



# Healthy Eating with Diabetes: Label Reading

## USDA Food Label

### Nutrition Facts

4 servings per container  
**Serving size 1 1/2 cup (208g)**

Amount per serving  
**Calories 240**

**% Daily Value\***

<b>Total Fat</b> 4g	<b>5%</b>
Saturated Fat 1.5g	<b>8%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 5mg	<b>2%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 430mg	<b>19%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 46g	<b>17%</b>
Dietary Fiber 7g	<b>25%</b>
Total Sugars 4g	
Includes 2g Added Sugars	<b>4%</b>

**Protein** 11g

Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 6mg	35%
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.

Label reading is a helpful tool to assist you in making informed and healthy food choices to manage your blood sugars. While it may be tempting to look at *everything*, focus on the information that matters.

**Serving Size.** Start by looking at the serving size. The information on the label is based on the serving size listed. Consuming more means you will intake more calories, carbohydrates, and nutrients than the amounts listed on the label.

**Servings per Container.** This refers to the number of servings available in a single package. Knowing the servings per container is essential for estimating the nutritional content if you consume the entire package.

**Percent Daily Value (%DV).** The %DV for each nutrient is found in the right column. These tell you what percent of each nutrient the food provides if you were on a 2,000 calorie diet. In general, aim for less than 5% for nutrients you want to limit and more than 20% for nutrients you want to get more off.

**Total Carbohydrates.** Total carbohydrates includes all three types of carbohydrates — sugar, starch, and fiber. When counting carbohydrates, use the *total number* of grams. No need to subtract fiber from total carbohydrate, often referred to as *net carb counting*.

**Added Sugar.** A type of carbohydrate, some sugars are naturally occurring, like lactose in milk, while others are added during the manufacturing process to improve taste. Look for products with less than 5% of the %DV to ensure you're selecting a low-sugar option.

**Fiber.** Fiber helps slow digestion and absorption of carbohydrates to prevent rapid spikes in blood sugars after meals. Look for foods with more than 20% of the %DV to ensure you're selecting a high-fiber option. Most adults need 25-30 grams of fiber per day.

**Saturated Fat.** Considered an “unhealthy fat,” saturated fat is associated with increased blood cholesterol and risk for heart disease, especially for those living with diabetes. A low-saturated fat food should <1 gram per serving. Aim for foods that are free of trans-fats.

**Sodium.** Sodium is a food additive derived from table salt, known for increasing blood pressure and risk for heart disease. Because high-sodium foods do not always taste salty, like bread or salad dressing, it's best to check the food label to help you select a low-sodium option. Aim for less than 150 mg per serving, for a total of less than 2300 mg per day of added sodium.

Making Sense of Food Labels | ADA.  
<https://diabetes.org/healthy-living/recipes-nutrition/reading-food-labels/making-sense-food-labels>. Accessed 25 July 2023.

Avenue, 677 Huntington, et al. "Carbohydrates." The Nutrition Source, 18 Sept. 2012, <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/carbohydrates/>.