FoodLabels

Making sense of the small print

It is a legal requirement for all food to display a nutrition information panel. This can be used to get an indication of what is in the food you are eating or as a tool to compare two similar products.

Do you know what you are looking for when reading labels?

Different foods will produce very different nutrition panels, so naturally they will not all be the same and you will have to look for different things specific to the food type you are looking at. Selected product labels may give information on additional nutrients which can be taken into considerations when assessing a new product. Know what you are looking for to help determine if the product can be included in a balanced diet.

When reading a nutrition information panel there are things to look out for that generally indicates a healthy product, nutrition information panels have to include the following information and generally look like this:

Check how many serves per product as it may be more than you think and lead to over consumption

Aim for less than half of the total carbohydrates

NUTRITION INFORMATION
SERVES PER PACKAGE 19
SERVE SIZE – 84g (2 slices)

	Per serve (84g)	**Per 100g**
Energy	991kJ (236cal)	1180g
Protein	9.2g	11.0g
Fat, total	4.4g	5.2g
- saturated fat	0.5g	0.6g
Carbohydrates	37.6g	44.8g
- sugars	2.4g	2.8g
Sodium	361mg	430mg

Aim for less than 1800kJ per 100g

Aim for less than 10g per 100g

Aim for less than 5g per 100g

Per 100g

Best used for comparing products of a similar nature to determine the **better** product to choose.

The fat per 100g on the label above is 5.2g – you may not consume 100g but if you compare it to a product that has 10.9g fat/100g than this product is going to be a better choice because its lowER in fat.

Per Serve

Best used to get an idea of what you will be consuming in each serve rather than as a comparison with other products as they may have quite different serving sizes. It is important to check how big the serve size is and whether it is an accurate indication of what you are eating.

The serve size on the label above is 2 slices – if you have 4 slices you will be getting more than just 991kJ even if you have it 'at one serve'

Ingredient list

Ingredients are listed in descending order from most to least in the product. All ingredients included have to be listed; with detail including the ingredients of ingredients or the percentage of specific ingredients.

Nutrition claims

Some labels include claims for a certain nutrient, like 'High in fibre or calcium,' this then has to be included in the nutrition information panel. Some of the most common claims are for low fat or low sugar.

Light – this generally refers to the fat content of products, for it to carry this term it must have less than 3g per 100g of food. In the special case of olive oil, light refers to the colour not the fat content.

Reduced… – this mean there is less of an ingredient than the original product, this is generally less fat or sodium, it may not always mean that it has a small amount, just less.

Diet – most diet products have low fat and reduced sugar or sugar replaced with an artificial sweetener