## Food label reading guide

3 minute read | Produced: 2016 | Revised: August 2021

## Key points:

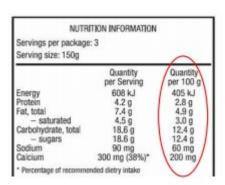
- Reading food labels can help us make healthy choices.
- Always read the per 100g column on the nutrition information panel (NIP) to compare similar products, as the serve sizes can differ between brands.
- Always compare the nutrition information panel (NIP) or health star rating of similar products, for example compare one brand of yoghurt with another brand of yoghurt.
- The more stars out of five, the healthier the food or drink choice.

### Food labels

Reading food and drink labels can help us make healthy choices. Food and drink labels will include information about the product, where and when it was made and a statement of ingredients, as well as any warnings or allergen statements. Most food or drink packages have a Nutrition Information Panel (NIP) which tells you the quantity of various nutrients a product contains per serve and per 100g or 100 ml. The NIP will also provide information on the serve size and the number of servings per packet.

### When reading the NIP:

- always read the per 100g column to compare similar products, because the serve sizes differ between brands.
- always compare similar products, for example compare one brand of yoghurt with another brand of yoghurt.





# What to look for when reading food and drink labels (per 100g)



#### Bread

- More than 5g fibre
- Less than 600mg sodium



#### Meat and alternatives

- Less than 10g total fat
- Less than 3g saturated fat
- Less than 750mg sodium



#### Breakfast cereal

- More than 6g fibre
- Less than 300mg sodium
- Less than 15g sugar (without dried fruit)



#### Savoury crackers, crispbreads and crisps

- Less than 10g total fat
- Less than 3g saturated fat
- More than 3g fibre
- Less than 600mg sodium



#### Milk and yoghurt

- Less than 2g total fat
- Less than 1.5g saturated fat
- Less than 15g sugar
- More than 150mg calcium



#### Sweet snack bars and biscuits

- Less than 10g total fat
- Less than 3g saturated fat
- Less than 15g sugar
- More than 3g fibre
- Less than 400mg sodium



#### Cheese

- Compare products and choose the one with the lowest total fat, saturated fat and sodium levels.
- Even reduced fat cheese will contain approximately 25% fat



#### Fats and oils

- Choose monounsaturated and polyunsaturated margarines and oils instead of butter
- 'Lite' oils are not necessarily lower in fat
- 'Vegetable blend' oils can still be high in saturated fat

## **Health Star Ratings**

The Health Star Rating is a front of pack labelling scheme which can be used to make healthier food choices at a glance. The rating range is from  $\frac{1}{2}$  – 5 stars and the more stars, the healthier the choice.



# Recommended minimum star ratings for food and drink categories



## Remember:

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- Always compare the nutrition information panel (NIP) or health star rating of similar products, for example compare one brand of yoghurt with another brand of yoghurt.
- The more stars out of five, the healthier the product choice.

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