



# Salts & Food Labels





# Food Labels

**Always read the Label**



**FOOD  
STANDARDS  
AGENCY**

If you want to eat a healthy diet, one of the key things you can do is try to cut down on fat (especially saturated fat), salt and added sugars. When you are checking food labels to choose which products to buy, traffic light colours can help you make that choice quickly and easily.

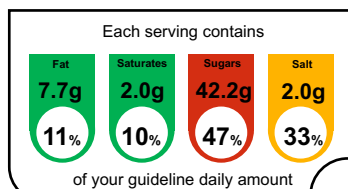
You may have seen products on sale with green, amber or red traffic light colours on the fronts of their packs. This is to help you see at-a-glance if the food has low, medium or high amounts of fat, saturated fat, salt and sugar.

## Guideline Daily amounts

	Women	Men
Energy	2000kcal	2500kcal
Protein	45g	55g
Carbs	230g	300g
Sugar	30g	30g
Fat	70g	95g
Saturated Fat	20g	30g
Fibre	30g	30g
Sodium	2.4g	2.4g
Salt	6g	6g

## What the colours mean

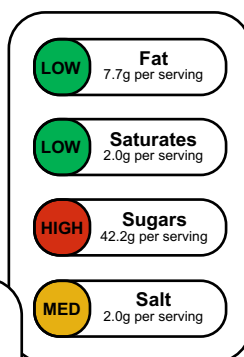
**Green** = Low  
**Amber** = Medium  
**Red** = High



Per serving

<b>Fat</b>	7.7g
<b>Saturates</b>	2.0g
<b>Sugars</b>	42.2g
<b>Salt</b>	2.0g

■ HIGH ■ MEDIUM ■ LOW





## Using Traffic Lights to Make Healthier Choices

Many foods with traffic light colours will have a mixture of greens, ambers and reds. So, when you're choosing between similar products, try to go for products with more greens and ambers, and fewer reds, if you want to make the healthier choice.

The colours make it easier to compare products at a glance. But remember, healthy eating is all about getting the overall balance right. Traffic light colours can help you choose between similar products and help you keep a check on the high-fat, high-sugar and high-salt foods you eat.

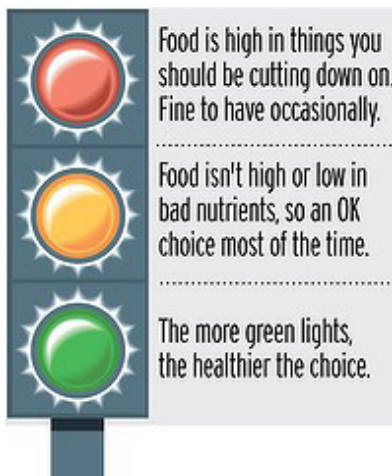
### Check it out

Some products you might have thought were healthy choices could qualify for red lights. Try comparing the saturated fat, sugar and salt levels of your favourite breakfast cereals with those that qualify for a full set of Green lights.

### Different traffic lights same signals

Different stores are using their own designs for the traffic light colours. But if they follow the Food Standards Agency's recommendations, the green, amber and red should mean exactly the same in each shop.

To find an up-to-date list of the stores and food producers that are using traffic light colours, see the Agency's eatwell website at: [eatwell.gov.uk/trafficlights](http://eatwell.gov.uk/trafficlights)



### Check how much fat, sugar and salt is in your food



Remember that the amount you eat of a particular food affects how much sugars, fat, saturates and salt you will get from it.

### Food Shopping Card

	Sugars	Fat	Saturates	Salt
What is <b>HIGH</b> per100g	Over 15g	Over 20g	Over 5g	Over 1.5g
What is <b>MEDIUM</b> per100g	Between 5g and 15g	Between 3g and 20g	Between 1.5g and 5g	Between 0.3g and 1.5g
What is <b>LOW</b> per100g	5g and below	3g and below	1.5g and below	0.3g and below





## The Nutrition Panel Explained

Nutrition Information		
Nutrient Per 100g		Per 400g
Energy	404.6KJ/97Kcal	1618.4KJ/388Kcal
Protein	6.3g	25.2g
Carbohydrate	9.6g	38.4g
of which sugars	2.0g	8.0g
starch	7.7g	30.8g
Fat	3.6g	14.6g
of which saturates	1.3g	5.0g
mono-saturates	1.4g	5.4g
polysaturates	0.7g	2.6g
fibre	1.6g	6.4g
sodium	0.2g	0.8g
salt	0.5g	2.0g

**You may see a panel like this on the back of food packs. It gives the nutritional breakdown of the food. You can use this information to help you make healthier choices.**

Manufacturers must provide nutrition information if the label makes a nutritional claim such as 'low fat' or 'high fibre', but sometimes manufacturers voluntarily provide nutritional information even when they have not made a claim.

