KENYATTA UNIVERSITY TEACHING, REFERRAL & RESEARCH HOSPITAL (KUTRRH)

CONTACT US

Call: 1558 or +254 800 721038 (Toll free)

Email: customercare@kutrrh.go.ke

kutrrh kureferral kureferral

Location: Northern Bypass Rd., Kahawa West, Nairobi

Kenyatta University Teaching, Referral & Research Hospital (KUTRRH)
P.O Box 7674 - 00100 GPO
Nairobi, Kenya

We are located in the Main Hospital Building, 2nd Floor at the Specialized Clinics Nutrition Outpatient Clinic.

KUTRRH/DND/PNEH/002

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY TEACHING, REFERRAL & RESEARCH HOSPITAL (KUTRRH)

DEPARTMENT OF NUTRITION & DIETETICS



Department of nutrition & Dietetics

NUTRITION INFORMATION LEAFLET:

How to Read & Understand Food Labels

This handout is for general information only. For personalized nutrition care, consult a Registered Dietitian/Nutritionist.

How to Read & Understand Food Labels

A guide to help you make healthier choices by learning how to read food packaging information. Reading nutrition facts helps make informed food choices to reach health and fitness goals. The information provides crucial details about ingredients, calories, and nutrients, allowing you to select foods that match your dietary needs and support long-term health benefits.



1. Serving Size

- Look for: Serving size (often indicated per 100 g) and servings per container.
- Serving size is the standardized amount recommended on the nutrition label, while portion size is the actual amount you choose to eat. For example, if you eat two cups of cereal when the serving size is one cup, your portion is double the serving

2. Calories

- Calories per serving: Shown in bold on the label, often located near the top under the 'Nutrition Facts' title. This indicates the energy you'll get from one serving. Monitoring calorie intake helps with weight management and supports health goals such as managing diabetes or heart disease.
- Note: Eating more than one serving? Multiply the calories accordingly

3. Nutrients to Limit



- Total Fat (especially Saturated & Trans Fat)
- Sodium
- Added Sugars
- Refined Carbohydrates (e.g., white flour)
- Artificial sweeteners (e.g., aspartame, saccharin) — for individuals sensitive to them
- Preservatives and additives (e.g., MSG, sodium nitrate) — when consumed in excess

Tip: Choose foods with 5% Daily Value (DV) or less for these. Check ingredient lists for hidden sources such as "partially hydrogenated oils" or "high fructose corn syrup."

4. Nutrients to Get Enough Of

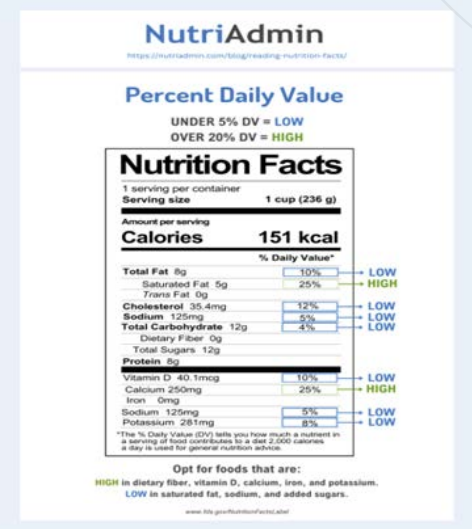


- Fiber
- Protein
- Calcium, Iron, Potassium, Vitamin D
- Magnesium
- Zinc
- Healthy fats (e.g., omega-3 fatty acids from fish, flaxseeds, or walnuts)
- B Vitamins (e.g., B6, B12, Folate)

Tip: Go for 20% DV or more.

5. % Daily Value (%DV)

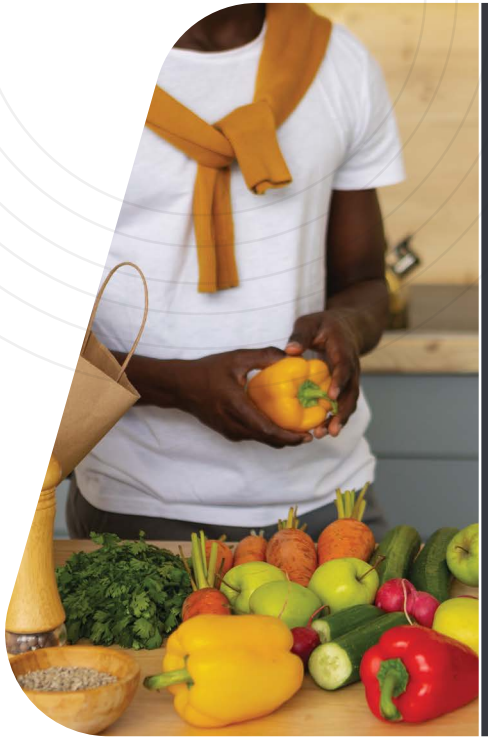
- Tells how much a nutrient in one serving contributes to a daily diet.
- **5% DV or less** = Low
- **20% DV or more** = High
- Based on 2,000 calories/day (your needs may vary)



6. Ingredient List

- Listed in descending order by weight.
- Watch out for sugars, fats, and salt listed early.
- Choose products with short, simple ingredient lists.
- Look for whole food ingredients such as oats, beans, vegetables, nuts, and seeds.
- Avoid products with many artificial additives or unfamiliar chemical names.

Example: Instead of "sugar, hydrogenated oils, artificial flavor," look for "whole oats, almonds, cinnamon."



7. Allergen Information

- Food labels must declare common allergens such as peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, fish, shellfish, soy, wheat, and sesame.
- Allergens are often highlighted in bold or listed separately as "Contains: ..."
- Always check the ingredient list if you have food allergies or intolerances.

8. Expiry Dates vs Sell By Dates

- Expiry Date / Use By Date: Indicates the last date the product is safe to consume. Do not eat food past this date.
- Sell By Date / Best Before Date: Indicates the date until which the product will be at its best quality. Food may still be safe after this date but might lose flavor, texture, or nutrition.

Tip: For safety, always follow the expiry date. For quality, note the best before date.

9. KEBS Guidelines on Food Labelling (Kenya Bureau of Standards)

According to KEBS and the Food, Drugs and Chemical Substances Act:

- Labels must be clear, accurate, and in English or Kiswahili.
- Must include: product name, ingredients (in descending order), net weight/volume, manufacturer's name & address, country of origin, batch/lot number, manufacturing date, expiry/best before date, and storage instructions.
- Nutritional information panel is required for most packaged foods.
- Allergen declarations are mandatory.
- No misleading health or nutrition claims.



10. Front-of-Pack Labels (if available)

- Traffic Light Labels: Green (low), Amber (moderate), Red (high)
- Nutri-Score: Grades A (healthiest) to E (least healthy)



11. Quick Steps to Read a Label

1. Check serving size
2. Look at calories
3. Check %DV
4. Limit bad fats, sugars, salt
5. Look for fiber and protein
6. Read the ingredient and allergen lists
7. Check expiry/best before dates

12. Tips for Grocery Shopping



1. Compare similar products
2. Be cautious with "low-fat" claims (may be high in sugar)
3. Choose whole, minimally processed foods
4. Use your nutrition goals to guide choices
5. Always check allergen and expiry date information

13. Summary Table

Nutrient Type	Ideal %DV per Serving
Saturated Fat	≤5% (Low)
Added Sugar	≤5% (Low)
Sodium	≤5% (Low)
Fiber	≥20% (High)
Protein	≥20% (High)
Vitamins/Minerals	≥20% (High)

This leaflet is for educational purposes only. For personalized nutrition advice, consult a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN).

