



UNDERSTANDING FOOD LABELS >

With increasing rates of overweight/obesity worldwide, we are forever being told to follow a healthy diet and that homemade is usually best. Unfortunately, due to work/study, family or other pressures and time constraints, convenience has a big influence on our food choices. It is in these situations especially that understanding how to read food labels is important.

1. Nutrition labels can help you:

- Compare products/brands
- Check how much fat, sugar or salt is in a food
- Choose the healthiest option
- Check the ingredients
- Understand what a typical portion size is

2. What am I looking for?

Average adult guidelines:

Female = 2000 kcal/d
Male = 2500 kcal/d

Always compare nutrition information 'per 100 g', not per portion, as these may differ.

Don't be misled by these claims. Sometimes a reduction in fat can mean more sugar, sweeteners or other added ingredients.

'Light/Lite' means that it contains at least 30% less (fat/calories/sugar) than standard products.

Don't be enticed by bright, fancy packaging - try to look closer at the label!

You can also find the nutrient content of many restaurant/fast food meals online!

How much energy you need will depend on your disability & your activity levels.

High sugar = more than 15 g per 100 g

Low fat = less than 3/1.5 g per 100 g for solid/liquid foods, respectively.

High saturated fat = more than 5 g per 100 g

Spinach & ricotta pizza					
Nutrition Information				Guidelines	
Typical values (cooked as per instructions)	Per 100g	Per 1/2 pizza	% based on GDA for ...	Women	Men
Energy	1001 kJ 238 kcal	1977 kJ 470 kcal	23.5%	2000 kcal	2500 kcal
Protein	9.3g	18.4g	40.9%	45g	55g
Carbohydrate	28.7g	56.7g	24.7%	230g	300g
of which sugars	2.7g	5.3g	5.9%	90g	120g
of which starch	25.9g	51.2g	-	-	-
Fat	9.6g	19.0g	27.1%	70g	95g
of which saturates	3.7g	7.3g	36.5%	20g	30g
mono-unsaturates	4.0g	7.9g	-	-	-
polyunsaturates	1.6g	3.2g	-	-	-
Fibre	2.3g	4.5g	18.8%	24g	24g
Salt	1.0g	2.0g	33.3%	6g	6g
of which sodium	0.4g	0.79g	32.9%	2.4g	2.4g

Low salt = 0.3 g or less per 100 g (or 0.1 g sodium)

NOTE: These figures are based on non-disabled guidelines and therefore adjustments may be required depending on your disability.

3. I need to make a quick decision!

- Some labels use red, amber and green (traffic light) colour coding ● High
- A quick glance can help you discover whether a food is high, medium or low in calories, sugar, fat, saturated fat and salt ● Medium ● Low
- Generally, the more green lights, the healthier the choice!

4. The ingredients list

- Ingredients are listed in order of weight (main ingredient first)
- Look out for various names for sugar e.g. high-fructose corn syrup, sucrose, dextrose, glucose, maltose and fructose.... they can quickly add up!
- If there is a long list of ingredients this may indicate that the product is highly processed or contains added flavourings and preservatives. Is there a more natural alternative?