Information will be given in terms of 100g or 100ml of the food for the following nutrients:

- energy (in kJ and kcal)
- protein (in g)
- carbohydrate (in g)
- fat (in g)

You may also see:

- sugars
- saturates
- fibre
- sodium

If a claim has been made about any other nutrient, the amount of the nutrient will also appear.

These terms, and some others you might see, are explained briefly below.

### Energy

This is the amount of energy that the food contains. It is measured either in calories (kcal) or kJ.

### Protein

The body needs protein to grow and repair itself. Protein-rich foods include meat, fish, milk and dairy foods, eggs, beans, lentils and nuts.





## Carbohydrate

The body turns carbohydrate into energy. Simple carbohydrates, which include added sugars and the natural sugars found in fruit and milk, are often listed on food labels as 'Carbohydrates (of which sugars)'.

### Complex carbohydrates

(sometimes known as starchy foods) include bread, cereals, rice, pasta and potatoes. Where possible, you should try to eat more complex carbohydrates. Sometimes you will only see a total figure for carbohydrates on food labels.

## Fat

Fat carries a lot of calories. Many food labels give figures for a product's fat content. Some food labels also break the figures down into different types of fat: saturates, monounsaturates and polyunsaturates.

Most of us know that we should be cutting down on fat. But it's even more important to try to replace the saturated fat we eat with unsaturated fat.

### Saturated fat

can raise blood cholesterol levels, which increases the chance of developing heart disease.

### Monounsaturates and polyunsaturates

are both types of unsaturated fat. Unsaturated fats provide essential fatty acids that the body needs.



## List of Ingredients

Ingredient lists provide useful information about what's in your food. With a few exceptions, all pre-packed foods must be labelled with their ingredients, listed in descending order of their weight.

If an ingredient is mentioned in the name, such as chicken in 'chicken pie', or is shown on the label, the amount contained in the food must be given as a percentage. This allows you to compare similar products.

Single ingredient foods, for example cheese, sugar and butter, do not need to give a list of ingredients. Neither do alcoholic drinks (above 1.2% vol.), though these products do have to say if they contain allergens.

Where an ingredient is made up of several other ingredients, all the individual ingredients, with a few exceptions, must be given on the label for example, the ingredients of mayonnaise used in a potato salad.

### Additives

Most food additives must be included either by name or by their E number in the ingredient list. The ingredient list must also say what type of additive it is, such as 'colour' or 'preservative'.

Any flavourings used in a food have to be listed in the ingredient list as 'flavouring/s' or with a more specific description, such as 'chicken flavouring'.





