

Reading Labels on Packaged Food

First rule - never believe what's on the front of a package! It's all marketing. Slogans like 'high fiber', 'heart healthy' or 'low fat' can be deceiving. Always turn the package over and read the nutrition facts and the ingredients to know what you're actually eating!

Check the Nutrition Facts Section for the Following

- 1) Serving size and servings per container. How many servings are you eating?
- 2) Fat
 - Total Fat – should be less than 20% of calories. If 'calories from fat' are not listed, you will need to calculate. There are 9 calories in every gram of fat.
 - Saturated Fat – should be less than 10% of calories
 - Trans Fat – should be zero
- 3) Sodium – should be less than or equal to the number of calories. Eg, if there are 100kcal per servings, there should be no more than 100mg of sodium
- 4) Fiber – high fiber indicates healthy carbs! Kids need at least 25g each day!
- 5) Added sugar – should be minimized, no more than 24g per day for kids

Check the Ingredients list

Note: ingredients are listed by weight so the first few ingredients listed are the most prominent in that product and therefore the most important

- 1) Look for whole food ingredients - foods that you recognize and can pronounce, avoid 'flavor' or 'flavoring'
- 2) Avoid added sugars in the first 5 ingredients (see separate handout)
- 3) Look for whole grains (especially the first ingredient!) - it has to say 'whole, avoid 'enriched' or 'unbleached' flours as they are highly processed