



WHAT'S BEHIND THE LABEL?

A NAVY NUTRITION GUIDE TO FOOD LABELS

Knowing what to eat can be confusing. The information on the food label only helps when you know what you are looking for. Become food label savvy by following these simple strategies.

INGREDIENTS: Reading the ingredient list is one way to ensure you are getting what you want when it comes to food and beverages. Lots of ingredients you cannot pronounce may actually mean more chemicals made in a lab rather than actual food. High quality ingredients taste good without a lot of sugar, fat and salt trying to encourage you to eat more than you need.

- ✓ Choose the least processed foods and foods with the fewest ingredients.

PORTIONS: Portions on packages are set by manufacturers and are not standardized. Restaurant portions can exceed recommended amounts by up to ten times!

- ✓ Use your plate as your guide. Fill half your plate with low calorie dense foods like fruit and vegetables, one quarter with wholesome grains and the final quarter with lean protein. It is okay to speak up and get exactly what you want in a restaurant.

SODIUM: Compare different brands and choose ones with lower sodium levels. High sodium foods tend to be lower in quality. Demand the best and seek ways to actively decrease.

- ✓ Keep sodium levels at around 500 mg per meal or a total of 2400 mg, or 1500 mg for those over 50 or with high blood pressure.

ADDED SUGAR: Natural sugar found in fruit and milk is part of a healthful diet. Other added sugar is just empty calories. You know it is in cake and candy, but how about yogurt, tomato sauce and so-called healthy cereals? Four grams of sugar is the equivalent to 1 teaspoon. Find products with less added sugar and add to your taste.

- ✓ Aim for no more than no more than 10% of total calories from empty calories, or no more than 7 teaspoons per day for women and 9 teaspoons for men.

SOLID FAT: Solid fat is found in a lot of processed foods fried food, chips and baked goods.

- ✓ Focus on plant-based fats like olive oil, nuts and avocado. Use only the amount needed to make food taste good. Cooking more at home makes this easy. An onion takes about 2 teaspoons of oil to cook. Glug, glug the oil in and you will find yourself using up to a ¼ cup or more!

Be food savvy. Read label ingredients. Make informed choices. Enjoy fresh food!