



GHH2

GROWING HEALTHY HABITS

Decode Nutrition Facts Labels

Time: 70 Minutes

When you're helping your family grocery shop or picking out snacks with your friends, you'll notice something called the Nutrition Facts label on cans, boxes, bottles, and containers. When you know how to read the labels, they can be very helpful in choosing healthy foods. Discover some clues that will help you solve the mystery of healthy eating!

OBJECTIVES:

Describe why it's important to read the Nutrition Facts label.

Correctly choose the option with less sodium when comparing two similar canned food products.

List one sneaky name for sugar.

SETUP

- Review the resource list and print it out. Purchase all necessary supplies after reviewing the [HFL Cost Calculator](#).
- Set up cooking stations with the necessary equipment and ingredients.
- Place canned ingredients, pairing the "regular" sodium and no-salt-added beans and tomatoes, on the demo table at the front to create the mock grocery store.
- 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.
- Ask the participants about their grocery shopping experiences. Do they help find items when they shop with their family? Have they ever looked at the product labels? *10 Minutes*

DEMO

- Demonstrate content (see demo script). Play video as indicated. *10 Minutes*

ACTIVITY

- Participants will practice grocery shopping for healthy turkey chili recipe ingredients and then cook the dish. *20 Minutes*

RECAP

- Pass out handout(s) and invite participants to taste their delicious chili 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 [Welcome Toolkit](#). 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 disclaimers before activity: [Food Liability Disclaimer](#). Please receive consent from each child's parent/legal guardian before the educational experience. Refer to Resource List for all necessary supplies and handouts. This Healthy for Life® Educational Experience was created by Aramark and the American Heart Association as part of our Healthy for Life® 20 by 20 Initiative. We are proud to be working together to help improve the health of all Americans. Healthy for Life® is a registered trademark of Aramark.

Decode Nutrition Facts Labels Resource List

HANDOUTS/VIDEOS

Find these resources on AHA's YouTube channel or heart.org/healthyforgood

- Video – [Food Label Smarts](#)
- Video – [Tasty Turkey Chili](#)

Find these resources in this guide

- Handout – [Eat Smart with Food Nutrition Labels](#)
- Handout – [Garden Nutrition Labels](#)
- Handout – [Setting SMART Goals](#)

SPACE SETUP

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

ACTIVITY INGREDIENTS* AND SUPPLIES**

For Tasty Turkey Chili

- Cooking spray
- 1 ½ tablespoons canola or corn oil
- 1 medium or large onion, chopped
- 1 pound 4 ounces (20 ounces) ground skinless turkey breast
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder or 2 large garlic cloves, minced
- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 15.5-ounce can no-salt-added pinto beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 15.5-ounce can no-salt-added black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 14.5-ounce can no-salt-added diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 ¾ cups fat-free, low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 cup frozen whole-kernel corn
- 1 6-ounce can no-salt-added tomato paste
- 4 medium green onions, chopped
- Measuring cups/spoons
- Chef's knife
- Can opener
- Bowls (for tasting)
- Soup spoons (for tasting)
- Optional: If available, use sinks and supply colander to rinse and drain the canned beans.

For the Mock Grocery Store Label Comparison


- 2 15.5-ounce cans regular pinto beans (be sure to check the sodium so it's higher than the no-salt-added pinto beans you buy)
- 2 15.5-ounce cans regular black beans (be sure to check the sodium so it's higher than the no-salt-added black beans you buy)
- 2 15.5-ounce cans regular diced tomatoes (be sure to check the sodium so it's higher than the no-salt-added diced tomatoes you buy)


**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.*


Decode Nutrition Facts Labels Demo Script


(Pass out the handout **Eat Smart with Food Nutrition Labels** so the participants can follow along.)


 **SAY:** Learning how to read and understand food labels can help you decide which foods and beverages are best to keep you healthy. The Nutrition Facts label has lots of numbers. Here's what to look for so you can decode the messages from the numbers. Think of yourself as a Health Detective! Look at your handout.


 At the very top of the label is the serving information: **Serving Size** and **Servings Per Container**. The serving size tells you the amount or size of a single serving of beans (or whatever you're eating) and the servings per container tells you how many servings are in the container, can, or package.

 Next, look at the **Calories**. A calorie is a unit of measurement (like inches or feet for length) that describes the amount of energy your body gets from food. To keep your weight at a healthy level, you should burn off the calories you eat with physical activity. It's a balancing act! Think of a seesaw at the playground or a balance scale in science class. For the seesaw or scale to stay level, both sides need to be equally weighted. **(Point to the Nutrition Facts label.)** That calorie number is for one serving. If you eat twice the amount for one serving, you're eating twice the calories.

