Nutrition Label 101

Everyone has seen a nutrition label but have you ever really looked at it? You likely already know how to read the basics on a nutrition label, but use this worksheet to find what's hiding in your snacks and food.

1 Serving Size

Used to determine the number of calories, amount of each nutrient, and percent Daily Value (%DV) of a food. Use it to compare a serving size to how much you actually eat. The serving size reflects the amount people typically eat and drink today. It is not a recommendation of how much to eat.

2 Amount of Calories

If you want to manage weight (lose, gain, maintain), this section is helpful. The key is to balance how many calories you eat with how many your body uses.

3 Nutrients

Use the label to look for foods that contain more of the nutrients you want to get more of and less of the nutrients you may want to limit.

- To get more of: Dietary fiber, Vitamin D, Calcium, Iron, Potassium. Consume at least 100% DV of each.
- To get less of: Saturated fat, Sodium, Added Sugars. Stay below 100% DV of each.

4 Percent Daily Value

This tells you whether the nutrients in one serving contribute to a little of a lot to your total daily diet: %5 DV or less is low and 20% DV or more is high.

5 Footnote

The footnote explains % Daily Value. 2,000 calories/day is used for general nutrition advice.

Scavenger Hunt

Grab 3-5 items from your pantry or fridge (or pick from the items provided in class and work in groups of 3 -5). The items should be an assortment of snacks (granola bars, chips, gummies, etc), canned goods, drinks from the fridge, gum.

List the 3-5 items you picked below

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------

How many of the items...

Include only one serving size? _______________________

Contains more than 50% of some Daily Value? _________

Includes more than 10 grams of sugar? _______________

Which item has a serving size that most surprises you? Is it smaller than the amount you normally eat?
Nutrition Label 101

Scavenger Hunt Continued...

Without looking at the answer key below, see if you can list which nutrients you should try and stay away from or limit, and which nutrients you need more of.

Get less of these....  
Get more of these...

Get more of:
- Dietary Fiber
- Vitamins
- Calcium
- Iron
- Potassium

Get less of:
- Saturated & Trans Fat
- Added Sugars
- Sodium

Take a look at the ingredient list.
The first ingredient makes up the _________ amount of total ingredients, and the last ingredient makes up the _________ amount of total ingredients.

Write down a few ingredients that you do recognize, then write some that you've never seen before or cannot pronounce.

Have seen before:
- ___________________________________________________________________________________

Have not seen before:
- ___________________________________________________________________________________

REMINDER
If any of the items you have in front of you contain a lot of indecipherable or hard to pronounce ingredients maybe it's time to rethink what you are snacking on. Stick with natural, filling, and healthy snacks like whole fruit!

Show us your nutrition label! Share + tag @TeenHealthVibe

healthcorps.org