



# **How to read a food label Part 1: Serving Size and Calories**

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For those of us wanting to get into the new year eating right and making healthier choices, here are a few pointers when picking foods off the shelf. I suggest starting at the top of the label. Glance at the serving size and the number of servings in the package. Most foods have more than one serving in the package. Second in line is the calorie amount. Calories are a measure of energy you get from food. The General Guide to Calories is based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Eating too many calories in a day can lead to obesity. As an example, let's take the label for Kraft macaroni and cheese. Note that one

serving is about 1 cup. Assuming you'll eat the food after its prepared and not right out of the box, you will consume 400 calories with that one cup of mac 'n cheese.

N u t r i t i o n   F a c t s			
Serving Size 2.5 oz (70g / about 1/3 Box) (Makes about 1 cup)			
Servings Per Container about 3			
Amount Per Serving		As Packaged	As Prepared
Calories		260	400
Calories From Fat		30	170
% Daily Value **			
Total Fat	3.5g*	5 %	29 %
Saturated Fat	1.5g	8 %	23 %
Trans Fat	0g		
Cholesterol	15mg	5 %	5 %
Sodium	580mg	24 %	30 %
Total Carbohydrate	47g	16 %	16 %
Dietary Fiber	1g	4 %	4 %
Sugars	6g		
Protein	10g	11%	13%
Vitamin A		0 %	15 %
Vitamin C		0 %	0 %
Calcium		10 %	15 %
Iron		10 %	10 %
* Amount in Box. Margarine and 2% Reduced Fat Milk preparation adds 15.5g total fat (3g sat fat, 4g trans fat), 130mg sodium, 2g total carbohydrate (1g sugars), and <1 g protein.			
** 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
Saturated 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
Protein		50g	65g

INGREDIENTS: ENRICHED MACARONI PRODUCT (WHEAT FLOUR, NIACIN, FERROUS SULFATE [IRON], THIAMIN MONONITRATE [VITAMIN B1], RIBOFLAVIN [VITAMIN B2], FOLIC ACID); CHEESE SAUCE MIX (WHEY, MILKFAT, MILK PROTEIN CONCENTRATE, SALT, SODIUM TRIPOLYPHOSPHATE, CONTAINS LESS THAN 2% OF CITRIC ACID, LACTIC ACID, SODIUM PHOSPHATE, CALCIUM PHOSPHATE, MILK, YELLOW 5, YELLOW 6, ENZYMES, CHEESE CULTURE)

CONTAINS: WHEAT, MILK.

Now let's assume that one mere cup of mac 'n cheese doesn't satiate your hunger and you eat the whole box. How many servings are in the whole box? The answer is 3. So, let's multiply the amount of calories (400) by 3. That equals 1200 calories. Simply put, that's a lot of calories, especially if you want to eat something besides one box of Macaroni and Cheese in a day. If you ate one box of that for lunch, what about the calories from breakfast and dinner? What about the soda you drank at lunch? That 12 oz can of Coke cost you another 140 calories. You can see it is easy to accumulate more than the standard 2,000 calories per day. Several "diets" reduce you to 1800 or even a more stringent 1200 calories per day. On a 1200-calorie per day diet, once you eat that one box of mac 'n cheese, you're done. Well, besides water. This is not to say that you

it is lower in fat.



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