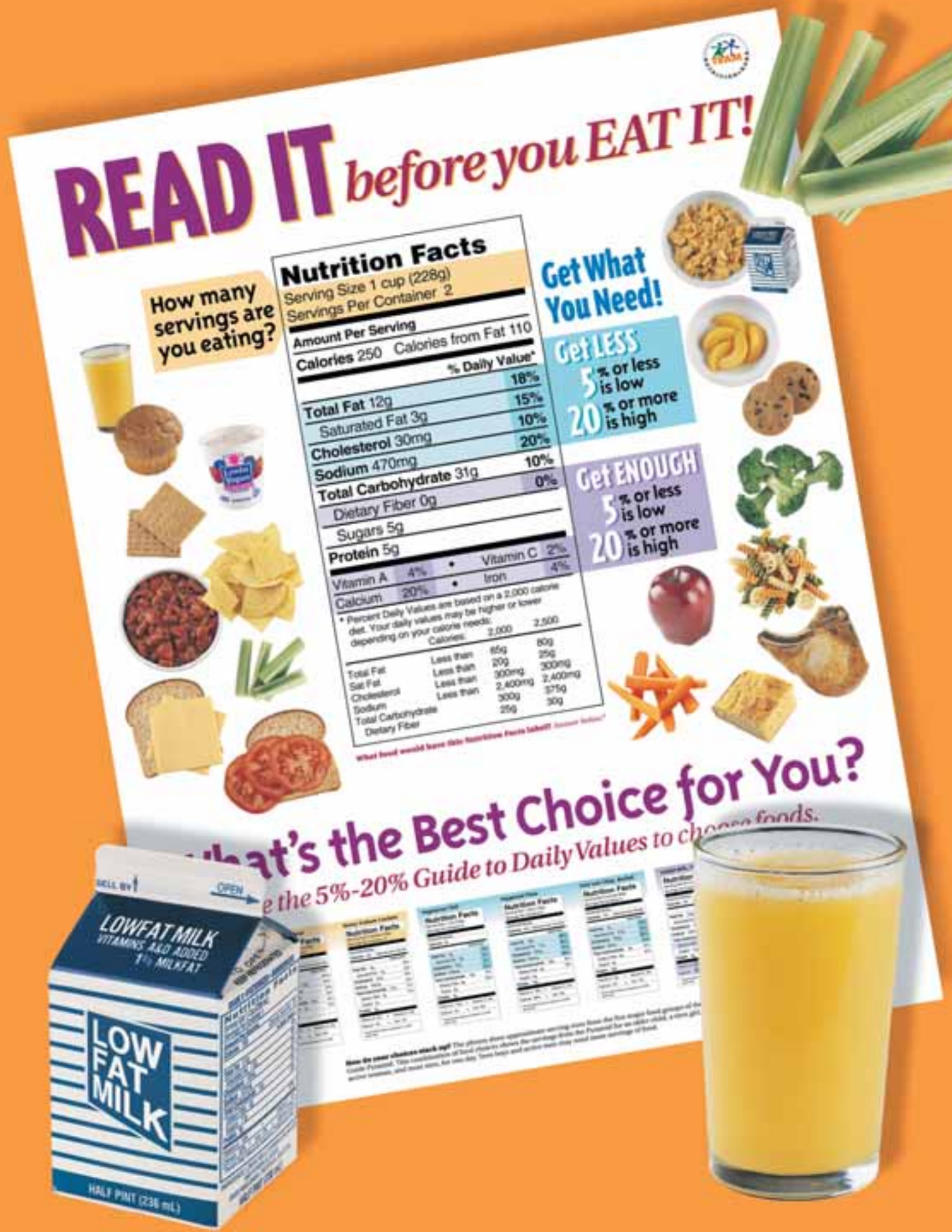

READ IT before you EAT IT!
How many servings are you eating?
Nutrition Facts
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)
Servings Per Container 2
Amount Per Serving
Calories 250 Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*
Total Fat 12g 18%
Saturated Fat 3g 15%
Cholesterol 30mg 10%
Sodium 470mg 20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g 10%
Dietary Fiber 0g 0%
Sugars 5g
Protein 5g
Vitamin A 4% • Vitamin C 2%
Calcium 20% • Iron 4%
Get What You Need!
Get LESS
5% or less is low
20% or more is high
Get ENOUGH
5% or less is low
20% or more is high
at's the Best Choice for You?
e the 5%-20% Guide to Daily Values to choose foods.
LOWFAT MILK
VITAMINS A&D ADDED
1% MILKFAT
LOW FAT MILK
HALF PINT (236 mL)

SHARING SESSION NO. 1

# FOOD LABELS: A Tool for Making Food Choices

## About the Activity

To start, use a box of cereal and three bowls to introduce serving sizes and the information on package labels. With the *READ IT before you EAT IT!* poster, show the parts of the Nutrition Facts label. Introduce the "5-20% DV Guide" for food labeling. Pass out the *Healthful Eating: Food Labels Help!* newsletter. Sum up by restating the "5-20% DV Guide."

## Getting Ready

**Read:** The outline, to get comfortable with the messages, questions and activities

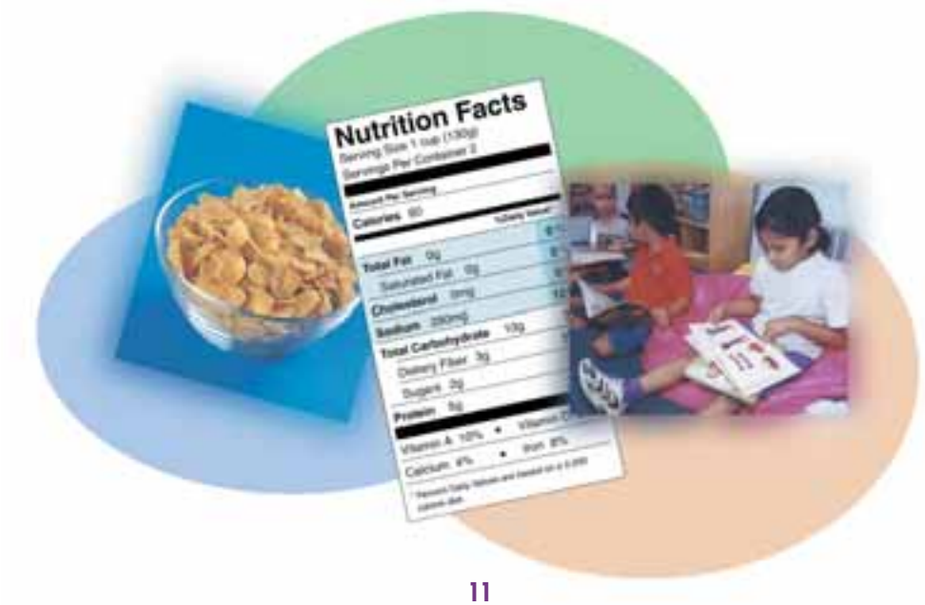
**Get:** One box of dry cereal,* three different sized bowls for the food item, measuring cups (*or pretzels, or a bag of chips)

**Copy:** Newsletter No. 4: *Healthful Eating … Food Labels Help*! Make enough copies of the newsletters for all participants.

**Display:** *READ IT before you EAT IT!* poster

## Key Messages

- Use the "5-20% DV Guide" (5% or less is LOW and 20% or more is HIGH) for the Nutrition Facts label, to help you GET LESS of some nutrients and GET ENOUGH of others.
- Use food labels to compare foods with the nutrients your child and family need.



# Do You Know?

## How you can use Nutrition Facts on food labels to eat smart?

Nutrition Facts on food labels tell the food energy (or calories) and nutrients in one serving of the food inside the package. You can use Nutrition Facts for different reasons, including:

To know the nutrient content in one serving.

To know what happens to calorie and nutrient amounts when you eat larger or smaller amounts of food.

To find foods with less or more of certain nutrients. That's helpful in two ways: **(1)** if you want to cut back on some nutrients, such as fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium and **(2)** if you want to consume more nutrients that often come up short: fiber, vitamins A and C, calcium, and iron.

To compare calories (food energy) and nutrients in similar foods, such as two kinds of chips or cheese.

To help you make choices within the Food Guide Pyramid's five major food groups.

## What nutrition information can you find on a label?

- Serving size and number of servings in the package.
- Calories in one serving.
- Nutrients that need your attention.
- % Daily Value (DV), which is the amount of a nutrient in one serving compared to your daily need.
- Footnote on the bottom, which shows how much or how little of some key nutrients you need each day. You may need more or less, depending on your energy needs.

## How big is a serving of food? (yellow section on the poster)

- The serving size on food labels varies for different foods. It may be more or less than what you usually eat. On a food label, you'll find the serving size at the top of the Nutrition Facts. The food label also tells how many servings the package contains.

## What do Nutrition Facts tell you about food energy?

Calories are a measure of how much energy you get from food. Nutrition Facts tells how many calories you get from one serving. It also tells how many of those calories come from fat. If you eat two servings, you get twice the calories. Pay attention to this information to cut back on calories, to maintain a healthy weight.

## What nutrients need your special attention?

*All nutrients are important to health.*
*Some need special attention:*

- ***Nutrients to limit*** (blue section of poster): total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium. Eating too much of these nutrients is linked to overweight and certain diseases, including diabetes, and heart disease.
- ***Nutrients to get enough of*** (purple section of poster): fiber, vitamins A and C, calcium, iron. Eating enough of these nutrients can improve your health and help reduce the chances of getting some diseases and conditions, such as osteoporosis from limited calcium, and tiredness or anemia from limited iron.

## How can you use Nutrition Facts to limit some nutrients and get enough of others?

Look at the % Daily Value. Use the "5-20% DV Guide." *For any nutrient:*

**5% DV or less is low:** For nutrients you need to get less of such as fat, choose foods with 5% DV or less.

**20% DV or more is high:** For nutrients you need to get enough of, choose foods with 20% DV or more

# Try This for a Sharing Session!

### Show the cereal box and three different sized bowls.

**ASK**

- What size would you use for yourself?
- How much would you normally put in the bowl? (Let someone pour that amount of cereal into the bowl.)
- How does that compare to what's in a serving on the food label? (Have someone measure the amount of cereal in the bowl.)
- Is it the same, less, or more (how much more) than the serving size on the package label?
- What does that mean about the calories, fat, sugars, or vitamins, in your bowl of cereal?

### Use the *READ IT before you EAT IT!* poster to talk about the "5-20% Daily Values Guide":

**POINT OUT**

- Point out the **blue section** of nutrients, GET LESS of these nutrients.
  - To get less of a nutrient: 5% or less is low and 20% or more is high.
  - Eating too much of these nutrients is linked to overweight and certain diseases.
- Point out the **purple** section of nutrients, GET ENOUGH of these nutrients.
  - To get enough of a nutrient, 5% or less is low, and 20% or more is high.
  - Eating enough of these can improve your health and reduce the chance of getting some diseases.
- The % numbers show the nutrients that you get from one serving, They are based on 100% of what is recommended for one day.

**How many servings are you eating?**

**Nutrition Facts**

Serving Size 1 cup (228g)
Servings Per Container 2

| Amount Per Serving | |
|---|---|
| **Calories** 250 | Calories from Fat 110 |
| | **% Daily Value*** |
| **Total Fat** 12g | **18%** |
| Saturated Fat 3g | **15%** |
| **Cholesterol** 30mg | **10%** |
| **Sodium** 470mg | **20%** |
| **Total Carbohydrate** 31g | **10%** |
| Dietary Fiber 0g | **0%** |
| Sugars 5g | |
| **Protein** 5g | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Vitamin A | 4% | • Vitamin C | 2% |
| Calcium | 20% | • Iron | 4% |

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

| | | 2,000 | 2,500 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total Fat | Less than | 65g | 80g |
| Sat Fat | Less than | 20g | 25g |
| Cholesterol | Less than | 300mg | 300mg |
| Sodium | Less than | 2,400mg | 2,400mg |
| Total Carbohydrate | | 300g | 375g |
| Dietary Fiber | | 25g | 30g |

**Get What You Need!**

**Get LESS**
5% or less is low
20% or more is high

**Get ENOUGH**
5% or less is low
20% or more is high

**Point out the yellow section showing serving size and servings per container.**

ASK

- How many servings are in one package?
- How much is one serving?
- How does the amount you eat change the amount of the % DV ? (*It varies with how much more, or less, you eat than one serving*.)

**Look at the %DV for saturated fat on the poster.**

ASK

- What is the color for saturated fat? (It's blue.)
- Is the %DV high or low? (It's neither. It's in between.)
- What if you ate 2 servings? (That would double the %DV.)
- Is 30% DV high or low? (20% or more is high, so 30% is high)

**Ask someone to use the "5-20% Daily Values Guide" to talk about the purple and blue sections on the small labels on the bottom of the poster.**

SUM UP

- Repeat the "5-20% Daily Values Guide": 5% or less is low, and 20% or more is high.
- Pass out: *Healthful Eating…Food Labels Help*! Newsletter, as a reminder.
- Reinforce: Use food labels to compare foods with the nutrients your child and family need.

With additional time, or at another session, learn more about using the %DV on food labels.

**Have someone pick a Nutrition Facts label from the bottom of the poster.**

ASK

- What is a serving?
- Do you think you eat more or less of this food at one time?
- What is the %DV for total fat? For saturated fat?
- How do the other nutrients compare?
- What might that tell you about the nutrients in the foods you eat?

**Have someone choose about five small Nutrition Facts labels (on the poster). They might be foods they would eat in a day. Compare the %DV for the same nutrient in similar or different foods.**

ASK

- What's the total for the %DV for calcium for the five foods? *(Point out that adults and children need 100% DV for calcium every day. Children need it for growing bones; adults need it to keep their bones healthy.)*

- What is the total for the %DV for saturated fat in the same five foods?
- Is this total more than 100%?
  - If it's more than 100%, how could you bring down the percent? *(Eat smaller portions, cut out a food, choose another food with less saturated fat.)*
  - If it's less than 100%, point out that they are below the total limit of fat for the day – and that's okay.

### Talk about the reasons to use the Nutrition Facts with their %DV.

**ASK**

- What does the %DV show you about the kinds of foods you chose?
- How can you use Nutrition Facts to make food choices for your family? *(See how calories and nutrients change with bigger or smaller helpings, compare the nutrition in foods that seem alike, choose foods to GET LESS of some nutrients and GET ENOUGH of others.)*

**SUM UP**

Refer to the poster and ask:

- How much is a serving?
- How do you know how much you need of a food?

"5% or less is low and 20% or more is high"
for nutrients you need less of
for nutrients you need to get enough of

### Extend the Sharing Session Now or Later

Have parents consider different beverage choices for their child and family, using the Nutrition Facts. Use the two ***Nibbles for Health*** newsletters with Nutrition Facts —*For Growing Bones…Which Milk?* and *Juice or Fruit Drinks?*— as part of the session.

Once parents know about food labeling, use it as a tool for exploring other issues related to feeding children and families, presented in the ***Nibbles for Health*** newsletters, for example:

No. 3 *How Much Is Enough*?
No. 7 *For Growing Bones… Which Milk*?
No. 9 *Healthful Choices for Vegetarian Families*
No. 11 *Family Meals – Fast, Healthful!*
No. 20 *Juice or Fruit Drinks?*
No. 21 *Easy Weekend Lunch Ideas*
No. 22 *Why Snacks?*
No. 23 *Fats in Food: How Much for Kids*?
No. 24 *Iron in Food: Does My Child Get Enough?*