

# HEALTH & WELLNESS LEARNING THE LABEL

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NUTRITION NEWS

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Series

## Understanding Nutrition Labels Part I

### References:

**U.S. Food and Drug Administration**

<http://www.fda.gov/food/labelingnutrition/consumerinformation/ucm078889.htm>

**American Dietetic Association**

<http://www.eatright.org/Media/Content.aspx?id=6442453585>

The first step in making good nutritional choices begins with understanding the nutritional value in your food. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has made this task a bit easier for us with the requirements of Nutrition Labels on most packaged foods.

Additionally, recent legislation regarding National Health Care will require restaurants and food vendors with 20 or more outlets to begin posting calories on menus, menu boards (including drive-through) and food display tags, with additional nutrient information (fat, saturated fat, carbohydrates, sodium, protein and fiber) available in writing upon request. These calorie posting requirements will also apply to vending machines managed by companies that operate 20 or more machines.

In order to help you begin understanding the Nutrition Labeling system, we will break the label down into 4 parts- each with its own segment.

Part I will deal with *Serving Sizes and Calories*.

### Breyer's Light Vanilla Ice Cream

#### Nutrition Facts

Amount Per Serving		% Daily Value*
<b>Calories</b> 110	Calories from Fat 28	
<b>Total Fat</b> 3.12 g		5%
Saturated Fat 1.95 g		10%
Trans Fat		
<b>Cholesterol</b> 10.2 mg		3%
<b>Sodium</b> 48.28 mg		2%
<b>Potassium</b>		
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 17.2 g		6%
Dietary Fiber 0.14 g		1%
Sugars 15.49 g		
Sugar Alcohols		
<b>Protein</b> 3.29 g		
<b>Vitamin A</b> 297.16 IU		6%
<b>Vitamin C</b> 0.75 mg		1%
<b>Calcium</b> 114.92 mg		11%
<b>Iron</b> 0.04 mg		0%

#### #1. Serving Size

First, make note of the serving size. There are various measurements this could be listed in such as cups, tablespoons, grams, pieces, and ounces. The serving size is one of the most important aspects of a nutrition label to be aware of because ALL other information is based on it. In our example, the serving size is a ½ cup of ice cream. It would be easy to quickly consume 2-3 servings of this product in one sitting. In that case, all other listed nutrient information must be increased to reflect the additional servings consumed. When at home, try measuring various food items according to their respective serving sizes in order to gain awareness of how many servings you are consuming.

#### #2. Calories

Calories are needed by our bodies for energy. Everyone's body is unique in the amount of calories required for normal activities. Your daily calorie needs will vary depending on your health and fitness goals. To begin gaining an understanding of how many calories you need to meet your specific goals (lose weight, maintain current weight, etc) click here: <http://nutrition.about.com/od/changeyourdiet/a/calguide.htm>

#### #3. Calories from Fat

This is simply telling you how many calories in one serving of this product come from fat. Every 1 gram of fat contains 9 calories. Therefore, if you consumed 2 servings of the ice cream from our example, you would take in 220 calories- 56 of those calories would come directly from fat.