

Understanding Food Labels and Health Claims

wholewheat
Bran Flakes



NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION (as packed)

	per 100 g	per 9 g single serving (±1 biscuit)
Energy (kJ)	1987	179
Protein (g)	7.8	0.7
Total fat (g)	68	6
of which saturated fat (g)	20.7	1.9
Total carbohydrate (g)	19.0	1.7
of which total sugar (g)	10.7	1.0

Checkers
 housebrand

Buttermilk
Rusk

TYPICAL NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION*

	per 100 g	per single serving
Energy (kJ)	788	98
Protein (g)	12.6	15.4
Glycaemic carbohydrate (g)	15	19
of which total sugar (g)	1.6	2.0
Total fat (g)	8.2	10.3
of which saturated fat (g)	3.0	3.8
of which monounsaturated fat (g)	3.0	3.8
of which polyunsaturated fat (g)	2.3	2.9
of which Omega 3 Fatty Acids (mg)	200	250
of which ALA (mg)	2.1	2.6
of which Omega 6 Fatty Acids (mg)	25	31
Cholesterol (mg)	2.4	3.0
Dietary fibre# (g)	348	435
Total sodium (mg)		

Checkers
 housebrand
Coconut biscuits
 200 g net



NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION (as packed)

	per 100 g	per 40g serving
Energy (kJ)	1441	576
Protein (g)	8.8	3.5
Total carbohydrate (g)	72.4	29.0
of which total sugar (g)	15.7	6.3
of which saturated fat (g)	1.8	0.6
of which monounsaturated fat (g)	0.3	0.1
of which polyunsaturated fat (g)	0.2	0.1
Dietary fibre# (g)	1.0	0.4
Total sodium (mg)	10.1	4.0
	380	152

*International laboratory services
 # Method of analysis: std test method 30.44ices

Why is it important to read food labels?

Learning how to read and understand food labels can help you make healthier choices.

It can help you to avoid or limit foods or components that you want to avoid, or are allergic to.

According to South African legislation, food labels must carry the name of the product; the name and address of the manufacturer or distributor; a list of all ingredients, where applicable; instructions for use; storage conditions, if any, and a sell-by or best-before date if this applies.

If there are any common food allergens in the food, such as peanuts, tree nuts, eggs, fish, soya, gluten, any significant cereals (*such as wheat*) and dairy products, these must be declared.

The list of ingredients is printed in descending order according to mass. This means that the main ingredient needs to appear first, and so on right down to the smallest one. If a food such as a pasta sauce has fat (*oil, hydrogenated vegetable fat, creamer, fat powder*) near the top of the list (*i.e. listed amongst the first 3 items*), it could contain a lot of fat.

In addition to the Nutritional Information Table, a lot of foods today also come with nutrient content claims provided by the manufacturer. These claims are typically featured in ads for the foods or in the promotional copy on the food packages themselves. Nutritional claims such as 'high in fibre', 'low sodium' and 'low fat' must be accompanied by a nutritional table to substantiate the claim, and logos of endorsement bodies must have been approved by the Director-General of the Department of Health.

Here are some tips for making the most of the information on the food label:

Start here

Note the size of a single serving and how many servings are in the package. Look at the serving size and how many servings you're really consuming. If you double the servings you eat, you double the energy.



The suggested portion is 125 g (5 units)

This pack contains 600 g (24 x 25 g individual units)

TYPICAL NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION*		
	per 100 g	per 125 g single serving
Energy (kJ)	788	985
Protein (g)	12.6	15.8
Glycaemic carbohydrate (g)	15	19
of which total sugar (g)	1.6	2.0
Total fat (g)	8.2	10.3
of which saturated fat (g)	3.0	3.8
of which monounsaturated fat (g)	3.0	3.8
of which polyunsaturated fat (g)	2.3	2.9
of which Omega 3 Fatty Acids (mg)	200	250
of which ALA (mg)	200	250
of which Omega 6 Fatty Acids (mg)	2.1	2.6
Cholesterol (mg)	25	31
Dietary fibre# (g)	2.4	3.0
Total sodium (mg)	348	435

Total Energy

Foods that contain a high quantity of fat or sugar should be kept to a minimum.

