



GS1

GROCERY SHOPPING

Food Label Smarts

Time: 70 Minutes

Understanding what is in our food is a critical part of choosing healthier options. Learn how to read food labels by comparing and contrasting nutrition facts and ingredients on similar products. Practice your new knowledge of calories, protein, sodium, sugar and saturated fat in a mock grocery store. Enjoy the feeling of being a confident, healthy shopper.

OBJECTIVES:

Identify correct serving sizes and corresponding calorie totals.

Describe the difference between the nutrients you need to limit and those you need to get enough of.

Correctly choose the healthier option when comparing two similar grocery food items.

SETUP

- Review resource list and print it out. Purchase all necessary supplies.
- Set up demo station with the necessary activity resources.
- Chop cilantro and red onion per recipe and stock grocery bags with measured ingredients beforehand.
- Place canned ingredients and the remaining shared ingredients at demo station.
- Provide computer, internet access, and projector, if available.

INTRO

- Welcome participants and introduce yourself.
- Take care of any housekeeping items (closest bathroom, water fountain, etc.).
- Give a brief description of the educational experience.
- Engage in an icebreaker to gauge topic knowledge from the bank of options provided in the facilitator guide. *10 Minutes*

DEMO

- Play video(s) or demonstrate content (see demo script). *10 Minutes*

ACTIVITY

- Participants will tour a mock grocery store and practice comparing food labels to identify healthier food choices. *20 Minutes*

RECAP

- Pass out handout(s) and invite participants to taste their healthy dish while going through the handout(s) together. *10 Minutes*

GOAL SETTING/CLOSING

- Engage in a goal setting activity from the bank of options provided in the facilitator guide. Pass out the Setting SMART Goals handout to participants.
- Thank participants and encourage them to join the next activity. (Provide date/time/location if known.) *20 Minutes*



NOTES: Read legal liability disclaimer(s), if applicable, before activity. Refer to Resource List for all necessary supplies and handouts.

Food Label Smarts Resource List

HANDOUTS/VIDEOS

These resources can be found on the AHA's YouTube channel or heart.org.

- Food Label Smarts demo video
- [Black Bean Salad \(or Salsa\) recipe](#)
- Understanding Food Nutrition Labels handout
- Side-by-Side Comparison handout
- Setting SMART Goals handout (please locate in this guide)

SPACE SETUP

- Chairs and tables for participants
- Demo table
- Pens for participants
- Folders
- Computer, internet access, and projector, if available

ACTIVITY INGREDIENTS* AND SUPPLIES**

- 1 15 oz. can low-sodium or no-salt-added black beans
- 1 15.5 oz. can regular black beans
- 1 15.5 oz. can low-sodium or no-salt added whole-kernel corn
- 1 15 oz. can regular corn
- 1 15 oz. can no-salt-added, diced tomatoes
- 1 15 oz. can regular, diced tomatoes
- ½ cup red onion, diced
- 1 tsp. minced garlic
- 2 Tbsp. chopped cilantro
- 2 Tbsp. cider vinegar
- 3 Tbsp. olive oil
- Juice of 1 lime
- Grocery bags
- Measuring cups/spoons
- Can opener
- Bowls (for tasting)
- Forks (for tasting)
- Optional: If available, use sinks and supply colander to rinse and rinse the canned vegetables.

**Recipe serves 6 people; please multiply ingredients as necessary for your participants.*

***Purchase appropriate number of supplies for your participants. Participants can divide into teams and share supplies and ingredients*

Food Label Smarts Demo Script

Use if video capabilities are unavailable.

Pass out Side-by-Side Comparison handout before the demonstration so participants can follow along.

 **SAY:** Learning how to read and understand food labels can help you make healthier choices. I am going to guide you through some tips on making the most of the information on the Nutrition Facts label. We will be referencing the current Nutrition Facts label but you should also know that packaged foods will gradually transition to an updated label. You can compare the two labels on your Side-by-Side Comparison handout. A main difference is that the new label shows added sugars. These are sugars put into foods during preparation or processing or those that are added at the table. Naturally occurring sugars like fructose (in fruit) and lactose (in milk) are not considered added sugars. The AHA recommends less than 150 calories or 9 teaspoons of added sugar for most men and less than 100 calories or 6 teaspoons of added sugar for most women and for children.

 First, let's start with the serving information at the top of the label. This will tell you the size of a single serving and the total number of servings per container or package.

 Next, we can check total calories per serving. It's important to pay attention to the calories per serving and how many servings you're really eating. If you double the servings you eat, you double the calories and nutrients.

 Now look at the saturated fat, trans fat and sodium levels. We want to limit these nutrients. The AHA recommends no more than 13 grams of saturated fat, as little trans fat as possible and no more than 1,500 mg of sodium per day. These recommendations are based on a 2,000-calorie diet.

 Moving down the label, we can see dietary fiber, protein, calcium, iron, vitamins and other nutrients you need every day. We want to make sure to get enough of these for a balanced diet.

 **SAY:** If we look on the right side of the label, we can see % Daily values. This tells us the percentage of each nutrient in a single serving, in terms of the daily recommended amount. As a guide, when we want to consume less of a nutrient (such as saturated fat or sodium), choose foods with a % Daily Value of 5 percent or less. If we want to consume more of a nutrient (such as fiber), we can look for foods with a higher % Daily Value, such as 20 percent or more.

 I have a couple final tips to help us all navigate a Nutrition Facts label.

