

Read the Label When Choosing Snacks

Family Handout

Any time is a good time to talk about nutrition and healthy eating. More and more kids are spending time alone after school – and you can help them to learn Read the Label so that they can make good choices when they are choosing their own snacks.

1. Ask your kid(s) to select a bag of **cereal, chips, cookies, crackers or pretzels**. Have them measure out how much they would usually eat for a snack into a bowl. (Make sure they don't peek at the label.)
2. Next, have them check the serving size on the Nutrition Facts Label and measure out a "serving" according to the Nutrition Facts Label into another bowl.
3. Together, **compare the two portions**. Discuss how the two amounts differ. Are they surprised to see what an actual serving size for this snack is?
4. Figure out the calories of what they typically eats for a snack. Remind them that if they are eating two servings, they will need to **double the calories** per serving to calculate how many calories they are actually eating.



Tasty Tips for Snacks

- Encourage portion control for snacking, and work with your children to measure out the servings for favorite snacks. The snacks can then be portioned out into single servings according to the amount listed as a "serving size" on the nutrition label. Try using individual, snack-size plastic zipper bags.
- Some healthy, filling snack choices are:
 - Baked chips
 - Trail mixes with nuts
 - Dried fruits
 - Low-fat yogurt and low-fat cheeses
- When considering calories, keep this easy range in mind: 100 is moderate and 400 is high.

Recap Questions:

1. What did you like the best about this activity?
2. What did your child say about this activity?
3. What do you think your child learned, if anything?

Nutrition Facts
Read the Label



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Read the Label When Packing Lunch

Family Handout

Lunchtime is a great time to Read the Label. Remind your children to look for the Nutrition Facts Label in the cafeteria line... and make it a family habit when packing lunches.



1. Challenge your children to create a 600 calorie lunch to take to school or enjoy at home! Siblings can see whose lunch choices add up to the best choices. Remind them to tally all sandwich ingredients, including condiments!

Ingredient/Item	Calories
Total	

Tips for Building Tasty, Healthful Lunches

- For foods that come with more than **one serving** per package, have your children measure out one serving.
- Sandwiches can vary in shape and size – so don't limit lunches to traditional breads. Try whole grain tortillas, pitas, and even whole grain English muffins.
 - Fiber is a **nutrient to get more of**, and can be found in lots of whole grain breads. Have your children **Read the Label** on different types of breads to see how many grams of fiber each contains.
- Spreads and dressing count in the overall calorie tally. **Read the Label** on the spreads and dressing that your family uses on sandwiches. You and your children may be in for a surprise!
 - Try mustard or hummus instead of mayonnaise.
- Fill your sandwich with lots of “extras” – but make the extras count. Have kids try to pack lunches that include the nutrients to get more of – fiber, Vitamin A and C – and encourage your family to try some of these tasty add-ins to give a sandwich a whole new personality!
 - Crunchy lettuce
 - Thin slices of cucumbers
 - Sliced tomato
 - Chopped red pepper
- Nutrition bars and granola bars are easy and “packable” for a delicious snack, but don't forget to **Read the Label** on these lunchbox additions. Many of these bars are more like a cookie than a health bar. Choose one that is close to 100 calories and is low in nutrients to get less of, like sugars and saturated fat.

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Read the Label To “Shake Down” Sodium

Family Handout

Most Americans eat too much salt. Salt contains sodium and too much sodium can raise blood pressure — which can have serious health consequences if not treated.

But did you know that the salt shaker is *not* the main cause of too much sodium in the diet? In fact, over 75% of dietary sodium comes from eating packaged and restaurant foods!

Reducing sodium is a great goal for all family members. Remind your kids to Read the Label for sodium, especially when choosing snacks and prepared foods.

1. Challenge your children to find three of their favorite afterschool snacks in the cupboard. Have them compare the %DV of sodium on each one, and decide which would be the more healthful choice.

TIP: 5%DV (120 mg) or less of sodium per serving is low, and 20%DV (480 mg) or more of sodium per serving is high.



Food Item	Rank (lowest to highest)	
	%DV of Sodium	mg of Sodium
1.		
2.		
3.		

Snack-time Tips for Reducing Sodium Intake

- **Add Flavor Without Adding Sodium.** Try rosemary, oregano, basil, curry powder, cayenne pepper, ginger, fresh garlic or garlic powder, black or red pepper, vinegar or lemon juice, and no-salt seasoning blends.
- **Watch your veggies.** Buy fresh, frozen (without sauce), or low sodium or no-salt-added canned vegetables.
- **Check the cheese.** Choose fat-free or low-fat cheeses in place of processed cheese products and spreads.
- **Go for fresh sandwich ingredients when you can.** Choose fresh or frozen (not processed) poultry, pork and lean meat rather than canned, smoked or processed meats (like luncheon meat, sausage and corned beef).
- **“Unsalt” your snacks.** Choose unsalted nuts and seeds, and snack products – such as chips and pretzels – that are marked “low sodium” or “no-salt-added.” Or, have a carrot or celery stick instead!
- **Consider your condiments.** Choose lite or reduced sodium soy sauce and no-salt-added ketchup, oil and vinegar rather than bottled salad dressings, and use a small amount of seasoning from flavoring packets instead of the entire packet.
- **Speak up at restaurants.** Ask to see the nutrition information in restaurants and choose a lower-sodium option. Ask for your meal to be prepared without salt and request that sauces and salad dressings be served “on the side,” then use less of them. You can also reduce your portion size – less food means less sodium! For example, ask the server to put half of your meal in a take out container before it comes to your table ... or, split an entrée with a friend!

Recap Questions:

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Remember: Read the Label to find the lower-sodium option when choosing snacks!

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Read the Label At The Supermarket

Family Handout

One of the best ways to get kids interested in what's in their food is to let them participate in the decision-making process. Take them grocery shopping! It's a great chance for them to compare and contrast their favorite foods and "get their food facts first."

1. Take your child to the cereal aisle at your favorite supermarket.

2. Have him/her **Read the Label** to find a cereal that has low sugar and high fiber:

a. Which cereal has the fewest grams of sugar?

Name:

Grams of Sugar:

b. Which cereal has the highest amount of fiber?
(Remember...5% DV is low and 20% DV is high).

Name:

%DV of Fiber:

3. When you return home, have him/her compare these products to the cereal(s) you currently have at home.

a. Lowest Grams of Sugar in cereal at home:

b. Highest %DV of Fiber in cereal at home:



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