

Reading Food Labels for Sodium (Salt)

You will find the *Nutrition Facts* box on most packaged food products. The Percent Daily Value (%DV) tells you whether a food has a little or a lot of a given nutrient. Choose a food with a lower %DV. See if you can find the %DV for sodium on the following label. This food product contains a little sodium at 4%DV. Foods with a higher %DV contain more sodium. In addition, the nutrition facts label will also give you the exact amount of sodium in milligrams per serving.

Nutrition Facts	
Per 3/4 cup (175 g)	
Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 170	
Fat 10 g	15 %
Saturated 6 g + Trans 1 g	35 %
Cholesterol 30 mg	
Sodium 100 mg	4 %
Carbohydrate 13 g	4 %
Fibre 0 g	0 %
Sugars 6 g	
Protein 7 g	
Vitamin A 10 %	Vitamin C 2 %
Calcium 25 %	Iron 0 %

Packaged foods may also have labelling claims, which can help you make better choices. The boxes below will help you understand the manufacturers' claims.

What the Label Says	What it Means
Free of sodium or salt – “salt-free”, “without salt”, “contains no sodium”	Contains less than 5 mg of sodium or salt per serving
Low in sodium or salt – “low sodium”, “low source of sodium or salt”, “contains only (number) mg of salt per serving”; “contains less than (number) mg of salt per serving”	Contains less than 140 mg sodium per serving; or if it's a pre-packaged meal it would contain less than 140 mg per 100 g serving
Reduced in sodium or salt – “lower in sodium or salt”; “sodium-reduced”; “less salt”; “reduced in salt”	Contains 25% or less sodium than the regular version of that food product
No added sodium or salt – “without added sodium”; “no added salt”; “unsalted”	Contains no added salt, or other ingredients that contain sodium
Lightly salted – “salted lightly”	Contains 50% or less sodium than the regular version of that food product

This information is not meant to replace the medical counsel of your Doctor or individual consultation with a Registered Dietitian.



More Information For You

- Canadian Diabetes Association, Dietitians of Canada. Healthy Eating is in Store for You – Nutrition Labelling Fact Sheets. 2005. Available at: http://www.healthyeatingisinstore.ca/pdf/ENG_BW_FactSheet.pdf.
- Canadian Diabetes Association, Dietitians of Canada. Healthy Eating is in Store for You - Frequently Asked Questions About Nutrient Content Claims Healthy Eating is in Store for You – Nutrition Labelling Fact Sheets. 2005. Available at: http://www.healthyeatingisinstore.ca/pdf/ENG_RGB_FAQ.pdf.

References Used For This Factsheet:

- Canadian Food Inspection Agency. Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising – Sodium (salt) Claims. 2003. Available at: <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/labeti/guide/ch7be.shtml#7.21>; accessed 24 Nov 2005.



Notes

This handout distributed by:

The following resources are also available on sodium:

- Low Sodium (Salt) Eating
- Low Sodium (Salt) Cooking
- Low Sodium (Salt) Eating Out
- Low Sodium (Salt) Eating Resources
- Low Sodium (Salt) Food Choices

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