

Ohio SNAP-Ed Adult & Teen Programs Reading the Nutrition Facts Label

Task Topic: MyPlate

Task Title: Reading the Nutrition Facts Label

Teaching ☒ Use food labels to make better choices.

Message(s): ☒ Choose whole grain products.

Resources: Adapted from ChooseMyPlate.gov and Make Your Calories Count (USDA)

Objectives for the Task:

1. Learn where to find key nutrition information on the Nutrition Facts label.
2. Use ingredients list to find the different sources of sugar and how the ingredients are listed (in order of amount).

Materials Needed for the Task (including Handouts):

- Nutrition Facts Label Poster (order from Learning Zone Express's website: <https://www.learningzonexpress.com/p-295-read-food-labels-poster.aspx>)
- Handout – Chocolate Chip Cookie Label

General Materials List:

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|--------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|
| • Flip chart paper | • Post-it notes | • Index cards |
| • Thought box | • Markers | • Pens |
| • Highlighters | • Masking tape | • Name tags |
| • VOICE principles | • Participant evaluation forms | |

Preparation:

- Hand up the large Nutrition Facts poster in the front of the room.

Key Points to Review:

- Introduce yourself. Give brief description of the program (program name, length of sessions, duration of program).
- Include your purpose as the facilitator (i.e. to introduce ideas that are supported by research, to give them the tools to make informed decisions about areas that affect their health & nutritional needs, and to identify topics that might be covered based on the curricula used in the program).
- Review the V.O.I.C.E. Principles.
- Ask participants to sign in on the SNAP-Ed sign-in sheet.
- Remember to pass out the appropriate participant evaluation form at the end of the session, making sure to read the questions out loud to the participants.



Transition:

Last time we met, we learned about You were asked to Who would like to share about their experiences with this activity?

Let's begin today's lesson by doing a few simple stretches. Stretching keeps your body flexible, so you can continue doing all the things you love to do as you get older.

Demonstrate several stretching exercises that are suitable for your participant group.

Physical activity guidelines can be found at the following websites:

- Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion: www.health.gov/paguidelines/
- CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/index.html>
- President's Council on Fitness, Sports, and Nutrition: www.fitness.gov/behavioral-physical-activity-guidelines-for-americans/

Anchor

Ask participants to direct their attention to the large Nutrition Facts poster at the front of the room.

How many of you use the information in the Nutrition Facts panel when you are shopping for food? What information on the label do you look at? Why is this information important to you as a consumer?

Add

The Nutrition Facts label is a window into the nutritive value of a food. In addition to things like calories, serving size, etc., we can also find information related to what kinds – and how much – of various nutrients can be found in a serving of the food. Nutrient information is found in grams or milligrams and has a corresponding percent daily value. The percent daily value, abbreviated % DV, compares the amount of a nutrient or ingredient found in the food with how much you should get each day. In general, 5% DV or less means the food is low in that nutrient, and 20% DV or higher means it is high in that nutrient.

A list of ingredients is usually right below this grid on most packages, but sometimes it may be separate. The ingredient list shows what the food is made of and can be useful when looking for added sugars. Ingredients are listed in order of highest to lowest amounts. Thus, the first item on the ingredient list is what the product contains the most of, while the last item on the list is used the least.

You may be wondering about fresh produce like vegetables and fruits. After all, they don't usually come with a label that you can inspect. The great news is that if you are eating fresh produce, you don't need a label to know that they are a healthy food option. While fruits and some vegetables naturally contain sugar, they have no added sugar or sodium and are loaded with vitamins and minerals, so feel free to load your plate with these foods. Remember, our goal is for half our plate to be vegetables and fruit. Canned and frozen produce will have a label on the packaging, which you can use to see if anything has been added to the food for taste or as a preservative. Examples of this are peaches canned in syrup (which have added



sugar) and frozen broccoli in cheese sauce (which may have added salt and fat). Frozen or canned produce is fine to eat, but make sure you check out the label and choose ones that have no added sugars, salt, or fat.

What questions do you have about finding information on the food label?

Apply

Pass out a copy of the Handout – Chocolate Chip Cookie Label to each participant.

Let's look at this sample label from a package of chocolate chip cookies. You may recall from last lesson that sodium is something we want to reduce our consumption of whenever possible. On the Nutrition Facts label, find the amounts and %DV for the following:

- Serving size
- Calories
- Total fat
- Saturated fat
- Sodium
- Sugars
- Fiber
- Protein
- Iron

How does the ratio of nutrients like protein, fiber, and iron compare to the ratio of calories, fat, sodium, and sugar?

If we were to eat more than one serving of cookies, how would that change the amount of these nutrients we consume?

Now we will use the ingredient list to find out a little more about our cookies. What is the first ingredient? Does it have the words “whole grain” to describe it? What does this mean about the flour used in the cookies?

Some ingredients, such as sugar, can be tricky to find because they go by many different names. Other names for sugar include corn syrup, high-fructose corn syrup, sucrose, maltose, honey, cane syrup, dextrose, and fruit juice concentrate. Read through the list of ingredients. Who can tell me how many different sugars were used to make these cookies? Where did the sugars appear in the order of ingredients?

What can you conclude about these cookies?

Away

Over the next week, look at labels on different kinds of food packages. How might reading the label change what and how much you eat? Try to find a food label that really surprised you to bring in. We will discuss next week.



Facilitator's Notes:

Answer key to Cookie Label activity:

- Serving size – 3 cookies
- Calories – 160
- Total fat – 8 grams
- Saturated fat – 2.5 grams
- Sodium – 110 milligrams (5% DV)
- Sugars – 11 grams (no %DV listed because there is no recommended intake of sugars)
- Fiber – 1 gram (4% DV)
- Protein – 2 grams (4% DV)
- Iron – 4% DV (amount not listed)

Sugars in the ingredients list:

“Sugar” – 3rd ingredient

“High fructose corn syrup” – 5th ingredient

May wish to share that the ingredient “soybean oil and/or partially hydrogenated cottonseed oil” indicates that there is some amount of trans fat in the cookies, even though the Nutrition Facts label says 0 grams of trans fat. This is because labels are allowed to show 0 grams if the actual amount is less than 0.5 grams. However, eating 2 servings of cookies would yield 1 gram of trans fat, which is half of the amount that the Dietary Guidelines recommends for the day.

Facilitator's Checklist:

- ☐ Have I gathered all of the pertinent materials needed for the lesson?
- ☐ Did I spend the requisite amount of time covering each targeted message?
- ☐ Did I apply the principles of adult learning to my program?
- ☐ Did I create a comfortable and functional learning atmosphere?
- ☐ Did I fill out a Program Log with the necessary program information?
- ☐ Did I ensure that all participants signed the sign-in sheet?
- ☐ Did I read the survey instrument out loud to the participants?
- ☐ Did I collect all requisite survey instruments needed for today's lesson?