 Now look at the **Saturated Fat**, **Trans Fat**, **Sodium**, and **Added Sugars** numbers. **(Point to these categories on the Nutrition Facts label.)** These nutrients can be "bad guys" if you have too much of them. The saturated and trans fats have a "g" after their numbers. This means the amounts are given in grams, a very small measurement. The sodium amount is given in milligrams, an even smaller measurement. See the mg for milligrams? But even with small measurements, we still want to limit these nutrients as much as we can.

 **Fats** – There are four different kinds of fats. You know now that saturated and trans fats are "bad fats." Eat as little of them as you can. Some foods that have saturated fat are fatty beef or pork, cream, butter, and cheese made from whole milk. Trans fat can be in a lot of different foods, including baked goods like cookies or doughnuts and fried foods like french fries. The two types of fat that are better for you are monounsaturated and polyunsaturated. Foods that have a lot of monounsaturated fat are peanut butter and avocados. Oils that come from plants have it, too, like olive oil and canola oil. Some foods that have polyunsaturated fat are corn oil, walnuts, and sunflower seeds. These foods and oils help protect your heart. So, grab a handful of unsalted sunflower seeds and cook with olive or canola oil. Treat your heart right and make friends with the good fats!

 **Sodium** – Less sodium means healthier bodies! Too much sodium can be bad for our bones, brains, stomachs, hearts, and kidneys. Always look at the Nutrition Facts label to find the products that have the least sodium. It's true that most of the sodium you eat is already in food. The foods that add the most sodium to your diet are pizza, burritos and tacos, sandwiches, breads and rolls, cold cuts and cured meats, and soups. If you're helping in the kitchen, try substituting herbs, spices, and fresh juices like lemon juice for salt.

 **Added Sugars** – Find **Total Sugars** on the label. Some sugars are natural sugars, like the kind in fruits, vegetables, milk, and grains. It's the Added Sugars, which are in products like soda, candy, and cookies that are the "bad guys." Eating and drinking too much added sugar is bad for our hearts. Added sugars can go by some sneaky names. Watch out for these culprits when you're reading ingredient lists: syrup, molasses, cane juice, fruit juice concentrate, fructose, and dextrose. If you have a sweet tooth or sugar craving, try a piece of your favorite fruit! As a heads-up,

Decode Nutrition Facts Labels Demo Script (continued)

you'll start seeing an updated version of the Nutrition Facts label on some products. What's different? The serving information and Calories is now in larger and or/bolder type. Added Sugars is now required on the label and the list of nutrients on the label has been updated.



Look around on the label and you can see many “good guy” nutrients, such as **Dietary Fiber, Protein, Vitamins D and E, Calcium, Iron, Potassium, and Choline.** You need these “good guy” nutrients for a balanced diet. They'll help you grow strong and healthy. **(Give the participants a few minutes to look for the good nutrients on the label.)**



One quick tip. Look at the heading called **% Daily Value** on the right-hand side toward the top of the label. This tells you the percentage of each nutrient in a single serving, based on the recommended daily amount. For the “bad guy” nutrients—saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium—choose 5% or less for the % Daily Value. For the “good guy” nutrients—like dietary fiber, protein, and iron—choose 20% or higher for the % Daily Value. Any questions? **(Pause and wait for questions.)**

Decode Nutrition Facts Labels Activity Script

Display the canned grocery items—pinto beans, black beans, and diced tomatoes—at the front on the demo table. This area will be the mock grocery store. Pair the “regular” sodium and no-salt-added products for the pinto beans, black beans, and diced tomatoes.

Divide the participants into two teams and distribute the recipe. Give each team a brown grocery bag.



SAY: Come to the front to do your “grocery shopping” for the canned ingredients (one team at a time). Your team will need to figure out which of the two choices of pinto beans, black beans, and diced tomatoes has less sodium and is the healthier choice. Be sure to look carefully at the sodium numbers on the Nutrition Facts labels. Grab the healthier options. We’ll confirm that you’ve made the right choices. Then you can return to your team area to start cooking!



The other ingredients for the chili are prepped and ready at your cooking station. Once everyone is finished making the chili, spoon it into bowls and share with your team.



Per serving:
347 Calories
0.5 g Sat. Fat
129 mg Sodium

Makes 6 servings;
1 $\frac{1}{3}$ cups per serving

Beans are high in protein and fiber. They help stretch this chili to feed more people or you can have leftovers for another meal! This recipe uses both pinto and black beans.