- Remember that foods that contain a little sugar to improve the taste can be enjoyed, especially if they are low in fat, have a low GI and are high in fibre (e.g. *baked beans, breakfast cereal, low fat yogurt*). The Glycaemic Index (GI) is a measure of how fast, and to what extent, a carbohydrate food affects blood glucose levels. By choosing low GI carbohydrates in combination with low-fat foods, heart health and blood pressure may be improved. For those wanting to lose weight, low GI carbohydrate foods digest slower, may be more filling and reduce insulin levels (*a fat storer*) which may enhance weight loss.

- Some foods will say “no added sugar” but will still be high in natural sugar (*e.g. fruit sugar*). These options are not ideal. All sugar should be taken into consideration when planning the overall meal plan.
- Added sugar is defined as sugar, honey, molasses, coloured sugar, fruit juice concentrate, de flavoured and/or de-ionised fruit juice and concentrates thereof, high fructose corn syrup or any other syrup. The claim ‘no added sugar’ can only be used if none of the above are added to the product.
- Foods that are labelled “lite” or “diet” or “low energy” are usually (*but not always*) suitable. For example, diet cold drinks are acceptable but certain “diet” foods (*e.g. diet chocolate*) are relatively high in kilojoules compared to many other available options and therefore not a good choice if one wants to restrict kilojoule consumption.

Checkers housebrand Coconut biscuits
200 g net

TYPICAL NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION (as packed)		
	per 100 g	per 9 g single serving (+1 biscuit)
Energy (kJ)	1987	179
Protein (g)	7.8	0.7
Carbohydrate (g) of which total sugar (g)	68 20.7	6 1.9
Total Fat (g) of which Saturated Fat (g)	19.0 10.7	1.7 1.0
Dietary Fibre# (g)	3.0	0.3
Total Sodium (mg)	391	35

#AOAC 985.29
Data sourced from SANAS Accredited Laboratory

This product is energy dense. One biscuit (9 g) contains 1.7 g fat and 179 kJ

Fats: Important facts about fat that we can get from food labels:

Fat intake should be limited, especially saturated- and trans fats found in animal fats, full cream dairy products, chocolate, coconut, hard margarine, full cream products, baked goods (*e.g. pies and cookies*) and palm oils (*e.g. coffee creamers and artificial cream*).

Determine how much fat is in the food; for example, compare the amount of fat in 100 g of different brands of food. In general, aim to purchase only food with ≤ 3 g fat per 100 g of the food item. Remember that some foods that may not taste fatty can be high in hidden fat – thus always check food labels.

Two examples of breakfast cereal:



This is high in fat: 14.1 g/100 g and 7.1 g (1½ tsp) of fat per serving (50 g)

TYPICAL NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION (as packed)		
Average values	Per 100 g	Per 50 g Serving
Energy (kJ)	1640	820
Protein (g)	8.3	4.2
Glycaemic carbohydrate (g)	67	34
Of which total sugar (g)	0.0	0.1
Total fat (g)	14.1	7.1
Of which saturated (g)	3.1	1.6
Of which monounsaturated (g)	5.4	2.7
Of which polyunsaturated (g)	3.4	1.7
Dietary fibre (g)#	10.2	5.1
Total sodium (mg)	6	3



This is low fat: 1.6 g/100 g and 0.6 g per serving (40 g)

TYPICAL NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION (as packed)		
	per 100 g	per 40 g* serving
Energy (kJ)	1441	576
Protein (g)	8.8	3.5
Glycaemic carbohydrate (g)	72.4	29.0
of which total sugar (g)	15.7	6.3
Total fat (g)	1.6	0.6
of which saturated (g)	0.3	0.1
of which monounsaturated (g)	0.2	0.1
of which polyunsaturated (g)	1.0	0.4
Dietary fibre# (g)	10.1	4.0
Total sodium (mg)	380	152

*International laboratory services
Method of analysis: std test method 30.44ices

It is important to choose products with little or no trans fat. Remember that trans fatty acids are naturally present in dairy products, but it is the trans-fat in hardened fat that you must avoid. If the product says that it is 'Trans Fat Free', this means that there is less than 1 g of trans fat per 100 g of the total fat in the product.

