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Decoding Food Labels

Reading food labels can help you make healthier and more informed food choices. While labels may seem confusing at first, they provide important information about what is in your food and how the information fits into your overall diet. Use the tips below to better understand and use food labels in your daily life.

- **Start with the serving size.** Always check the serving size first, as all nutrition information on the label is based on this information. The serving size helps you understand how much you are actually consuming.
- **Pay attention to calories.** Be mindful of how many calories you are consuming per serving, especially if you eat more than one serving.
- **Look for nutrient-dense options.** Choose foods that are higher in beneficial nutrients such as fiber, protein, vitamins, and minerals to support overall health.
- **Limit some ingredients.** Select foods lower in added sugars, sodium, and saturated fats to help reduce the risk of chronic disease.
- **Check the ingredient list.** Ingredients are listed from highest to lowest amount (weight/volume), so look for whole foods and avoid products with artificial additives and preservatives, and highly processed ingredients.
- **Be aware of allergens.** Food labels identify common allergens, which is especially important for individuals with food allergies or sensitivities.
- **Use labels for portion control.** Serving size information can help guide how much you should eat and prevent overeating.
- **Compare products.** Use food labels to compare similar products and choose healthier options.

Make it a habit to read food labels before purchasing or consuming foods to support healthier, more informed choices.



Presented by
Susan Kim, MS, RDN, CCTD
Nutrition & Wellness Manager
USC Transplant Institute
Keck Medicine of USC



To view the recording of this session, visit the EatWell Bites webpage: <https://workwell.usc.edu/events/eatwell-bites/>



213-821-0800



workwell@usc.edu



workwell.usc.edu