

## Label Reading 101

It's hard to know what to watch for these days – calories, fat, fibre, carbs, protein – they all are important for balanced nutrition. Don't get hung up on numbers – counting is for sheep. Generally, look to see if the nutrients come from real, unadulterated foods. Nuts and seeds are high in calories and fat, but very nutrient dense and full of phytonutrients. That's why we don't eat a whole bowl of them in a sitting. Think about the nutritional value of the food – eat lots of nutrient dense foods, less nutrient neutral foods (not bad, but not very beneficial), and few nutrient negative foods (do more harm than good). In terms of calories, fat, carbohydrates, and protein, each person has a unique ratio required to keep them in optimal health. Generally, a good guide is 40-30-30 – percent calories from carbs-fat-proteins.

When reading the ingredients, look for items you recognize, can pronounce, and know where they came from – i.e. butter comes from a cow, margarine comes from.....? Avoid artificial colours, additives, and preservatives – they are there to cover up a sub-standard product, to increase shelf-life, and to make it look more “natural”. Chemicals belong in a lab, not our food. Most are very toxic to our bodies, causing illness and allergies, and are a burden on our liver. Stick to natural when reading labels and purchasing foods.

Nutrition Facts	
Per 2 cookies (30g)	
Amount	% Daily Value
<b>Calories</b> 150	
<b>Fat</b> 7 g	11 %
Saturated Fat 3 g	20 %
+ Trans Fat 1 g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0 mg	
<b>Sodium</b> 80 mg	3 %
<b>Carbohydrate</b> 21 g	7 %
Fibre 1 g	4 %
Sugars 8 g	
<b>Protein</b> 1 g	
Vitamin A 0 %	Vitamin C 0 %
Calcium 0 %	Iron 8 %

**Serving Size** – see exactly how many the facts pertain to – 1 cookie, ½ bagel, 10 chips, etc.

**Calories** – how much energy per serving – each person is different, but aim for 1500-2000 Calories daily.

**Fat** – total fat should be around 30% of calories per day (67g based on 2000 Cal). Limit saturated fats. Eliminate hydrogenated and trans-fats – they clog cell membranes so they can't function and create disease.

**Cholesterol** – too much cholesterol is not good for the heart, but cholesterol coming from natural substances like butter or eggs is much better for you than those from hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated fats.

**Sodium** – try to keep your sodium around 1500 – 2000mg per day. Products with more potassium than sodium are better for your health.

**Carbohydrates** – 40% of daily caloric intake - ~200g of unrefined, whole carbs per day.

**Fibre** – excellent for disease prevention. Aim for 35-50g per day.

**Sugars** – can be found naturally in the food, like sugars in fruit or milk, or from added sweeteners like glucose/fructose. Read the ingredient list to determine where these are coming from.

**Protein** – 30% of daily caloric intake - ~150 g per day to keep your body structure sound.

**Vitamins and Minerals** – based on RDI – minimum wage of nutrition, and do not list all nutrients we require. Why add nutrient back in – eat whole foods that keep their original nutrients from start to finish.