



Serve Up a Healthier You

North Carolina Child Nutrition Services
Staff Wellness Toolkit
Newsletters

Understanding Food Labels

Food labels can seem a little tricky. Making smart choices doesn't have to be difficult. The tips below will help you use food labels to get the most nutrition for your dollar.

The **Nutrition Facts** panel is your best tool when shopping for value. The label tells us about the serving size, the number of servings per package and calories per serving. It also helps us to identify nutrient-rich foods. Nutrient-rich foods have more vitamins, minerals, fiber and other nutrients that we need.



The **Percent Daily Values** (% DV) are based on the daily values for a 2,000 calorie diet. A 5% DV or less is low and 20% DV or more is high.

The **Ingredients** list can tell you a lot about a product. The list can help you to make healthy choices. You can find sources of whole grains. You can watch out for added sugars. It helps to know that the ingredients are listed in order by weight. So you can tell how much sugar, for example, is in a product.

If a food contains any of the eight major food allergens, then there must be a statement on the package about this. The eight major food allergens are milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat and soybeans.

Food packaging is meant to catch your eye. You may see "fat free", "light" or "low sodium". Many manufacturers use these words or phrases to describe and highlight their product.



Health claims describe the relationship between a nutrient or a food and the risk for a disease or condition. For example, you may see a claim on dairy food packages that calcium reduces the risk for osteoporosis.

Go to www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/NFLPM/default.htm to learn more about food labels.

Eat Smart and Move More

Research points to seven key behaviors that can help children, youth and adults eat healthier and be more active:

1. Prepare and eat more meals at home.
2. Tame the tube.
3. Choose to move more every day.
4. Right-size your portions.
5. Re-think your drink.
6. Enjoy more fruits and vegetables.
7. Breastfeed your baby.

Frosty Pineapple Orange Smoothie

Makes 2 servings
Serving size: 1/2 recipe

Ingredients

- 12 ounces orange juice
- 1/2 cup pineapple chunks, drained
- 1 1/4 cups low fat vanilla yogurt

Directions

1. Combine all ingredients in a blender or food processor.
2. Blend on high speed for 2-3 minutes, or until frothy.
3. Serve immediately.

Lemon Velvet Smoothie Pineapple

Makes 4 cups
Serving size: 1 cup

Ingredients

- 2 1/2 cups low fat milk
- 1 cup low fat lemon yogurt
- 6 ounces frozen orange juice concentrate
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Directions

1. Combine all ingredients in a blender or food processor.
2. Blend on high speed for 2-3 minutes, or until frothy.
3. Serve immediately.

*If you don't have a blender, put all of the ingredients into a jar or plastic jug. Put the lid on tightly.

4 Tasty Ways to Balance Your Beverages

- Drink plenty of water. Water is a refreshing low calorie, low cost choice.
- Drink 1% or fat free milk three times a day. Milk benefits kids of all ages! An 8-ounce glass at each meal is an easy way to get your 3-Every-Day®.
- Drink no more than 8 to 12 ounces of 100% fruit or vegetable juice a day. Choose whole fruits over juice for more fiber and fewer calories.
- Drink other beverages with care. Soft drinks, sweet tea, fruit drinks, sports drinks and energy drinks are often loaded with calories, and sometimes caffeine.

A Message from the Child Nutrition Program Staff Wellness Initiative

For more resources and information on staff wellness:

- Talk with the cafeteria manager at your school.
- Contact the Child Nutrition director for your school system.
- Consult the Child Nutrition staff wellness committee.
- Check out Resources for Schools at www.nutritionnc.com.



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Some ideas adapted from www.eatrightmontana.org. Recipes adapted from www.3aday.org and www.oregondairyCouncil.org.