

# NUTRITION SNACKS HOW TO READ A FOOD LABEL

Some of the key components on a food label and things to look out for when choosing products to buy are the nutrition information panel, ingredients list, and in some cases product claims.

## NUTRITION INFORMATION PANEL

Legally, all nutrition information panels must include the energy content, in kilojoules, protein, total fat, saturated fat, total carbohydrate, sugar and sodium (salt). Some labels will also contain other nutrients such as fibre or calcium, and these extra nutrients must be included if a claim is made about them on the label.

A nutrition information panel will usually give you amounts per serve and per 100g. If you're comparing two or more similar products look at the per 100g column as serving sizes between products can differ. When comparing products look for products that are lower in kilojoules, saturated fat, sugar and sodium.

If you're wanting an idea of how much of a nutrient, for example how many kilojoules, you will consume if you chose the product, look at the 'per serve' column, but be mindful that the recommended serve size may not be the amount you choose to have. For example, you might have an entire packet of chips because it was a small product. But the serve size on the label is for two.

Also keep in mind that the serve size can be manipulated to try and make a product look better than it is, for example reducing the serve size will make the kilojoule content seem less. All Jenny Craig products are for one serve.

## INGREDIENTS LIST

Ingredients are listed in order from largest to smallest by weight in the product. It's useful to look at the ingredient list to get an idea of what has been added in large amounts and to check for sources of added sugar, saturated fat or sodium (salt). For example added sugar may be listed as sugar but could also be called honey, fruit juice concentrate and any word ending in 'ose'.

## PRODUCT CLAIMS

Labels can have a number of claims such as 'low fat' or 'high fibre' and these have to meet strict criteria to be able to make these claims. However, be wary of claims and marketing statements as they can sometimes make a product seem healthier than it really is. Some examples are a product that is 'low fat' but high in sugar and total kilojoules or a product that states it is 'light' which can really mean anything from light in colour, taste or flavour.

While looking at the label of product can help you determine healthier choices, it's important to always consider the product in the context of your whole diet. For example, a product with a little added sugar can be included as part of a balanced diet but perhaps shouldn't be eaten in large quantities.

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## KEY MESSAGES

- 1 Use the per 100g column for comparing products and the per serve column for how much you will consume
- 2 Use the ingredients list for to check for ingredients added in large amounts and added saturated fats, sugar and salt
- 3 Be wary of claims and marketing statements as some can be used to make products seem healthier than they are