

NUTRITION LABELS AND FATS



NUTRITION LABELS:

Reading nutrition labels can sometimes feel like reading another language! But it doesn't have to be confusing – you just need to know what to look for.

Many people look at the total energy value of the food, but there is other nutritional information that will give you a better indication about the nutritional value of the food.

Carbohydrate and of which sugars: The key element to look for is 'sugar' content. Try to go for foods with less than 25g sugar per 100g.

Fat and of which saturated fat: Nutrition labels often differentiate between total fat and saturated fat. Try and keep total fat below 5g per 100g, and saturated fat below 2g per 100g.

Sodium (salt): Something that often gets forgotten is sodium content. High sodium levels are common in highly refined and processed foods as it acts as a preservative and makes food taste good. Too much salt is bad for your health, so try to limit your intake of salty foods, don't add salt to foods when cooking or at the table and choose lower salt foods.

UNDERSTANDING FATS:

Fats are formed of fatty acids. Some fatty acids, such as omega-3 (e.g. fish oils) and omega-6 (e.g. vegetable oils) have essential benefits while others, such as saturated and trans fats have less benefit.

Saturated fats - hard fats mainly found in animal products such as red meat, butter and full-fat cheeses. A high saturated fat intake is a key contributor to heart problems.

Unsaturated fats - also known as 'good' fats, are found in foods such as olive oils, avocado, oily fish, nuts and seeds.

Omega-3 and omega-6 are two unsaturated fats that are essential for health and must be obtained through the diet, as the body is unable to produce them. They form part of the structure of every cell in our bodies. We need them to achieve and maintain a healthy heart, brain and healthy function of eyes.

Trans fats - are predominately found in vegetable fats which have been chemically altered by a process called hydrogenation which turns liquid oils into solid fat. Like saturated fats, a high intake of trans fats can increase the risk of high cholesterol levels and heart disease, so watch your intake of processed foods containing trans fats.

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What are the benefits of fats?

- Provide energy when carbohydrate sources become used up (fat is the most concentrated source of energy and is stored in the body)
- Help the absorption of certain vitamins, such as fat soluble vitamins A, D, E and K
- Help in maintaining cell membranes
- Protect our organs from damage

REQUIREMENTS

It is healthier to consume more unsaturated fat than saturated fat, but remember that unsaturated fats still contribute to calorie intake. The Guideline Daily Amount (GDA) for fat is 20-35% of your daily total calorie intake. Saturated fats should be kept below 10% of total calorie intake.



approximately 95g total fat per day



approximately 70g total fat per day

WHAT FOODS ARE A SOURCE OF GOOD FATS?

Eat “good” fats (unsaturated fats) such as: vegetable oils including olive oil, nuts and seeds, avocado, oily fish such as salmon or mackerel which contain omega-3 fatty acids, sunflower, rapeseed and olive oil spreads.

Healthy living tip

Research shows that by replacing saturated and trans fats with unsaturated fats, you can help decrease the risk of developing heart disease

Healthy living tip

Portion control is one of the easiest ways to control your calorie intake. If you're prone to having a second serving, serve yourself less food than normal, then wait 15min before thinking about a second serving. You will often find you are satisfied and you don't actually need more food

