



Child Health Improvement Programme

Food Labelling

session objectives

In this session we will be covering the following:

- 1) How to read food labels
- 2) Looking out for sugar and fat in our products
- 3) Marketing and cost of products
- 4) Food label practice
- 5) Home Tasks

how to read food labels

If you can understand the information on food labels, it will help you to make healthier food choices when shopping for food. Food labels give the details of the ingredients and the nutritional values of the product.

The higher up the list an ingredient appears the more of it there is in the product.

Nutritional information

Nutritional labels provide information on how much protein, fat, fibre, salt and carbohydrate there is in food. It also tends to show you how many calories there are per 100g and per portion of the product.

Nutrition				
Typical values	100g contains	Each slice (typically 44g) contains	% RI*	RI* for an average adult
Energy	985kJ 235kcal	435kJ 105kcal	5%	8400kJ 2000kcal
Fat	1.5g	0.7g	1%	70g
of which saturates	0.3g	0.1g	1%	20g
Carbohydrate	45.5g	20.0g		
of which sugars	3.8g	1.7g	2%	90g
Fibre	2.8g	1.2g		
Protein	7.7g	3.4g		
Salt	1.0g	0.4g	7%	6g

This pack contains 16 servings
*Reference intake of an average adult (8400kJ / 2000kcal)

There are usually 2 columns on a nutrition food label, one giving values per serving of the product and one giving values per 100g of the product. The Traffic light guide produced by the foods standards agency shows you what is low, medium and high.

	FAT	SATURATES	SUGARS	SALT
LOW Healthier choice	3g or less	1.5g or less	5g or less	0.3g or less
MEDIUM OK most of the time	3.1g - 17.5g	1.6g - 5g	5.1g - 22.5g	0.31g - 1.5g
HIGH Just occasionally	More than 17.5g	More than 5g	More than 22.5g	More than 1.5g

All measures per 100g/ml

Source: British Heart Foundation

looking out for sugar and fat

- Try to reduce the fat in your family's diet, especially saturated fat.
- Look at the sugar content – words ending in 'ose' usually indicate sugars e.g. sucrose, glucose, fructose, dextrose. Honey and syrup are also types of sugar.
- Low fat – must contain less than 3g or less of fat. Be careful as the product could contain high amounts of sugar.

Warning!!

Terms such as 'light, lite or reduced fat' draw you in to buy their products. These items are usually better than their original product, however, may still contain high levels of fat. It does not mean they are low in fat, just reduced from the original product.

- You can also look at salt content as too much salt can be bad for your health and lead to high blood pressure. Salt is sometimes listed as Sodium. 1g of Sodium is the same as 2.5g of Salt.

marketing and cost

Remember the price of a product does not necessarily determine how healthy a product is. Try to always make your own judgement on a product by checking the label. You may find that sometimes the cheaper brands will contain exactly the same ingredients as a more expensive brand but you will need to check for yourself. The price may be cheaper because they have spent less money on the fancy packaging.

food label practice

When reading food labels we always want to check the back or side of the packet and look for the 100g column. All products have to have 100g or 100ml on them so it's an easy way to compare similar products to see what one is the healthiest.

always check the
per 100g column

Typical Values	100g contains	Half of a Pizza 237g contains
Energy	990KJ 235kcal	2345KJ 560kcal
Protein	11.9g	28.2g
Carbohydrate	28.7g	67.9g
Of which sugars	3.3g	7.7g
Fat	8.1g	19.1g
Of which saturates	5.1g	10.2g
Mono-unsaturates	2.6g	6.9g
Polyunsaturates	0.4g	0.9g
Fibre	2.0g	4.8g
Sodium	0.5g	1.1g
Salt equivalent	1.2g	2.8g

'of which sugars' is where you check the sugars

the total fat column

the 'saturated fat' column

the colours here represent whether the column is low, medium or high

Please note that when checking the back or side of the packet, the colours are not always shown. You can use your 'food label decoder' to cross reference what is on the food label.

Tips for checking labels

- Start by checking the labels that are in your cupboards at home
- Try to find 1-2 healthier products each time you go shopping
- Once you are familiar with the healthier products you will not have to check these again for a while
- Always try to cook from fresh food so you know exactly what is contained in the food you are eating

activity

Using the table below, pick 5 food labels and write down how much sugar, fat and saturated fat is in the product.

Food	Sugar	Fat	Saturated Fat
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

What surprised you when looking at the food labels?

home tasks

Your home tasks for this week are:

- Parent's task - set your family a SMART goal using the information you have gained on food labelling
- Children's task - find three labels and highlight in your diary whether they fall into the low, medium or high for both fat and sugar