

Reading Food Labels

1. Read the following information on healthy lifestyles and eating habits.

Food labels tell a lot about food. They don't suggest what foods to eat – that's your decision. But labels can help you make your "personal best" food choices – choices that benefit you now and in the future. Teenagers' health goals should include a healthful diet. The teen years demand more nutrients and often more calories than any other time of life. That's because teenagers are still growing. But their "on-the-run" lifestyles often prevent them from getting the right amount of nutrients and calories they need.

In the short run, food choices make a difference. For example, a diet that's low in iron, typical among teenage girls, may result in anemia, which causes paleness and a tired feeling. A teenage athlete who cuts back on calories to trim down may not have enough energy for peak performance. And eating more calories than you use often shows up as extra pounds of body fat. Down the road, in 20 or 30 years, the results of a poor diet may start to show up in other ways. If you eat a diet with too much fat and not enough fiber over a long period, you may be more likely to develop heart disease, obesity or cancer. And girls who don't eat enough calcium-rich foods, such as milk, cheese and yogurt, are more prone to osteoporosis later in life.

What makes a healthy diet for teenagers? The dietary guidelines for Americans say:

- Aim for a healthy weight
- Be physically active each day
- Let the Food pyramid guide your food choices
- Choose a variety of grains daily, especially whole grains
- Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables daily
- Choose a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol and moderate in total fat
- Choose beverages and food to moderate your intake of sugars
- Choose and prepare foods with less salt

The good news is: Nutrition labeling can help you make food choices that meet these Dietary Guidelines and promote a lifetime of good health.

2. Study the following terms and rules for reading food labels. You are going to need to reference these later on in the assignment.

- **Fat-Free**: Less than 0.5grams of fat per serving
- **Low-Fat**: 3 grams of fat or less per serving
- **Reduced Fat**: 25% less fat than the original product
- **Light**: 50% less fat than the original product
- **Low Cholesterol**: 20 milligrams or less of cholesterol and 2 grams or less of saturated fat per serving
- **Sodium Free**: Less than 5mg of sodium
- **Sugar Free**: Less than 0.5grams of sugar
- **High Fiber**: 5 grams or more of fiber
- **Serving Size**: one serving, usually a small portion, not the whole box or bag; everything listed on the label such as calories and fat is based on the serving size
- **Servings per container**: how many servings are contained in the whole package
- **Total Fat**: a good food choice is one with 3 grams or less of fat per 100 calories
(*Example: if there are 300 calories in a serving of chips and 9 grams of fat per serving that would equal 3 grams of fat per 100 calories, so that would be a good choice*)
- **Saturated Fat**: should be half of the total fat or less
- **Sodium**: People with high blood pressure should eat products with 250mg or less of sodium per serving

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3. Bring in two food labels from food that you like to eat or commonly eat. Then, fill in the following table.

Food Item	Serving Size	Calories per serving	Total Fat per serving	Saturated fat/serving	Cholesterol per serving	Sodium per serving	Total Carbs per serving	Fiber per serving	Sugar per serving

4. Refer to your completed table as well as the list of terms on the previous page to answer the following questions:

- a. Is either of your foods fat free or low fat? If yes, which ones?

- b. Is either of your foods high in fiber? If yes, which ones?

- c. The saturated fat in a serving should be less than half of the total fat to be a healthy choice. Look at your food items. Do either of them have an unhealthy saturated fat content? If yes, which ones?

- d. Is either of your foods sodium free?

- e. People with high blood pressure should eat products with 250mg or less of sodium per serving. Please explain if one or both of your food items would be ok for someone with high blood pressure.

5. a. According to the following two food labels, which food is lower in saturated fat?
- b. What is the exact difference in saturated fat between the two items?
- c. According to the food labels, which food would be the better choice & WHY?

Whole Milk	
Serving Size 8 fl oz (240mL)	
Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 150	Calories from Fat 70
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 8g	12%
Saturated Fat 5g	25%
Cholesterol 35mg	12%
Sodium 125mg	5%
Total Carbohydrate 12g	4%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 11g	
Protein 8g	
Vitamin A 6%	Vitamin C 4%
Calcium 30%	Iron 0%
	Vitamin D 25%
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	
	Calories: 2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g 80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg 2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g

Skim Milk	
Serving Size 8 fl oz (240mL)	
Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 80	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol less than 5mg	1%
Sodium 130mg	5%
Total Carbohydrate 12g	4%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 11g	
Protein 8g	
Vitamin A 8%	Vitamin C 4%
Calcium 30%	Iron 0%
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