

HEALTH & WELLNESS LEARNING THE LABEL

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NUTRITION NEWS

Health & Wellness
Series

Understanding Nutrition Labels Part II

References:
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
<http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/>
<http://www.fda.gov/food/labelingnutrition/consumerinformation/ucm078889.htm>

Breyer's Light Vanilla Ice Cream

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size: 1/2 cup (68g)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 110	Calories from Fat 28
Daily Value*	
Total Fat 3.12 g	5%
Saturated Fat 1.95 g	10%
Trans Fat	
Cholesterol 10.2 mg	3%
Sodium 48.28 mg	2%
Potassium	
Total Carbohydrate 17.2 g	6%
Dietary Fiber 0.14 g	1%
Sugars 15.49 g	
Sugar Alcohols	
Protein 3.29 g	
Vitamin A 297.16 IU	6%
Vitamin C 0.75 mg	1%
Calcium 114.92 mg	11%
Iron 0.04 mg	0%

After serving sizes and calories, you will find a list of various nutrients. These are listed in order of priority or impact on consumer health. In other words, the FDA wants you to pay attention to how much total fat, cholesterol and sodium you are consuming. Too much of any of these nutrients may increase your risk of developing heart disease, high blood pressure and certain cancers.

Limit These Nutrients

#1. Fat, Sodium and Cholesterol

While some fats are considered bad, and others good (see [Nutrition News - Fats](#)) - it is beneficial to consume a limited amount of total fat. Like our example, not all nutrition labels will show you how many "good" fats (polyunsaturated and monounsaturated) are in a product. It is a good idea to educate on the types of foods that contain higher amounts of good fats and lower amounts of saturated fats. In our example, you clearly see one serving of the product contains 1.95 grams of saturated fat. The total fat in one serving is 3.12 grams. Therefore, the remaining 1.17 grams of fat is either polyunsaturated, monounsaturated, or a combination of the two. Either way, the product is clearly higher in saturated fat than unsaturated fat.

Cholesterol is also a nutrient that should be consumed in limited amounts. Saturated Fat and cholesterol in food will make your blood cholesterol levels increase. Limiting these two nutrients in your diet will help reduce your total blood cholesterol levels. *The National Heart Lung and Blood Institute recommends an intake of no more than 200mg of cholesterol from food per day.*

Sodium is another nutrient that must be consumed in limited quantities. See [Nutrition News - Sodium](#) for more information.

Get Enough of These Nutrients

#2. Potassium

A diet rich in potassium has been shown to help lower blood pressure by mitigating the effects of sodium on blood pressure. Adequate potassium intake may also reduce the risk of developing kidney stones, and possibly decrease bone loss with age. *The FDA recommended intake of potassium for adolescents and adults is 4,700 mg/day*

#3. Total Carbohydrate

Carbohydrates are necessary to a healthful diet. *It is recommended that carbohydrates make up 45-65% of total daily calories.* There are two types of carbohydrates- simple and complex. Simple carbohydrates come from sugar- fruit juices, fruit, table sugar, honey and soft drinks are all sources of simple carbs. These types are used in our bodies as quick sources of energy; however, they are usually void of any other nutrients. Complex carbohydrates are a better option when making carbohydrate rich food choices. Complex carbs supply energy as well as fiber and other nutrients that the body needs. Good sources of these carbs are breads, cereals, potatoes, pasta, and rice.

Dietary Fiber- *The recommended dietary fiber intake is 14 grams per 1,000 calories.* Fiber presents an array of health benefits, including maintaining bowel health, lowering blood cholesterol, controlling blood sugar levels, and aiding in weight loss. Sources of dietary fiber are complex carbohydrates such as whole wheat flour, whole grains, raw