



YOUR ULTIMATE MANUAL
FOR GOOD NUTRITION

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CHAPTER

1

WHAT'S IN OUR FOOD ANYWAY?
PART I





Food is everywhere. It's on TV, online, in magazines, on billboards – it's even in your house! You just can't avoid it, and you certainly can't live without it. Deciding what to eat every day among the many, many choices you have can be really tough: What do I really want to eat right now? What do I need to eat to keep me growing and healthy? What foods will satisfy my hunger, my taste buds, and keep me strong?

In the following pages, you are going to see that you can have it all: tasty, filling food that helps your body move and grow. (Psst! It's all about variety!)

First, you'll need to get up close and personal with nutrients, which are the parts of your food that your body needs every day.

**READY?
LET'S GO
FOR IT.**



CHECK THE LABEL

If you want to know what's in your food, the best place to start is the nutrition panel on a food label. This panel gives you all the information you need to know about your food.

In the "Nutrition Facts" on a food label, you can find the following information:

- ⊖ **Serving size:** How much of that food you should eat in one sitting.
- ⊖ **Calories in one serving:** How much energy your body will get from one serving of that food.
- ⊖ **Macronutrient content in one serving:** How much fat, carbohydrate, and protein your body will get from one serving of that food (these measurements are given in grams and in the percentage (%) of your Daily Value).
- ⊖ **Micronutrient content in one serving:** How much sodium and certain vitamins and minerals you will get from one serving (this is given in % of your Daily Value). (Of course, not all foods, like fresh fruits, vegetables, or meats, have a label. To find out the nutrition info of these foods, check out the resource pages at the back of the book).





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%
Trans Fat 1.5g	
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:

	Calories:	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

Source: U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

NOTE: This food label is from North America – in other parts of the world, food labels might look different, and / or give other information.

A food's packaging will also give you the list of ingredients in that food. The ingredients are what gives your food its nutrients. A list of ingredients shows everything that was mixed together to make those crackers, or cookies, or jam, but without showing you exactly how much of each ingredient was used (because that would give away their secret recipes!).

Q: WHAT IS A SERVING?

A: A serving is the amount of a particular food that a person should eat at one meal or snack. Food manufacturers decide how much food is in a serving of their product, and they include that measurement on the food's label. A serving can be measured in many different ways, depending on the kind of food: sometimes, the measurement is one "piece" of that thing, like a slice of bread. For other foods, a serving is measured in ounces (grams), or cups (milliliters).

The problem is that often, our idea of a serving is VERY different from what the manufacturer had in mind.

GOOD IDEA!

Find out how your serving size compares to the one on the label: Take out your favorite box of cereal. Pour your regular amount of cereal into a bowl (but don't pour any milk on top – you won't get the right measurement!). Take out some measuring cups and measure how much cereal is in the bowl. Write down the number on a piece of paper. Then, find the serving size on the nutrition label and write that number on your piece of paper. Now compare the two numbers: are you eating more or less than the serving size? Does that mean you are eating more or less nutrients than are listed on the label?

The bottom line about servings: If you decide to eat more or less than the serving on the label, that is your choice to make. But, you need to know that you will be getting more or less nutrients than the label indicates. While that's okay sometimes, if it happens consistently with a lot of the foods you eat, your body might get out of balance (you'll find out more about how that happens on pages 105-108).

