



Food Label Quick Guide

A simple five-step scan for comparing packaged foods without turning grocery shopping into a math assignment.

Start with your purpose

The best choice depends on your needs, preferences, budget, allergies, culture, and the role the food will play in your meal. Use the label to make an informed comparison - not to judge a food as good or bad.

THE FIVE-STEP LABEL SCAN

Read the label in this order

1 Check the serving size

Every number is based on the listed serving. Compare it with how much you expect to eat or use.

2 Notice protein and fiber

These nutrients can support fullness and help you compare similar choices. Their importance varies by food.

3 Review added sugars

Total sugars include natural and added sugars. The Added Sugars line shows what was added during processing.

4 Look at sodium

Compare sodium in similar products, especially sauces, soups, frozen meals, snacks, and breads.

5 Scan the ingredient list

Ingredients appear by weight, from most to least. Check allergens, ingredients that matter to you, and whether the product fits your needs.

Use % Daily Value as a shortcut

As a general FDA guide: 5% Daily Value or less is low, and 20% or more is high. Your individual needs may be different.

Compare two similar products

Pick two versions of the same kind of food. Compare what matters for your goal, then choose the option that also works for your taste and budget.

WHAT TO COMPARE	OPTION A	OPTION B
Serving size		
Protein		
Dietary fiber		
Added sugars		
Sodium		
Ingredients or allergens I noticed		
Price and servings per package		

MY DECISION

I am choosing _____
because _____.

One question I still have:

KEEP IT PRACTICAL

- ☐ I compared similar foods.
- ☐ I checked serving size first.
- ☐ I focused on nutrients relevant to my goal.
- ☐ I considered taste, access, and budget.

Educational note

This guide provides general wellness education and is not individualized nutrition or medical advice. If you have a food allergy, medical condition, or another concern requiring a specialized eating plan, consult an appropriate licensed clinician.