INGREDIENTS

- Cooking spray
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons canola or corn oil
- 1 medium or large onion, chopped
- 1 pound 4 ounces (20 ounces) ground skinless turkey breast
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon garlic powder or 2 large garlic cloves, minced
- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 15.5-ounce can no-salt-added pinto beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 15.5-ounce can no-salt-added black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 14.5-ounce can no-salt-added diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups fat-free, low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 cup frozen whole-kernel corn
- 1 6-ounce can no-salt-added tomato paste
- 4 medium green onions, chopped

DIRECTIONS

1. Lightly spray a Dutch oven with cooking spray. Pour in the oil. Heat over medium-high heat, swirling to coat the bottom. Cook the onion for 3 minutes, or until soft, stirring frequently.
2. Reduce the heat to medium. Stir in the turkey. Cook for 5 minutes, or until browned, stirring frequently to turn and break up the turkey.
3. Stir in the garlic powder, chili powder, pepper, and cumin. Stir in the remaining ingredients except the green onions. Cook for 5 to 7 minutes, or until heated through, stirring frequently. Just before serving, sprinkle the chili with the green onions.

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Healthy for Good™

EAT SMART

WITH FOOD NUTRITION LABELS

The Nutrition Facts label can help you make healthier choices. **Use it!**
Here's what to look for:



- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Nutrition Facts	
6, 12, 18 or 24 servings per container	
Serving size	1 egg (50g)
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	60
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 4g	5%
Saturated Fat 1g	6%
Trans Fat 0g	
Polyunsaturated Fat 1g	
Monounsaturated Fat 2g	
Cholesterol 170mg	57%
Sodium 65mg	3%
Total Carbohydrate 0g	0%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Total Sugars 0g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 6g	13%
Vitamin D 6mcg	30%
Calcium 28mg	2%
Iron 1mg	6%
Potassium 69mg	2%
Vitamin E 5mg	35%
Riboflavin 0.3mg	25%
Folate 45mcg	10%
Vitamin B12 1mcg	40%
Biotin 10mcg	35%
Pantothenic Acid 1mg	20%
Iodine 60mcg	40%
Zinc 1mg	10%
Selenium 22mcg	40%
Molybdenum 8mcg	20%
Choline 147mg	25%

*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.
Saturated Fat 25% less than ordinary eggs:
1g vs 1.5g (quantities rounded)

- 1 **Start with serving information.**
This will tell you the size of a single serving and how many servings are in the package.
- 2 **Check total calories.**
Do the math to know how many calories you're really getting if you eat the whole package.
- 3 **Limit certain nutrients.**
Compare labels and choose options with lower amounts of added sugars, sodium, saturated fat and trans fat when possible.
- 4 **Get enough of beneficial nutrients.**
Eat foods with nutrients your body needs, like calcium, choline, dietary fiber, iron, magnesium, potassium, and Vitamins A, C, D and E.*
- 5 **Understand % Daily Value.**
 - The % Daily Value (DV) tells you the percentage of each nutrient in a single serving in terms of the daily recommended amount.
 - To consume less of a nutrient (such as saturated fat or sodium), choose foods with a lower % DV (5% or less).
 - To consume more of a nutrient (such as fiber or potassium), choose foods with a higher % DV (20% or more).

For more tips and tricks on eating smart, visit [HEART.ORG/EATSMART](https://www.heart.org/eatsmart)

EAT SMART ADD COLOR MOVE MORE BE WELL

*Source: 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans

Make your own nutrition labels. Create one for a vegetable and one for a fruit from the garden.

Nutrition Facts	
servings per container	
Serving size	
Amount per serving	
Calories	
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat	
Saturated Fat	
<i>Trans Fat</i>	
Cholesterol	
Sodium	
Total Carbohydrate	
Dietary Fiber	
Total Sugars	
Includes Added Sugars	
Protein	
Vitamin D	
Calcium	
Iron	
Potassium	
<small>* 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.</small>	

Nutrition Facts	
servings per container	
Serving size	
Amount per serving	
Calories	
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat	
Saturated Fat	
<i>Trans Fat</i>	
Cholesterol	
Sodium	
Total Carbohydrate	
Dietary Fiber	
Total Sugars	
Includes Added Sugars	
Protein	
Vitamin D	
Calcium	
Iron	
Potassium	
<small>* 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.</small>	

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:
