



Food labels can be confusing!
**This fact sheet aims to help you understand
the information contained on a food label.**

There is a legal requirement for all food sold in the European Union to be clearly labelled. A food label contains information about the:

- ◆ Weight of the food
- ◆ Ingredients it contains, listed in descending order of weight
- ◆ **Ingredients that might cause allergy or intolerances**
- ◆ Nutritional content
- ◆ Storage conditions
- ◆ 'Best before' and 'Use by dates'
- ◆ Country of origin information for meat

Note: Use by date is about safety and the most important date to remember! Foods can be eaten (and most can be frozen) up until the use by date, but not after this date. **Best before date** is about quality and not safety. The food will be safe to eat after this date but may not be at its best.



NUTRI-SCORE



On 31 October 2017, France introduced a voluntary labelling scheme for food products, the '**Nutri-Score**', which ranks the overall nutritional quality of all foods except single-ingredient foodstuffs and water (!) by using a scale of colours ranging from dark green "**A**" (best nutritional quality) to dark orange "**E**" (poorest nutritional quality).

The aim is to help consumers select more foods which are categorised as A or B!

MANDATORY NUTRITION INFORMATION

These values may also be shown as a percentage of Reference Intake (RI), the recommended daily intake, based on a 2000 calorie bench mark diet. This is the amount of energy a moderately active female adult needs to maintain her weight.

People who are very active will need more energy and people who are less active will need less. Men and adolescents also have greater energy requirements.

SUPPLEMENTARY NUTRITION INFORMATION

The mandatory nutrition declaration may be supplemented with information on: monounsaturated fats, polyunsaturated fats, polyols, starch, fibre and listed vitamins and minerals present in significant amounts, as a percentage of the RI.

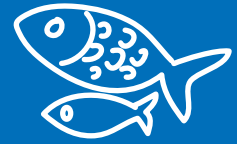
SUGAR

This term covers all types of sugars including added sugar (sucrose/table sugar) and sugars that are naturally found in certain foods, known as intrinsic sugars such as lactose (milk sugar). The RI for total sugar is 90g while the recommendation for added sugar is a limit of about 30g a day for adults, about 4-5 teaspoons. The concern with excessive added sugar is that it causes dental decay and is associated with a greater risk of weight issues.



Sugar contains energy, but very few other nutrients which is why it is called a source of 'empty calories'!

PROTEIN



Protein is needed for growth and repair. The RI for protein for adults is approximately 50g and the research indicates that we tend to eat enough protein.

CARBOHYDRATE

This Includes both **COMPLEX CARBOHYDRATES** found in starchy foods (bread, potatoes, etc) and **SIMPLE CARBOHYDRATES** such as sugars. There is not a reference intake for carbohydrates though there is a recommendation that the carbohydrates consumed should be whole grains as they are higher in fibre, an important element for gut health.



Nutrition

Amount Per Serving	Per 100g	Per slice (44g)
Energy	985kj 235kcal	485kj 105kcal
Fat	1.5g	0.7g
of which are saturates	0.3g	0.1g
Carbohydrate	45g	20g
of which are sugars	3.8g	1.7g
Protein	7.7g	3.4g
Salt	1.0g	0.4g

This pack contains 16 slices.

*Reference intake of an average adult (84000kj / 2000kcal).

SALT

Salt is found naturally in many foods like meat and vegetables but is also added to foods to improve taste and shelf life. Adults should eat no more than 6g salt/day (children only 2-5g depending on their age).

High in salt: more than 1.5g of salt per 100g. Low in salt: 0.3g of salt or less per 100g.

ENERGY

Energy is listed as kilojoules (kJ) and kilocalories (kcal). Although we say 'calories' we are technically referring to kilocalories.

**1 kilo calorie
=
4.2 kilo joules**

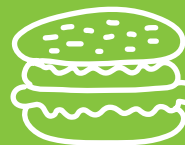
FAT

The label lists the fat content of the product. The RI for fat is 70g per day for women and 90g per day for men.

High in fat: more than 17.5g of fat per 100g. Low in fat: 3g of fat or less per 100g.



SATURATED FAT



A high intake of saturated fat is associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease.

While obvious sources of saturated fat include full fat dairy products and red meat, cakes, biscuits and pastries are also high in saturated fat. The RI for saturated fat is less than 20g, about 4 teaspoons.

High in saturated fat: more than 5g of saturated fat per 100g. Low in saturated fat: 1.5g of saturated fat or less per 100g.

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NUTRITIONIST AND AUTHOR

