



Unit 9

Using labels on foods

Outcomes

- Use information on Nutrition Facts to make healthier food choices.
- Use ingredient information to choose foods that meet their needs.
- Identify 1 or 2 things that WNEP learners with whom they work might be interested in looking for on a food label.



Overview

We can learn an amazing amount of information from a food label – or we can look at it quickly and find the one or two facts that are important to us at the time. This unit will show you how to look at the entire food label to learn what’s really inside the package. It will also give you some practice in looking at the Nutrition Facts label for information you can use to make food choices.



Reading Assignments

Put a check mark in the box as you complete each of these

- The ADA Complete Food and Nutrition Guide, 3rd Edition, “Today’s Food Label”, pages 241-254.**
Did you ever wonder what “light” meant on a food label? Or what the difference is between “reduced fat” and “low fat”? This section of the chapter gives you an explanation of everything you’ll see on a food label.
- How to Understand and Use the Nutrition Facts Label**
<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/foodlab.html> - this is a good educator reference for details about reading labels
- Eating for Pleasure and Health, pages 6-8**
This section shows how to make lower fat food choices by using the Nutrition Facts label.



Learning Activities

Put a check mark in the box as you complete each of these

Nutrition Facts Label

Take several food packages out of your cupboard that have a Nutrition Facts label on them. Answer the following questions:

- Do these labels have any of the terms listed on p.246 of your textbook? Make a list of all the different terms you find on your food packages.
- If you were choosing foods with less solid fats, which part or parts of the label would you look at to make your decision?
- If you were choosing foods with less added sugars, which part or parts of the label would you look at to make your decision?
- If you were choosing foods with less sodium, which part or parts of the label would you look at to make your decision?
- If you were choosing whole grains, which part or parts of the label would you look at to make your decision?

Stretching Your Food Dollars Booklet activity - page 22

Complete this activity. Look at the serving sizes on the labels. Are these what you would consider usual serving sizes? If you were choosing between corn chips and pretzels, and you were concerned about the fat content, which do you think would be a better choice? Would your choice change if you were concerned about the sodium content?

Comparing Foods at the Grocery Store worksheet

Complete the worksheet

Test Your Food Label Knowledge!

To complete the online quiz go to <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/label.html> and scroll down to click on the box at the left of the screen that says "Quiz Yourself!" Test Your Food Label Knowledge



There is a lot of information on a food label. When you choose foods, what are 1 or 2 things you personally look for (or will start looking for) on a food label?

What WNEP audience do you target (for example, pregnant women, older adults, teens)? What are 1 or 2 things that these learners might be interested in looking for on a food label?



Comparing Foods at the Grocery Store

Visit the following 5 sections of the grocery store. Find the items specified and compare information in the Nutrition Facts Panel as directed.

Record the better choice, based on the nutrients you're asked to compare. Also record any thoughts, questions, or comments you have while doing this assignment.

(1) Store Section	(2) Items	(3) Compare Nutrition Facts Panel for	(4) Which is the better choice, based on the nutrient(s) in column 3? (remember to consider label serving size as appropriate)
Cracker aisle	2 brands of cracker that say "reduced fat"	1. <i>trans</i> fat 2. saturated fat	
Cereal aisle	2 brands of cereal that say "whole grain" anywhere on package	1. Fiber 2. Whole grain listed <i>first</i> in ingredient list*	
Canned fruit	"packed in heavy syrup" and "packed in juice/water"	Calories	
Frozen dinner	2 brands – one that indicates it's a healthier choice and one that doesn't	1. Calories 2. Sodium	
Milk aisle	"fat free," "low fat," "reduced fat," and whole milks	1. Saturated fat 2. Calcium	

*Not sure how to tell if a grain is whole? See the Grains section of your *MyPyramid Educator Reference Handbook* for a list of whole grains.

Find labels for the following foods. How much does one serving (according to the label) contribute to MyPyramid recommendations for a 2,000 calorie food intake pattern?

	Label serving size	MyPyramid recommendation (for 2,000 calorie intake pattern)	Amount still needed or available for the day, after having one serving of food in far left column
Yogurt		3 cups from milk group	
Can of regular soda		267 discretionary calories	
Orange juice		2 cups from fruit group	