

Mastering the label lingo

Total fat



By now, you are probably using the Nutrition Facts label in some way—maybe to check calories, fat or sodium content. Good for you! The more familiar you are with the information, the more you'll want to use it daily to ensure you're eating a healthy, balanced diet. Use the label when you shop, as you plan your meals and as you cook each day. The label makes it easy to check the amounts of nutrients you're getting and to compare one product to another.

What is total fat?

The total fat listed on the Nutrition Facts label is the number of fat grams contained in one serving of the food. Fat is an important nutrient that your body uses for growth and development, but you should limit the amount you eat. Follow these label guidelines when choosing fats:

- To help reduce your risk of heart disease, use the label to select foods that are lowest in saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol.
- Trans fat doesn't have a separate Percent Daily Value (PDV), but you should consume as little as possible because it increases your risk of heart disease.
- The PDV for total fat includes all different kinds of fats.
- To help lower blood cholesterol, replace saturated and trans fats with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats found in fish, nuts and liquid vegetable oils.



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Figuring out the fats



The nutrients listed first on the Nutrition Facts label are the ones Americans generally eat in adequate amounts, or even too much. So keep in mind that total fat is near the top of the list. A diet that includes fat in moderation can help lower your risk for certain chronic diseases and put you on the path to good health.

Fats on the Nutrition Facts label

Dietary cholesterol, saturated fat, unsaturated and trans fats are listed on the Nutrition Facts label. Foods high in saturated fat, cholesterol and trans fat tend to raise blood cholesterol levels. Learn the different types of fats so you can make wise food choices.

Saturated fats are found in high-fat dairy products (cheese, whole milk, butter), fatty meats, poultry skin and fat, lard, palm oil and coconut oil. Limit these foods.

Cholesterol is in liver and other organ meats, egg yolks and dairy fats. Limit these foods.

Trans fats include partially hydrogenated vegetable oils, such as many hard margarines and shortenings. Foods that contain a high amount of these ingredients include some fried foods and bakery goods. Limit these foods.

Unsaturated fats are found in vegetable oils, most nuts, olives, avocados and fatty fish like salmon. Use moderate amounts of these foods and avoid excess calories.

Feeling flustered by the food label guidelines? Help is just a couple of clicks away with nutrition advice from the Personal Health Manager's *Ask A Dietitian* feature—one of the many health and wellness resources available from Blue Access® for Members.