Grocery shopping tips

Food labelling

What is food labelling?

Food labelling is the information that appears on the packaging of food products and provides interesting information about the product.

From a health perspective, food labelling also includes information about the nutritional quality of the food. This is called ***nutritional labelling****.*

The Nutritional labelling includes two important elements: the ***Nutrition table*** *and the* ***List of ingredients****.*

- *The* ***Nutrition table*** *provides information about energy, nutrients, and the percentage of the Reference Intake.*
- *The* ***Ingredients list*** *is a summary of all ingredients that were used to make the product and remain in the finished product. They are listed in descending order of weight, so the first ones are the ones of largest quantity.*

Ingredient list

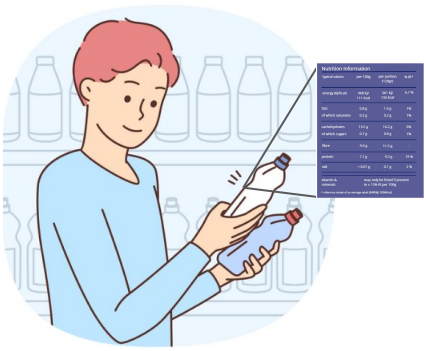
Ingredients: whole **milk**, milk proteins (**milk**), calcium salts of **milk**, stabilizers (disodium folate) and vitamins D and K.

Nutrition table

Nutrition Information

typical values	per 100g	per portion (120gr)	% RI*
energy (Kj/kcal)	468 KJ/ 111 Kcal	561 KJ/ 134 Kcal	6.7 %
fats	0.8 g	1.0 g	1%
of which saturates	0.2 g	0.2 g	1%
carbohydrates	13.5 g	16.2 g	6%
of which sugars	0.7 g	0.8 g	1%
fibre	9.6 g	11.5 g	-
protein	7.7 g	9.3 g	19 %
salt	< 0.01 g	0.1 g	2 %
vitamin & minerals	may only be listed if present in ≥ 15% RI per 100g		

* reference intake of an average adult (8400Kj/ 2000Kcal)



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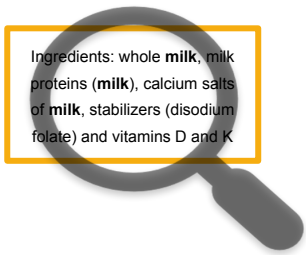
Nutritional labelling:

The list of ingredients

*To make a healthy choice, there are **four general tips** to keep in mind when reading the ingredient list:*



✔ ***The shorter the list of ingredients, the better.***

As a general rule, a healthy product has 3 to 4 ingredients in its list, maximum 5.

✔ ***The more ingredients you recognise, the better.***

The use of additives serves a function as preservatives. However, we find extensive lists full of additives that are not necessary.

✔ ***Try to select products without sugars, refined oils or refined flours in the Ingredients list.***

Regular consumption of these ingredients has been linked to negative health effects.

✔ ***If it contains oils, it must be virgin or extra virgin olive oil.***

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Nutritional labelling:

The nutrition table

*The table shows the amount of **calories**, **fat**, **saturated fat**, **carbohydrates**, **sugars**, **protein** and **salt** per 100 grams or liters of the product and per portion size. The percentage of the **Reference Intake** (**RI**) is also provided.*

What is the RI?

The RI is based on the requirements for an average adult with no special dietary requirements and an assumed energy intake of 2000 kcal.

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Nutritional labelling:

The nutrition table

Here are some considerations to help you make a healthy choice when we focus on the nutrition table…

- *The information in the nutritional table is based on quantities. It is therefore difficult to determine the quality of the food or product based on the information in the table.*

- *In order to choose a better **quality product**, it is necessary to analyse the information provided in both **the ingredients list and the nutritional table**.*

- *In the nutrition table, the **health-promoting nutrients of interest are fibre, protein and vitamins**, **while** **saturated fat, sugar and salt/sodium are** variables that give us an indication of the **poorer health quality** of the product.*

What is a product high or low in these nutrients? See here: *Understanding nutrition information (infographic) | Eufic*

*Choose those that are **low in salt, saturated fat, and sugar**, and **high in protein, fibre, vitamins and minerals***

And what about vitamins and minerals?

We must put attention on the percentage of RI:

- *If a food has at least 15% of the RI of a nutrient, it's considered a **source of that vitamin or mineral**.*
- *If it has at least 30% of the RI, it's considered a **food high in vitamin or mineral**.*

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Extra virgin olive oil

Extra virgin olive oil (EVOO) is one of the most characteristic foods of the Mediterranean diet. It is a source of healthy fats with excellent nutritional and health properties.

Culinary approach

It can be used for both cold and/or raw preparations, such as salads, and hot preparations, such as sautéing.

EVOO is also more resistant to cooking than seed oils such as sunflower, rapeseed or corn.

***Link to a recipe**:*

Health Benefits

- *Antioxidant and anti-inflammatory.*
- *Lipid and blood sugar lowering.*

It is recommended to consume 3-4 tablespoons per day.

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Nuts

Nuts are edible seeds enclosed in a hard shell. Included in this group are walnuts, almonds, cashews and hazelnuts, pistachios, between others.

Culinary approach

You can add them to your salads and yoghurts to give them a crunch.

You can also include nuts by looking for options such as nut creams.

Choose natural nuts over fried or salted nuts.

***Link to a recipe**:*

Health benefits

- *Sources of healthy fats (omega-3).*
- *Help prevent constipation and increase satiety.*

It is recommended to consume 2 servings of nuts per day, 1 of which should be walnuts.

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Seeds

Seeds include sesame seeds, pumpkin seeds, chia seeds, and sunflower seeds, between others.

Culinary approach

You can add seeds to your salads, yoghurts and soups, to give them a more colourful and appetising taste.

***Link to a recipe**:*

Health benefits

- *Sources of healthy fats (omega-3).*
- *Lower blood sugar and cholesterol.*
- *Support intestinal transit and the immune system.*

In addition to nuts, it is recommended to consume seeds at least 3 times a week.

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Herbs and Spices

Herbs and spices are plant-based substances used to season and preserve food. They have a high flavoring capacity, so they are usually used in small quantities, and can be mixed together to achieve different combinations.

Culinary approach

Aromas, colours, and flavors are added to foods and beverages to enhance their appeal to the senses.

These ingredients are commonly used in culinary preparations such as brine and pickles.

Herbs and spices come in a variety of forms, including fresh, dried and ground.

***Link to a recipe**:*

Health benefits

Aromatic herbs (oregano, basil, thyme, and rosemary) and spices (turmeric, cloves, and cinnamon) have been shown to have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects.

Add herbs and spices to your dishes.

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