

Kidney Health: How to read food labels

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

This product has **8 servings** in this container. If you eat more than 1 serving, you may eat more calories and ingredients than intended.

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

Phosphorus is not required to be on the label. To see if it has been added to the food, check the ingredients list for anything that has the word “phos” in it, like:

- **Phosphoric acid**
- Sodium **phosphate**
- Sodium acid **pyrophosphate**
- Calcium **phosphate**

| Nutrition Facts | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| 8 servings per container | |
| Serving size | 2/3 cup (55g) |
| Amount per serving | |
| Calories | 230 |
| % Daily Value* | |
| Total Fat 8g | 10% |
| Saturated Fat 1g | 5% |
| <i>Trans Fat</i> 0g | |
| Cholesterol 0mg | 0% |
| Sodium 160mg | 7% |
| Total Carbohydrate 37g | 13% |
| Dietary Fiber 4g | 14% |
| Total Sugars 12g | |
| Includes 10g Added Sugars | 20% |
| Protein 3g | |
| Vitamin D 2mcg | 10% |
| Calcium 260mg | 20% |
| Iron 8mg | 45% |
| Potassium 240mg | 6% |

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Sodium content is available on food labels. The front of the label might say the product is “low in sodium,” but how do you know how much that is? Here’s a cheat sheet:

- **Sodium-free:** Less than 5 milligrams per serving
- **Very low sodium:** Less than 35 milligrams per serving
- **Low sodium:** Less than 149 milligrams per serving
- **High sodium:** Greater than 400 milligrams per serving

Potassium may not be listed, but check the ingredients list. The higher it appears on the list, the more potassium is in the food.

Other things to look for:

- **Protein:** Your body needs protein to help build muscles and bones. Discuss with your dietitian the appropriate amount of protein for you to eat.
- **Fiber:** Fiber is important for maintaining digestive health, controlling blood sugar, and lowering cholesterol. Choose foods with higher fiber content, such as low potassium fruits and vegetables and whole grains. Aim for 25 to 30 grams of fiber per day.
- **Sodium:** Choose food items with less than 250 milligrams per serving.

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.

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