

reading food labels for diabetes



IT'S IMPORTANT TO KNOW WHAT'S IN THE FOODS YOU BUY

Making informed choices about the food you eat is a crucial part of looking after your health and managing your diabetes. When food shopping, labels on the packaging provide an excellent source of information and will supply you with details about nutrition, ingredients and warnings about the major allergens in foods. You can also use the nutrition information to compare similar products e.g. you can find out which cereal is higher in fibre, or which of two yoghurts is lower in fat. The nutrition panel can also be used as a tool to calculate your total energy and fat intake.



READING NUTRITION INFORMATION PANELS

► Nutrition Information Panels are displayed on the packaging of most food and beverages and will tell you what the product contains. The panel includes information about:

- > **Energy (kilojoules)**
- > **Protein**
- > **Total fat and saturated fat**
- > **Total carbohydrate and sugars**
- > **Sodium**

The Nutrition Information Panel provides very useful information that can be used to decide whether a food is suitable for someone with diabetes.

NUTRITION INFORMATION		
SERVINGS PER PACKAGE: 3		
SERVING SIZE: 150g		
	Quantity per Serving	Quantity per 100g
Energy	608kJ	405kJ
Protein	4.2g	2.0g
Fat, total	7.4g	4.9g
- saturated fat	4.5g	3.0g
Carbohydrate		
- total	18.6g	12.4g
- sugars	18.6g	12.4g
Sodium	90mg	60mg

SERVING SIZE
This is the average serving size of the product as determined by the manufacturer. However, this may not be the same as the serving you have.

PER 100g
100g is a useful standard to compare products, e.g. which is lower in fat. Use this information when choosing products.

FAT - total
This is the total amount of fat in the product. It includes the amount of fat from the three main types of fat: saturated, polyunsaturated and monounsaturated.

SODIUM (salt)
Choose, where possible, products with reduced or no added salt.

FAT - saturated
Use the figure per 100g, compare similar products and pick the one with less saturated fat.

CARBOHYDRATE
Total
This includes both sugars and starches in food. If you are using carbohydrate exchanges/ portions you can use this figure to work out how many exchanges are in the food.
Sugars
This tells you how much of the total carbohydrate is sugar. This includes added sugar as well as naturally occurring sugars like lactose (milk sugar) and fructose (fruit sugar). Sugar content alone will not predict the effect of the food on your blood glucose level.

READING THE INGREDIENTS LIST

The ingredients contained in a product are listed in descending order of weight. On the ingredient list the proportion of certain characterising ingredients must also be declared. The characterising ingredient will not necessarily be the main ingredient in terms of weight, but it will be the ingredient that gives the food its character.

► **Percentage Labelling:** Some packaged foods show the percentage of the key ingredients or components in the food product. For example, in the case of strawberry yoghurt, "strawberries" are a key ingredient, so the percentage of strawberries is indicated. In some cases, such as plain milk or bread, there are no characterising ingredients.

✓ This nutrition sheet has been developed by the **Sanitarium Health Food Company** and favourably reviewed by **Diabetes Australia**. Please contact **Sanitarium** on **1800 673 392** or via **www.sanitarium.com.au** if you would like to ask a qualified dietitian about diabetes or any nutrition issue of interest to you.



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