

Sodium: How to Read Food Labels

Reading food labels can help you monitor how much **sodium** you are getting in your diet. Here are some of the key parts to check:

Notice the **servicing size**. Is that the same portion as you are eating? If your serving size increases, then the amount of sodium you eat also increases.

This product has **2 servings per container**. If you eat the whole amount you will need to double the sodium content.

Sodium is listed in milligrams. A food low in sodium should have about 140 milligrams or less per serving.

Nutrition Facts			
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)			
Servings per Container 2			
Amount Per Serving			
Calories 280	Calories from Fat 120		
		% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 13g			20%
Saturated Fat 5g			25%
Trans Fat 2g			
Cholesterol 2mg			10%
Sodium 660mg			28%
Total Carbohydrate 31g			10%
Dietary Fiber 3g			0%
Sugars 5g			
Protein 5g			
Vitamin A 4%	*	Vitamin C 2%	
Calcium 15%	*	Iron 4%	
*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
Sat. Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Fiber		25g	30g
Calories per gram:			
Fat 9	*	Carbohydrate 4	* Protein 4
Ingredients: Granola, sugar, whole grain rolled wheat, high fructose corn syrup, sodium phosphate, vegetable oil, sorbitol, potassium chloride, fructose, soy, lecithin.			

Notice the **% Daily Value**. This percentage is based on 2400 milligrams of sodium a day. But if you're on a low-sodium diet, your daily value should be 2000 milligrams or less.

If you eat one serving of this product — and it has 660 milligrams of sodium per serving — your actual percentage of sodium would be 33%, slightly higher than listed.

The **ingredients list** will show you every ingredient in the product. The higher an ingredient appears on the list, the larger the percentage of that ingredient is in the food.

If any of the following items appear at the top of the list, you can expect the product will be high in sodium:

- **Salt**
- **Monosodium glutamate (MSG)**
- **Sodium bicarbonate**
- **Sodium phosphate**
- **Anything pickled, brine cured, or smoked**

Low-sodium label hints

The label might say it is "**low sodium**," but how do you know how much that really is? Here's a cheat sheet:

Sodium free — Less than 5 milligrams of sodium per serving

Very low sodium — 35 milligrams or less of sodium per serving

Low sodium — 149 milligrams or less of sodium per serving

Reduced sodium — 25% less sodium than the original version

No added salt or unsalted — No salt is added during the processing (this does not guarantee the food product is sodium-free)

Light in sodium — 50% less sodium than the product it is compared to

Dietitian: _____

Phone: _____

Facility: _____

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This handout is intended for use during an appointment with a registered dietitian only, and is not meant for use by other clinicians.