



Read the Label

Now It's the Law

In 1990, the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act was signed into law. This law requires that all processed foods carry a "Nutrition Facts" label and ingredient list. It also sets strict government definitions for certain terms used and health claims made on labels. These regulations have helped deter misleading advertising and have made food labels more useful sources of information.

Nutrition Facts

The Nutrition Facts label must provide information on the following:

- Standard serving size
- Number of servings per container
- Number of calories per serving
- Number of calories derived from total fat per serving
- Total amount of fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, total carbohydrates, dietary fiber, sugars, and protein
- Total amount of certain vitamins and minerals (vitamins A and C, iron, and calcium)
- Percentage of the daily value for a person requiring 2000 calories per day.

Ingredient List

Ingredient information is required on all manufactured food products, unless these products conform to standard recipes. Ingredients are listed in order of decreasing weight, therefore, the first ingredient listed is the most prominent.

Light, Low-fat, and Cholesterol-free: What Do These Words Really Mean?

<u>Label Claim</u>	<u>Definition*</u>
Calorie-free	Less than 5 calories
Low Calorie	40 calories or less
Light or Lite	1/3 fewer calories or 50% less fat than regular version
Light in Sodium	50% less sodium
Fat-free	Less than 1/2 gram of fat
Low-fat	3 grams or less of fat *per serving

(Continued)



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<u>Label Claim</u>	<u>Definition*</u>
Cholesterol-free	Less than 2 mg. cholesterol and 2 grams or less of saturated fat
Low Cholesterol	20 mg or less of cholesterol and 2 grams or less of saturated fat
Sodium-free	Less than 5 mg of sodium
Very Low Sodium	35 mg or less of sodium
Low Sodium	140 milligrams or less of sodium
High Fiber	5 grams or more of fiber <i>*per serving</i>

Can a Food Help Reduce the Risk for Heart Disease, Cancer, and Osteoporosis?

Many food packages now carry health claims. A health claim is a label statement that describes the relationship between a nutrient and a disease or health-related condition. A food must meet certain nutrient levels to make a health claim. Some labels also carry "Qualified Health Claims," because the scientific evidence is not as well established.

Some Examples of Currently Approved Health Claims

These nutrient/disease relationships include:

<u>A Diet...</u>	<u>And...</u>
• High in calcium	Osteoporosis
• Which replaces saturated fat with mono-unsaturated fat*	Heart Disease
• High in fiber-containing whole grain products	Cancer and Heart Disease
• High in fruits and vegetables	Cancer and Heart Disease
• High in nuts*	Heart Disease
• High in Omega-3 fatty acids*	Heart Disease
• Low in fat	Cancer
• Low in saturated fat and cholesterol	Heart Disease
• Low in sodium	High Blood Pressure
• High in B Vitamins*	Vascular Disease
• High in Antioxidant Vitamins*	Cancer
• High in soy protein	Heart Disease
• High in folic acid	Neural Tube Birth Defects
• High in soluble fiber from oats and psyllium	Heart Disease
• Consisting of sugar alcohols in place of sugar	Dental Cavities

**Qualified Health Claims*

To find out more about how to read labels, please visit www.snac.ucla.edu.