



Understanding Nutritional Claims on Food Package Labels



Understanding Nutritional Claims on Food Package Labels

Under regulations from the Food and Drug Administration of the Department of Health and Human Services and the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, food labels offer complete, useful and accurate nutrition information—but only if you can understand the label language.

This quick guide offers definitions for some common terms you might see on packages in your grocery store aisles:

High/Excellent

- **High/Excellent**

Greater than or equal to 20% of the daily value per serving for a specific nutrient

- **Good Sources**

10%-19% of the daily value per serving for a specific nutrient

- **More or Added**

Greater than or equal to 10% more of the daily value per serving than the food to which it is being compared

Low or Very Low

- **Low Fat**

3 grams or less per serving as defined on the label

- **Low Saturated Fat**

1 gram or less of saturated fat and 15% or less of calories from saturated fat per serving as defined on the label. Must also be low in total fat or the fat content must be listed

- **Low Cholesterol**

20 milligrams or less of cholesterol and less than 2 grams of saturated fat per serving as defined on the label

- **Low Sodium**

140 milligrams or less per serving as defined on the label

- **Very Low Sodium**

35 milligrams or less per serving as defined on the label

- **Low Calorie**

40 calories or less per serving as defined on the label

Free

- **Fat Free**

Less than 0.5 grams of total fat per serving as defined on the label

- **Saturated Fat Free**

Less than 0.5 grams of saturated fat per serving as defined on the label and less than 0.5 gram of trans fatty acids

- **Cholesterol Free**

Less than 2 milligrams of cholesterol and less than 2 grams of saturated fat per serving as defined on the label

- **Sodium Free**

Less than 5 milligrams per serving as defined on the label

- **Calorie Free**

Less than 5 calories per serving as defined on the label

- **Sugar Free**

Less than 0.5 grams of sugar per serving as defined on the label

- **No Sugar Added**

No sugar or ingredient that contains sugar is added during processing or packing

Reduced or Less

- **Reduced or Less Fat**

At least 25% less fat per serving as defined on the label than the food to which it is being compared

- **Reduced or Less Saturated Fat**

At least 25% less saturated fat per serving as defined on the label than the food to which it is being compared

- **Reduced or Less Cholesterol**

At least 25% less cholesterol per serving as defined on the label than the food to which it is being compared

- **Reduced or Less Sodium**

At least 25% less sodium per serving as defined on the label than the food to which it is being compared

- **Reduced Sugar**

At least 25% less sugar per serving as defined on the label than the food to which it is being compared