Sodium

Salt is composed of sodium and chloride. Sodium has been the cause of some concern as excess sodium in the diet can lead to high blood pressure and other related diseases. Read the nutritional information table on the label and find out how many milligrams of sodium (*Na*) the food item contains. Multiply this number by 2,5 to calculate the amount of salt in milligrams (*divide this value by 1000 to get the salt value in grams*).



TYPICAL NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION (AS PACKED)	PER 100 g	PER 20 g SERVING
ENERGY (kJ)	2369	474
PROTEIN (g)	1.4	0.3
GLYCAEMIC CARBOHYDRATE (g)	61.1	12.2
OF WHICH TOTAL SUGAR (g)	57.6	11.5
TOTAL FAT (g)	35.0	7.0
OF WHICH SATURATED FAT (g)	8.1	1.6
OF WHICH TRANS FAT (g)	0.3	<0.1
OF WHICH MONOUNSATURATED FAT (g)	19.1	3.8
OF WHICH POLYUNSATURATED FAT (g)	7.5	1.5
DIETARY FIBRE (g)	0.9	0.2
TOTAL SODIUM (mg)	83	17

This is a low salt spread. It contains less than 120 mg sodium per 100 g

Use this as a rule when choosing foods containing salt: those that contain more than 1,5 g per 100 g are high in salt. Try to avoid these. Foods that have less than 0,3 g of salt per 100 g are low in salt and a better choice for you. Look for the Heart Mark to identify foods that are lower in salt content. Some products appear to have less salt than they do: 'low sodium' 120 mg sodium for each 100 g, whereas 'virtually free from sodium' actually means there can be up to 5 mg sodium for each 100 g.



For more information on healthy living kindly contact
Nutrition Information Centre Stellenbosch University (Nicus)
on **021 933 1408** or send an email to nicus@sun.ac.za

Should you have any comments on our range of consumer leaflets, please write to Sarita van Wyk at:
Shoprite Checkers Communications Department,
PO Box 215, Brackenfell 7561
www.checkers.co.za

If a food claims to be...

It means that one serving of the product contains...“nutrient content claim” means a claim that describes the level of a nutrient or energy contained in a foodstuff

SUGAR

Reduced Sugar	At least 25% less sugar for each serving than the original product
No added sugar	Sugar in any form has not been added as an ingredient

FAT

Fat free	Less than 0.5 grams of fat per 100 g/ml
Low fat	3 grams of fat or less per 100 g solid 1.5 g or less per 100 ml liquids
Reduced fat or less fat	At least 25 percent less fat than the regular product
Low in saturated fat	1.5 gram of saturated fat or less per 100 g, with not more than 10 percent of the total energy coming from saturated fat
Lean	Less than 10 grams of fat per 100 g
Extra lean	Less than 5 grams of fat per 100 g

CHOLESTEROL

Cholesterol free	Less than 5 milligrams of cholesterol per 100 g/ml
Low cholesterol	20 mg or less per 100 g (solids) 10 mg or less per 100 ml (liquids)

SODIUM

‘Virtually free from Sodium’	Less than 5 milligrams of sodium per 100 g
Very low sodium	Less than 40 mg of sodium per 100 g
Low sodium	Less than 120 mg of sodium per 100 g
Reduced or less sodium	At least 25 % less sodium than the regular product

FIBRE

High fibre	At least 6 g of fibre per 100 g
Source of fibre	At least 3 g of fibre per 100 g

Vitamins and minerals

Vitamins and minerals which are present either naturally or added by means of enrichment or food fortification

Source of	15-30% of NRV (Nutrient Reference Values)
High in	More than 30% of the NRV per nutrient per portion