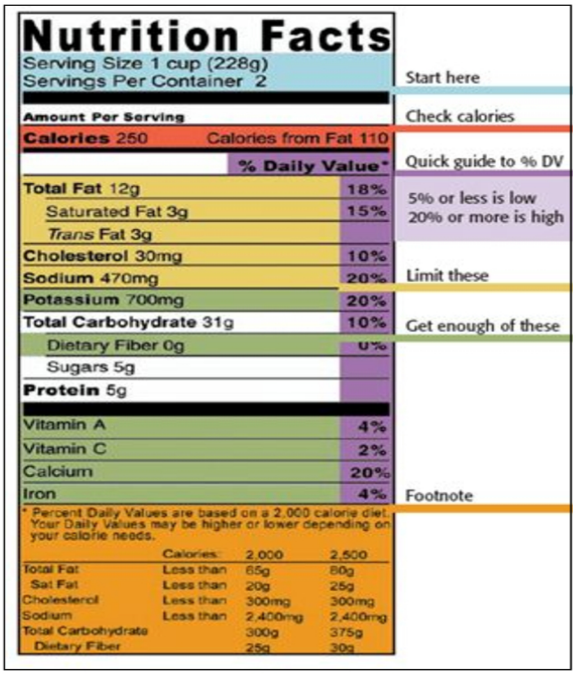
Healthy Habits

A publication of Maternal & Family Health Services that provides nutrition education and helps people make healthy food choices

Promoting Good Health

Benefits of the Food Label

The food label was designed to help people choose foods for a healthful diet. By using the food label, we can compare the nutrient content of similar foods, see how foods fit into our overall diets, and understand the relationship between certain nutrients and diseases.



When making nutrition choices, remember these 3 basics:

1. *Find the serving size.*
   - Remember that one package isn't necessarily one serving!
   - Check out the total number of calories and nutrients per serving.
   - Think about the total number of servings you eat.

2. *Consider the calories.*
   - When looking at a food's calories, remember: 40 is low, 100 is moderate, 400 is high.
   - Pay attention to the calories you eat throughout the day.
   - The food label is based on a 2,000 calorie diet—but your calorie needs might be different.
   - To find out what your "target" calories per day are, go to My Pyramid Plan: www.mypyramid.gov

3. *Choose nutrients wisely.*
   - Pick foods that are lower in certain fats, cholesterol and sodium when making daily food choices.
     5% Daily Value (DV) is low. 20% DV is high.
   - Nutrients to get less of (trans fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium and sugars)
   - Nutrients to get more of (potassium, fiber, vitamins A & C, iron, Calcium)

Adapted from the US Food and Drug Administration.

Maternal and Family Health Services, Inc.
15 Public Square Suite 600 Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701-1700 • Phone: 1-800-367-6347 • Fax: 570-823-3040 • www.mfhs.org