

## Food labels

The Government advises food manufacturers on what they can put on a food label. Some foods may contain a lot of fat and calories, but if only a small quantity is eaten then this may not be a significant amount per serving. Also, some athletes may eat more than the recommended serving on the food label and may have more fat and calories than they realise. Food labels can be really confusing. Below is a guide to help you understand them better.

<b>What's on the label?</b>	<b>What does it mean?</b>
<b>Ingredients</b>	Ingredients are always listed in order of weight so the main ingredient (i.e. what's in it most) is listed first and any minor ingredients (what's in it least) are listed last.
<b>Healthy eating logo</b>	The product is lower in fat, sugar or salt than an equivalent standard product.
<b>Energy</b>	The amount of energy the food provides. It is measured in either calories (kcal) or kilojoules (kJ). 1kcal = 4.184 kJ
<b>Carbohydrate</b>	TOTAL carbohydrate content - includes sugars (both natural and added) and starches.
<b>Of which sugars</b>	The amount of carbohydrate that is made up of sugars (either natural or added).
<b>Reduced sugar</b>	Contains at least 25% less sugar than an equivalent standard product e.g. reduced sugar jams.
<b>Low sugar</b>	Contains no more than 5g of sugar per 100g e.g. low sugar custard. N.B. If a product is low in sugar, this does not necessarily mean it is also low in fat.
<b>No added sugar / unsweetened</b>	Contains no added sugars, just the sugars that occur naturally in food e.g. unsweetened fruit juice.
<b>Sugar free</b>	Contains no more than 0.2g sugar per 100g e.g. sugar free jelly.
<b>Fat</b>	TOTAL fat content (includes saturated, polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fat)
<b>Of which saturates</b>	The amount of fat that is made up of saturated fat.
<b>Reduced fat</b>	Contains at least 25% less fat than an equivalent standard product e.g. reduced fat cheese.
<b>Low fat</b>	Contains less than 3% fat (i.e. no more than 3g of fat per 100g). So watch out for claims that foods are 90% fat free - which looks good, but actually means that the food contains 10% fat, which is 3 times the amount permitted in a genuinely low fat food! Low fat foods are not necessarily low in sugar.
<b>Fat free</b>	Contains no more than 0.15g fat per 100g.

This information is taken from 'Fuel for Performance, Nutrition for Sport',  
a sports nutrition resource updated and revised by the following Welsh sports dietitians:  
Rhian Owen, Chris Cashin, Elaine Hibbert-Jones and Gill Regan.  
Every acknowledgement is given to all the sports dietitians who contributed to the original publication  
of this resource, which was first published in 1998.

## Using food labels

Reading food labels properly can be helpful to the athlete to compare one product with another or to compare the nutritional content with recommended values. The information below explains how to read food labels correctly.

The nutritional information on food labels is usually given in two columns.

Typical Nutrition Values		
	per serving (25g pack)	per 100g
Energy	415 kJ	1660 kJ
	98 kcal	390 kcal
Protein	1.5 g	6.0 g
Carbohydrate	18.5 g	74.0 g
of which sugars	1.6 g	6.5 g
Fat	2.0 g	8.0 g
of which saturates	0.3 g	1.1 g
Fibre	1.4 g	5.5 g
Sodium	0.2 g	0.6 g

Look in the 'per 100g' column and use the following as a guide to work out if a food is high or low in a nutrient.

**Table showing recommended figures (per 100g or per 100ml) on food labels (FSA, 2007)**

	Nutrient	This is low	This is high
For food labels:	Carbohydrate, of which sugars	5g or less	12.5g or more
	Fat	3g or less	20g or more
	Fat, of which saturates	1.5g or less	5g or more
	Sodium*	0.1g or less	0.5g or more
	Salt	0.3g or less	1.5g or more
For drinks labels:	Carbohydrate, of which sugars	2.5g or less	6.3g or more
	Fat	1.5g or less	10g or more
	Fat, of which saturates	0.75g or less	2.5g or more
	Sodium*	0.1g or less	0.5g or more
	Salt	0.3g or less	1.5g or more
* If you only have a figure for sodium, multiply this by 2.5 to find out the amount of salt			

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For more information on food labelling, visit [www.eatwell.gov.uk](http://www.eatwell.gov.uk)

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