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# Label-mates

New nutrition labels aim to help you make clearer food choices

by ANA GASCON IVEY

## COSTCO CONNECTION

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Easily overlooked amidst everything that occurred in 2020, the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Nutrition Facts labels got an update. Why, and what does that mean for you?

### What's new

The new Nutrition Facts label must list total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, sodium, total carbohydrate, dietary fiber, total sugars, added sugars, protein, and certain vitamins and minerals. The actual amount and the percentages of daily values of vitamin D, calcium, iron and potassium must be listed (other vitamins and minerals may be listed voluntarily).

Labels no longer reflect portion sizes based on what Americans *should* eat or drink, but instead on what they actually consume. For instance, the serving size

for soda went from 8 ounces to 12 ounces and a serving of yogurt went from 8 ounces to 6 ounces.

Additional changes include:

- Serving sizes and calories printed in a larger, bold font.
- Dual columns (on some products) with the nutrition information for a single serving in one column and for the entire package in the other column.
- Updated daily values.
- Nutrient information for vitamin D, potassium and added sugars.
- No more calories from fat (see "The skinny on fats").

### Why the updates?

The FDA says the point is to promote awareness, increase usage of nutritional information and guidelines, and help consumers make healthier choices by:

- Choosing items that are high in

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
<b>Serving size</b>	<b>2/3 cup (55g)</b>
<b>Amount per serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>230</b>
<b>% Daily Value*</b>	
<b>Total Fat</b> 8g	<b>10%</b>
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 160mg	<b>7%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 37g	<b>13%</b>
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	20%
<b>Protein</b> 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 240mg	6%

\* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Servings in larger, bolder type

Serving size updated

Calories in larger type

Daily Values updated

Added Sugars included

Some nutrient requirements changed

New footnote added

fiber, vitamins and minerals, and lower in saturated fat, trans fat, sodium and added sugars.

- Comparing serving sizes on items to make sure you're looking at nutrition facts for similar portions.
- Checking the calories on nutrition labels and adjusting your intake based on your health care provider's advice.
- Better understanding of the percentages of daily values.

### The research behind the change

Science played a big role in the new label. For example, according to the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine's *Dietary Reference Intakes for Sodium and Potassium* report, getting more potassium may lower blood pressure. Vitamin D helps your body absorb calcium and is critical for bone health.

"Vitamin D and potassium are now

required because they are nutrients Americans don't always get enough of," says Susan Mayne, director of the FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition. "Inadequate amounts of vitamin D and potassium are associated with an increased risk of chronic disease."

The FDA also dropped nutrients from the new label. It now no longer requires vitamins A and C to be listed, because Americans are rarely deficient in these.

And the "added sugars" entry is on the new label because, based on studies, food choices based on added sugars could prevent over 350,000 cases of heart disease and close to 600,000 cases of diabetes over 20 years.

Use the Nutrition Facts label to make the rest of 2021 (and beyond) your year for living healthily. ■

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## UNDERSTANDING DAILY VALUES

The FDA recommends Americans get the daily values (DV) of nutrients to achieve optimal health. The percentage of daily values is listed on Nutrition Facts labels, but they can be hard to interpret. Here's an easy way to use them.

In a nutshell, if a food serving has 5% or less of the DV of a nutrient, it's considered low in that nutrient. If a food serving has 20% or more of the DV of a nutrient, it's considered high in that nutrient.

On Nutrition Facts labels, look for the column marked "% Daily Value." If you want to get more vitamin D from your diet, reach for foods with 20% or more of the recommended DV. If, on the other hand, you want to consume less sodium, find foods with 5% or less of the recommended DV.—AGI

## The skinny on fats

Why are fat calories missing from the new label? Science shows that the type of fat is more important than the

amount of fat. Switching to good fats may help lower your blood pressure and prevent heart disease. Go for foods high in monounsaturated fats such as olive oil, avocados,

almonds and pecans. Get polyunsaturated fats from walnuts, pumpkin seeds and fatty fish such as tuna and salmon. Your heart will thank you.—AGI