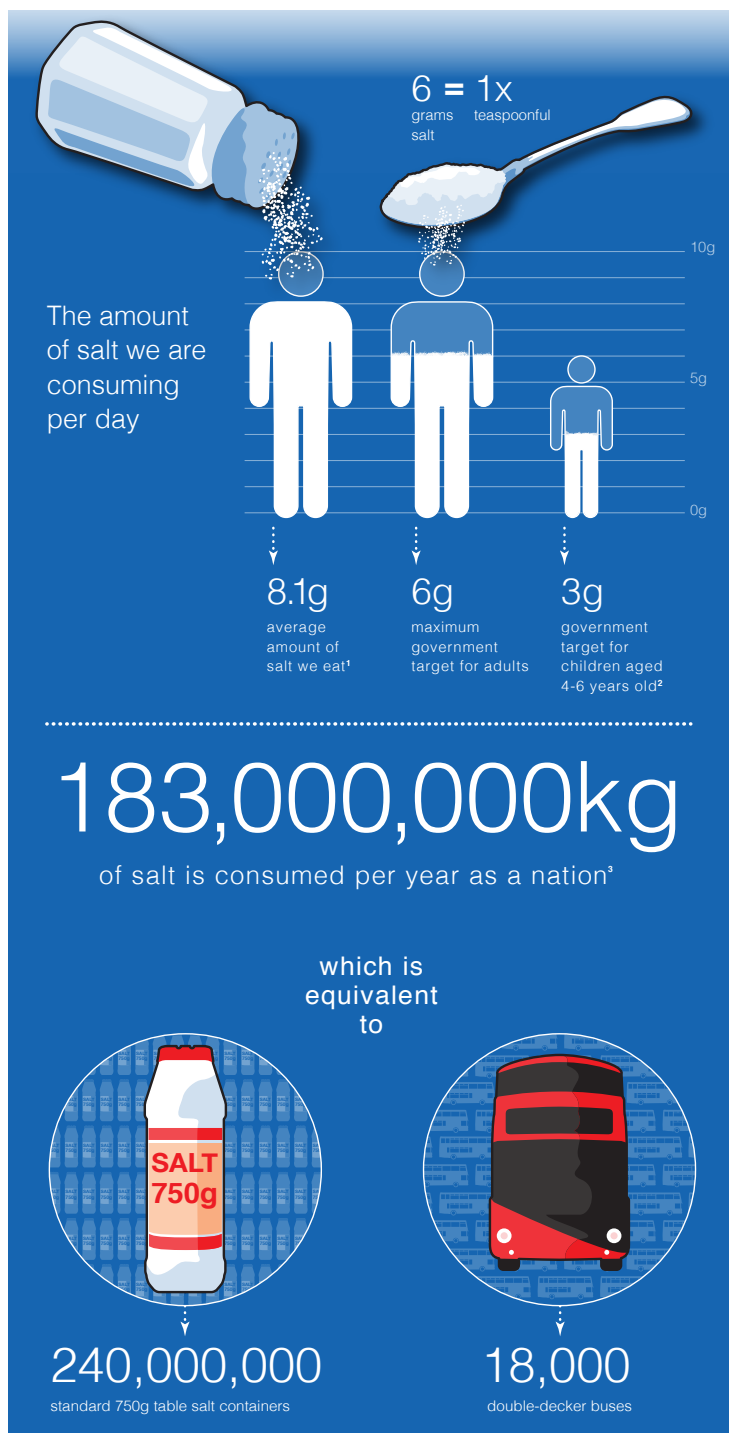
## Claims on Labels

The FDA also provides guidelines about the claims and descriptions manufacturers may use in food labeling to promote their products:

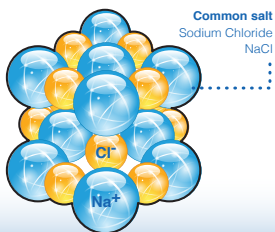
Claim	Requirements that must be met before using the claim in food labelling
Fat-Free	Less than 0.5 grams of fat per serving, with no added fat or oil
Low Fat	3 grams or less of fat per serving
Less Fat	25% or less of fat than the comparison food
Saturated Fat Free	Less than 0.5 grams of saturated fat and 0.5 grams of trans-fatty acids per serving
Cholesterol-Free	Less than 2 mg cholesterol per serving, and 2 grams or less saturated fat per serving
Low Cholesterol	20 mg or less cholesterol per serving and 2 grams or less saturated fat per serving
Reduced Calorie	At least 25% fewer calories per serving than the comparison food
Low Calorie	40 calories or less per serving
Extra Lean	Less than 5 grams of fat, 2 grams of saturated fat, and 95 mg cholesterol per (100 gram) serving of meat, poultry or seafood
Lean	Less than 10 grams of fat, 4.5 grams of saturated fat, and 95 mg cholesterol per (100 gram) serving of meat, poultry or seafood
Light (fat)	50% or less of the fat than in the comparison food (ex: 50% less fat than our regular cheese)
Light (calories)	1/3 fewer calories than the comparison food
High-Fibre	5 grams or more fibre per serving
Sugar-Free	Less than 0.5 grams of sugar per serving
Sodium-Free or Salt-Free	Less than 5 mg of sodium per serving
Low Sodium	140 mg or less per serving
Very Low Sodium	35 mg or less per serving
Healthy	A food low in fat, saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium, and contains at least 10% of the Daily Values for vitamin A, vitamin C, iron, calcium, protein or fibre
"High", "Rich in" or "Excellent Source"	20% or more of the Daily Value for a given nutrient per serving
"Less", "Fewer" or "Reduced"	At least 25% less of a given nutrient or calories than the comparison food
"Low", "Little", "Few" or "Low Source of"	An amount that would allow frequent consumption of the food without exceeding the Daily Value for the nutrient - but can only make the claim as it applies to all similar foods
"Good Source of", "More", or "Added"	The food provides 10% more of the Daily Value for a given nutrient than the comparison food



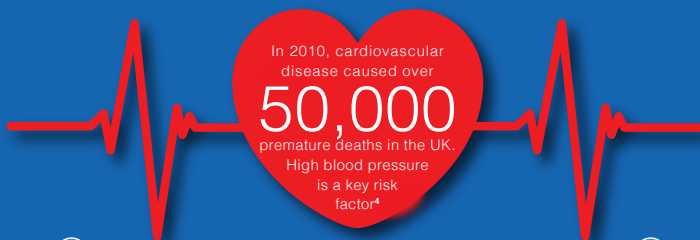
# HAVING TOO MUCH SALT?







