

FOOD LABELS

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.

What The Colours Mean:

Red means the product is high in a nutrient and you should try to cut down, eat less often or eat smaller amounts.

Amber means medium. If a food contains mostly amber, you can eat it most of the time.

Green means low. The more green lights a label displays, the healthier the food is.

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



Each burger contains:

ENERGY	FAT	SATURATES	SUGARS	SALT
924KJ 220kcal 11%	13g MED 19%	5.9g HIGH 30%	0.8g LOW <1%	0.7g MED 12%

% of an adults reference intake.
Typical values per 100g: Energy 966kJ/ 230kcal

Each serving (150g) contains

Energy	Fat	Saturates	Sugars	Salt
1046kJ 250kcal 13%	3.0g LOW 4%	1.3g LOW 7%	34g HIGH 38%	0.9g MED 15%

of an adult's reference intake
Typical values (as sold) per 100g: 697kJ/ 167kcal

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 Light, 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 out more on food labelling please visit

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/how-to-read-food-labels/>



	Sugars	Fat	Saturates	Salt
What is High per 100g	Over 15g	Over 20g	Over 5g	Over 1.5g
What is Medium per 100g	Between 5g and 15g	Between 3g and 20g	Between 1.5g and 5g	Between 0.3g and 1.5g
What is Low per 100g	5g and below	3g and below	1.5g and below	0.3g and below

The Nutrition Panel Explained

Nutrition labels can help you choose between products and track the amount of foods you're eating that are high in fat, salt and added sugars.

Nutrition information will appear on the food label, alongside other information including:

1. Name of the food
2. Weight of the food
3. Ingredients, listed in order of quantity used
4. Nutrition information

Nutrition information is legally required on all packaging larger than 10cm², with exemptions for some food items. This information is usually shown on the back or side of the product's packaging as a table and may also appear on the front of the package (e.g. as traffic lights).

Common allergens will be shown on the ingredients list in bold.

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.

- 1. Chicken & Vegetable Broth**
- 2. 600g e**
- 3. Ingredients**
Water, Carrot (10%), Onion, Chicken (6%), Potato (5%), Spinach (2%), Peas (2%), Cabbage (2%), **Celery** (2%), Chicken stock (chicken skin, water, chicken extract, chicken, sugar, salt, cornflour, chicken fat, onion concentrate), Potato starch, Pearl **barley**, Rapeseed oil, Garlic purée, Salt, Black pepper.
- ! ALLERGY ADVICE**
For allergens, including cereals containing gluten, see ingredients in bold.
- ! Warning**
Although every care has been taken to remove bones, some may remain.
- 4. Nutrition**

Typical values (as consumed)	per 100g	per 1/2 pot (300g)	%RI	your RI*
Energy	167kJ	501kJ		8400kJ
	40kcal	119kcal	6%	2000kcal
Fat	1.2g	3.6g	5%	70g
of which saturates	0.2g	0.6g	3%	20g
Carbohydrate	4.2g	12.6g		
of which sugars	1.2g	3.6g	4%	90g
Fibre	1.1g	3.3g		
Protein	2.5g	7.5g		
Salt	0.5g	1.5g	25%	6g

*Reference intake of an average adult (8400kJ/2000kcal) (RI). Contains 2 portions.

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.

Carbohydrates

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, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated. 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.

Monounsaturated and Polyunsaturated

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 must 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 labelling 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

Helpful Links

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/how-to-read-food-labels/>

<https://www.nutrition.org.uk/creating-a-healthy-diet/food-labelling/#:~:text=Looking%20at%20the%20nutrition%20information,also%20shown%20on%20the%20label.>