

Dear *Walk Across Texas* Participant,

Included with this letter is the fourth topic of the Weight Management Series called “Focus on the Food Label.” The goal of this topic is to use the information on the food label to aid in weight management.

To help you reach this goal, look for key points while reading “Focus on the Food Label.”

- The food label is one of the best tools for weight management.
- Many packaged products have several servings.
- The amounts listed are for one serving only, not for the entire package.
- The Nutrient List shows the total amount of nutrients in the food per serving.
- Daily values tell you if a food is high or low in fat, fiber, and other nutrients.

Happy Walking!

Sincerely,

Weight Management Series — Health Break 4

Focus on the Food Label

Goal:

To use the information on the food label to aid in weight management

Objectives:

Participants will:

- Find the serving size and the number of servings per package.
- Check for other nutrients.
- Watch for added sugars.
- Look at % Daily Values.

Key Teaching Points:

- The food label is one of the best tools for weight management.
- Many packaged products have several servings.
- The amounts listed are for one serving only, not for the entire package.
- The Nutrient List shows the total amount of nutrients in the food per serving.
- Low fat foods often have a high sugar content.
- Daily values tell you if a food is high or low in fat, fiber, and other nutrients.

Activities:

- Have several labels from different food products including some that are from low or reduced fat items. Pass them out to the participants. Have participants look for the serving size, number of servings per package, nutrients, and sugar as well as the % Daily values for fat and fiber.
- Let the participants complete *Getting to Know Food Labels* (you may prefer to do this as a group) using food labels. Go over the questions with the participants when they have finished answering the questions.

Evaluation

- Yes No 1. The food label is one of the best tools for weight management.
- Yes No 2. The serving size and number of servings are on the food label.
- Yes No 3. The food label tells you the amount of nutrients, such as sodium (salt), present in each serving.
- Yes No 4. Check low fat and fat free foods for added sugar (carbohydrates).
- Yes No 5. % Daily Values tells you if a food is high or low in fat and fiber.

Answers: 1. Yes; 2. Yes; 3. Yes; 4. Yes; 5. Yes

Focus on the Food Label

One of the best tools in weight management is the food label on packaged products called “Nutrition Facts.” The food label tells the serving size, the number of servings per container, the amount of calories per serving, the calories from fat, the daily values, and much more.

Things to look for when reading food labels are:

- **Know the serving size.** The Calories, Calories from Fat, Nutrient List, and Daily Values are listed for one serving only. If the package has two servings and you eat the entire package, then you will be getting two times everything listed on the label. To help you make food choice comparisons, the serving size is about the same for similar foods such as cookies.
- **Check the Nutrient List.** The list tells you the total amount of fat, cholesterol, sodium (salt), carbohydrates, and protein in each serving.
- **Watch for added sugar.** When a package states on the front that it is “low fat” or “fat free,” check the label for sugar and calorie content. The food may still be high in calories because of added sugars.
- **Look at % Daily Values.** Daily Values tell you if a food is high or low in fat, fiber, and other nutrients. Choose foods low in fat and high in fiber when possible. Low fat is 5 percent or less of the daily value for fat.

Getting to Know Food Labels

Complete the questions. Use the enclosed Nutrition Facts label. Answers are below.

1. How many servings are in the package? _____
2. What is the serving size? _____
3. How many calories per serving? _____
4. If you eat the entire package, how many calories from fat would you have eaten? _____
5. Is this a “low fat” food? _____
6. How much sodium (salt) is in the product per serving? _____
7. Does this product have calcium? _____
8. What is the total sugar (carbohydrate) content? _____

Answers:

1. Two; 2. 1 cup or 228 g; 3. 90; 4. 60; 5. Yes; 6. 300 mg; 7. Yes; 8. 13 g

Food Labels

Nutrition Facts Title

The label title "Nutrition Facts" signals the label.

Serving Size

Similar food products now have similar serving sizes. This makes it easier to compare foods. Serving sizes are based on amounts people actually eat.

Nutrition List

Some label information may be new to you. The new nutrient list covers these most important to your health. You may have seen this information on some old labels, but it is now required.

Vitamins and Minerals

Only two vitamins, A and C, and two minerals, calcium and iron, are required on the food label. A food company can voluntarily list other vitamins and minerals in the food.

Label Numbers

Numbers on the nutrition label may be rounded for labeling.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)	
Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 90	Calories from Fat 30
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 3g	5%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 300mg	13%
Total Carbohydrate 13g	4%
Dietary Fiber 3g	12%
Sugars 3g	
Protein 3g	
Vitamin A 80%	• Vitamin C 60%
Calcium 4%	• Iron 4%
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:	
	Calories: 2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g 80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg 2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g
Calories per gram:	
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4	

% Daily Value

% Daily Value shows how a food fits into a 2,000 calorie reference diet.

You can use % Daily Value to compare foods and see how the amount of a nutrient in a serving of food fits in a 2,000 calorie reference diet.

Daily Values Footnote

Daily Values are the new label reference numbers. These numbers are set by the government and are based on current nutrition recommendations.

Some labels list the daily values for a daily diet of 2,000 and 2,500 calories. Your own nutrient needs may be less than or more than the Daily Values on the label.

Calories Per Gram Footnote

Some labels tell the approximate number of calories in a gram of fat, carbohydrate, and protein.