

Understanding the Nutrition Label

If you have or your loved one has cystic fibrosis, it may be useful to familiarize yourself with food labels, while leaning on your care team for guidance, to make choices that suit your individual needs.

Breaking down the nutrition facts

1. Serving information

Start by noting the serving size and servings in the package (ie: servings per container) when looking at a food label. Familiar units are given (eg: tablespoons), as well as their metric units (eg: grams).



TIP:

Everyday objects can help you visualize serving sizes!

- 1 cup = a baseball
- 1 tablespoon = a poker chip
- 3 ounces = a deck of cards
- 1 ounce = a golf ball

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 2 Tbsp (32g)

Servings Per Container About 25

Amount Per Serving

Calories 190 Calories from Fat 140

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 16g	25%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
<i>Trans</i> Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 150mg	6%
Total Carbohydrate 6g	2%
Dietary Fiber 2g	8%
Sugars 3g	
Protein 7g	7%
Vitamin A 0%	• Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 0%	• Iron 2%
Vitamin E 10%	• Niacin 20%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

2. Calories

Calories are a measure of how much energy you get from a serving of food.



TIP:

Everyone's individual caloric needs are different and some people with CF may require more calories than someone without CF—up to double the amount! Work with your care team to determine the right target for you or your loved one!

3. Nutrients

If you have or your loved one has CF, pay extra attention to the following values:

- **Fats:** Fat helps the body function properly and also helps meet increased calorie needs. Find out more about the different types of fats found on a food label [in this article](#).
- **Sodium:** People with CF have a high concentration of salt (sodium) in their sweat, so it's important to replenish lost salt through dietary intake.
- **Carbohydrates:** This is one of the body's main sources of energy. One of the main types of carbohydrate found in foods is fiber, which helps move food through the digestive tract and can be found in all plant sources—like whole grains and fruits.



TIP:

It's recommended the majority of fat intake to come from unsaturated fats for a healthy heart.

4. Daily Values

A % Daily Value (%DV) indicates how much a nutrient will contribute to a full day's diet within a serving of food, **based on a 2,000 calorie diet**.

It's important to remember individuals have diverse dietary requirements, and the needs of a child differ from an adult due to fluctuating energy and nutrient requirements as we age.



TIP:

5% DV or less per serving is considered low, and **20% DV or more** per serving is considered high.



Beyond the Nutrition Facts Table

1. Ingredients:

Ingredients are listed by weight, from most to least, and different names for commonly used ingredients (eg: sugar) can be used interchangeably. For example, “fructose” or “glucose” may be listed—which really just mean sugar.

Ingredients & Allergens

Roasted peanuts, sugar, hydrogenated vegetable oil (cottonseed, soybean and rapeseed oil) to prevent separation, salt.

Contains: Peanuts and Soy

7g
protein*



2. Allergens & food restrictions:

There are 8 major food allergens: **milk, eggs, fish, shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, and soybeans**. Food labels are required to identify all major allergens in the food, either by clearly listing it in the ingredients (eg: peanuts) or by a “Contains” statement (eg: Contains Peanuts). If you have a restriction beyond the 8 major allergens, make sure to be diligent when looking at a food label.

3. Marketing claims:

Packaged foods may include nutrition claims, including **nutrient content claims** that use terms like **free, high, and reduced** to describe the amount of a nutrient in the product, and **health claims** which communicate possible health benefits. Labels with claims like “gluten-free” and “halal” can be especially helpful for people with specific dietary preferences or restrictions.



TIP: Watch out for claims that don't need support to be used—like the word “natural,” as there are no mandated requirements to use this word on a package.

What about food without a label?

Some foods will not have a label, like single-ingredient items (ie: produce and raw meat), prepared items at local cafes, and some restaurants. Nutrition facts of single-ingredient foods can be easily found on the internet, and when eating out you can ask your server for nutrition and allergen details. Don't hesitate to ask questions and advocate for yourself when you're out to eat or cooking at home!

Get even more nutrition tips at [Everyday-CF.com](https://www.everyday-cf.com).

