



Food labels and nutrition apps

Before 1969, food labeling was voluntary and not standardized. Food labeling was used only for “special diets” and included the amount of salt and calories. As people started to use more convenience foods, they wanted to know what was in their food. In response, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the White House decided to develop a system to identify the nutritional qualities of packaged food.

In the 1970s, the FDA specified a format for nutritional information on packaging. The FDA made standard rules around what had to be listed if the manufacturer made nutritional claims. In the 1970s and 1980s, scientific knowledge around nutrition grew and labeling was modified to address new finds. But labeling was still not standardized.

In 1989, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services decided to standardize labeling. Finally, in 1990, the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act was passed. This act is considered the most important food labeling legislation since the 1930s.

In 2020, the FDA changed labels for the first time in more than 20 years. This change included newly added categories, changes to font sizes, daily values and serving sizes.

New Label / What's Different?

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size	2/3 cup (55g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	230
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 8g	10%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	13%
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	20%
Protein 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg 10%	
Calcium 260mg 20%	
Iron 8mg 45%	
Potassium 240mg 6%	

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Servings: larger, bolder type

Serving sizes updated

Calories: larger type

Daily Values Updated

New: added sugars

Change in some nutrients required

Actual amounts declared

New footnote

Using the information on the label, you can track the nutritional content to help you meet your health goals. To do this, you can use paper and pen, a spreadsheet or a nutrition app on your phone or device. The following are some of the most popular apps based on reviews:

- Nutrients
- MyFitnessPal
- Ate
- ShopWell

Note: You need to look at an app’s capabilities and pick the one that meets your needs.

Sources: [healthline.com](https://www.healthline.com),* [wa-health.kaiserpermanete.org](https://www.wa-health.kaiserpermanete.org),* [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)*

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