

Understanding label reading

Reading and understanding food labels is an important skill. It enables you to compare products to choose the healthiest choice for you and your whanau.

What important information is on a food label?

Your favourite breakfast cereal		
Nutrition Information Panel		
Servings per pack: 15		
Serving size: 30g		
	Per serve	Per 100g
Energy	444kJ	1480kJ
Protein	3.6g	12g
Fat	0.4g	1.3g
- Saturated	0.1g	0.3g
Carbohydrates	20g	67g
- Sugars	0.8g	2.8g
Dietary fibre	3.3g	11g
Sodium	84mg	280mg
Ingredients	Whole Grain Wheat (97%), Sugar, Salt, Barley Malt Extract, Vitamins (Niacin, Thiamine, Riboflavin, Folate), Mineral (Iron).	

Energy: Energy is another word for calorie or kilojoule. The more energy you eat, the more you need to burn off (exercise). Otherwise, it is stored as fat in the body.

Fat: Foods high in fat will be high in energy, which can lead to weight gain if not used by the body (exercise).

Carbohydrates: Carbohydrates are broken down into glucose and are an important source of fuel for your muscles and brain.

Sugars: Sugars are part of the total carbohydrates in food. A small amount of sugar is acceptable, but it is best to limit these. Especially if you are a diabetic.

Fibre: Fibre is important for many aspects of health. It helps control your appetite by making you feel full and controls blood sugar levels.

Sodium: This is salt. It is important to choose foods low in sodium/salt, especially if you have high blood pressure.

Ingredients are always listed from largest amount to smallest amount—something to keep in mind!

How do I read a food label to make a healthy choice?

Use the following steps to compare products to find the healthiest choice. Try it the next time you are at the supermarket with products like cereal, crackers, yoghurt and bread. Focus on one product each week.

Step 1: Always refer to the **per 100g** column

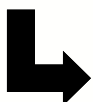
Step 2: Is there less than **10g total fat**?

Step 3: Is there less than **10g sugar**?*

* cereals with dried fruit can have less than 25g sugar per 100g.

Step 4: Is there more than **6g of fibre**?

Step 5: Is there less than **400mg of sodium**?



Yes? - you have chosen a healthy product.

No? - See if you can find a better choice. Otherwise, consider this a “sometimes” food.

Practice with the food label pictured above.

Fill in the correct numbers.

	Per 100g
Total fat	
Sugar	
Fibre	
Sodium	
Good choice?	