## The damage being done to our health



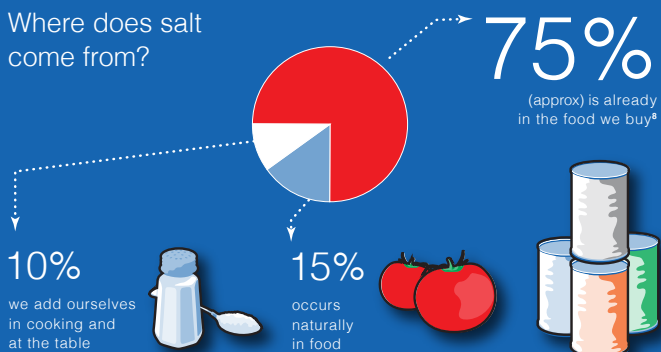
4,147  
preventable  
deaths

£288m  
from NHS  
budgets

£30bn  
amount  
cardiovascular  
disease costs  
UK economy  
per year<sup>7</sup>

saved each year if we  
reduce average salt intake  
by 1g<sup>6</sup>

## Where does salt come from?



### Industry adds salt to provide:

- taste
- texture
- preservative

Salt can be found in a wide range of foods. Some are almost always high in salt, such as:

- bacon
- ham
- cheddar and other hard cheeses

In other foods, salt levels vary a lot, such as in:

- bread (freshly made, sliced, crumpets, bagels)
- breakfast cereals
- soup and pasta sauces





## How to cut down on salt: 3 top tips



### 1

When food shopping, check the label and choose the food that's lower in salt. Look at the figure for salt per 100g (see example food label below):

- High is more than 1.5g salt per 100g. May be colour-coded red.
- Low is 0.3g salt or less per 100g. May be colour-coded green.
- Medium is between 0.3g and 1.5g salt per 100g. May be colour-coded amber.

Each serving contains:				
ENERGY	FAT	SATURATES	SUGARS	SALT
2551kJ 605kcal	18.7g	4.4g	8.9g	0.3g
30%	MED 28%	LOW 22%	LOW 10%	LOW 5%
% of an adult's reference intake.				
Typical values per 100g: Energy 479kJ/114kcal				

### 2

Eat foods high in salt less often and in smaller amounts.

Go easy on condiments and sauces such as ketchup, mustard, soy sauce and pickles as they are high in salt.



### 3

Cook with less salt.

- When seasoning, use black pepper, fresh herbs and spices instead.
- Make your own stock and gravy instead of using cubes or granules.
- Make sauces with fresh ingredients such as ripe tomatoes and garlic.

#### Sources

- 1 National Diet and Nutrition Survey: Assessment of Dietary Sodium Levels Among Adults (aged 19-64) in England, 2011.
- 2 Salt and Health, 2003. Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition. Maximum salt target for adults is 6g. Recommended targets for children range from <1g to 6g depending on age.
- 3 Salt intake calculation based on mid-2010 Population Estimates: United Kingdom: estimated resident population by single year of age and sex, data from the Office for National Statistics.
- 4 Scarborough, P et al. Coronary Heart Disease Statistics, 2010. British Heart Foundation.
- 5 Health Survey for England 2012. Health and Social Care Information Centre.
- 6 Department of Health.
- 7 Scarborough, P et al. Coronary Heart Disease Statistics, 2010. British Heart Foundation.
- 8 Data from Why 6g? A summary of the scientific evidence of the salt intake target. © Medical Research Council.

**To convert salt  
to sodium  
divide by 2.5**

**To convert  
sodium to salt  
multiply by 2.5**

*For example:*

**1g salt = 0.4g  
sodium**

**0.8g sodium = 2g  
salt**

Salt is sodium chloride and as food labels often list both salt and sodium content, it can be confusing.





## Notes

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[www.activ8fitnessclubs.co.uk](http://www.activ8fitnessclubs.co.uk)