 Remember the information shown on this label is based on 2,000 calories per day. We may need to eat less or more than 2,000 calories depending on our age, gender, activity level and whether we're trying to lose, gain or maintain weight. Your healthcare provider can help you figure out how many calories you need.

 Also, if the label says a food contains "0 grams" (g) of trans fat, but includes "partially hydrogenated oil" in the ingredient list, it means the food contains trans fat, but less than 0.5 grams of trans fat per serving. So, if we eat more than one serving, we could quickly reach our daily limit of trans fat.

Food Label Smarts Activity Script

Display canned grocery items at the demo station. Pair the “regular” and “better” foods next to each other. Place the bottle(s) of cider vinegar, olive oil, jar of garlic, and limes on the end of the table.

Divide participants into teams and distribute the recipe.



SAY: Each team will come up to the front to pick up the required recipe ingredients and the recipe.

Remind participants to share the following ingredients with one another: cider vinegar, olive oil, garlic and limes.



SAY: When you come up to the demo station, grab a grocery bag, that’s already pre-filled with your cilantro and diced red onion. As you start shopping through the mock grocery store, you’ll want to look at the Nutrition Facts label and compare the different canned options. Make sure to grab the healthiest version of the ingredient and return to your team area to start cooking!



Once everyone is done making the dish, divide it into tasting bowls and share with your team.

Black Bean Salad (or Salsa)



Per serving:
142 Calories
0.5 g Sat. Fat
11 mg Sodium
\$0.84

Makes 6 servings

Serve chilled as a great side salad to a meal.
Or, warm it in the microwave and use it as a
filling for tacos!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 15 oz. can low-sodium or no-salt-added black beans
- 1 15.5 oz. can low-sodium or no-salt-added corn **or**
¾ cup frozen whole-kernel corn
- 1 medium bell pepper, diced **or**
1 medium diced tomato
- ½ cup red onion, diced
- 1 tsp. minced garlic
- 2 Tbsp. chopped cilantro
- 2 Tbsp. cider vinegar
- 3 Tbsp. olive oil
- Juice of 1 lime

DIRECTIONS

1. Toss all ingredients together. Chill for at least one hour.

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Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 2/3 cup (55g) Servings Per Container About 8	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 230	Calories from Fat 72
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 8g	12%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	12%
Dietary Fiber 4g	16%
Sugars 1g	
Protein 3g	
Vitamin A	10%
Vitamin C	8%
Calcium	20%
Iron	45%
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily value 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

1. Start with the serving information at the top of the label.

This will tell you the size of a single serving and the total number of servings per container (package).

2. Next, check total calories per serving.

Pay attention to the calories per serving and how many servings you're really eating. If you double the servings you eat, you double the calories and nutrients.

3. Limit these nutrients.

Based on a 2,000-calorie diet, try to eat no more than 13 grams of saturated fat, as little trans fat as possible, and no more than 1,500 mg of sodium.

4. Get enough of these nutrients.

Make sure to get enough dietary fiber, protein, calcium, iron, vitamins and other nutrients you need every day.

5. Quick guide to Percent Daily Value:

The Percent Daily Value (DV) tells you the percentage of each nutrient in a single serving, based on the daily recommended amount.

As a guide, choose foods with a 5 percent or lower Percent Daily Value for saturated fat, trans fat and sodium.

If you want to eat more of a nutrient, such as fiber or protein, look for foods with a 20 percent or higher Percent Daily Value.

HERE ARE MORE TIPS:

Remember that the information shown on this panel is based on 2,000 calories a day. You may need to eat a diet of more or fewer calories depending on your age, gender, activity level, and whether you're trying to lose, gain or maintain your weight. Your healthcare provider can help you figure out how many calories you need.

When the Nutrition Facts label says a food contains "0 grams" (g) of trans fat, but includes "partially hydrogenated oil" in the ingredient list, it means the food still contains trans fat, but less than 0.5 grams per serving. So, if you eat more than one serving, you could quickly reach your daily limit of trans fat.

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Side-by-Side Comparison: Original and New Nutrition Labels



Note: These images are meant for illustrative purposes to show how the new Nutrition Facts label might look compared to the old label. Both labels represent fictional products.

ORIGINAL LABEL

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 2/3 cup (55g) Servings Per Container About 8	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 230	Calories from Fat 72
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 8g	12%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	12%
Dietary Fiber 4g	16%
Sugars 1g	
Protein 3g	
Vitamin A	10%
Vitamin C	8%
Calcium	20%
Iron	45%
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily value 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

When the original hypothetical label was developed in 2014, added sugars were not yet proposed so the “original” label shows 1 g of sugar as an example.

NEW LABEL

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size	2/3 cup (55g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	230
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 8g	10%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	13%
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	20%
Protein 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 235mg	6%
* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	

The image created for the “new” label lists 12 g total sugars and 10 g added sugars to give an example of how added sugars would be broken out with a % Daily Value.

Source: FDA 2016

www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/GuidanceRegulation/GuidanceDocumentsRegulatoryInformation/LabelingNutrition/UCM501646.pdf

Setting SMART Goals

SPECIFIC

- What exactly do you want to accomplish?

MEASURABLE

- How will you track your progress towards your goal?

ACHIEVABLE

- Is reaching your goal possible with your full effort?

REALISTIC

- Do you have the resources and ability to achieve your goal? If not, how can you get them?

TIME-BOUND

- When will your goal be achieved?

EXAMPLE OF A SMART GOAL:

I will increase the number of fruit servings I eat daily by 2 cups within the next 3 months.

Personal SMART goal:
