



UNDERSTANDING NUTRITION LABELS .

BY MECHELLE MEADOWS

Happy National Nutrition Month! Here's to a month of making healthy, conscious decisions about the type of foods and ingredients we eat. Let's start with flipping over that package or canned good to find the nutrition label.

Nutrition labels can be confusing, so here are three easy tips for reading them:

1. **Look at the serving size first.** Often the container you are eating or drinking from holds more than one serving, so you may unintentionally consume more calories than you think.

2. **Limit calories from saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium.** These three items are listed toward the upper middle of the food label.
3. **Eat foods higher in beneficial nutrients.** These include dietary fiber, protein, and vitamins and minerals, such as Vitamin A, Vitamin C, calcium, and iron.

These three tips can help you quickly review a food to see if it's a healthy choice or a splurge that can be saved for a special treat.

Source: American Heart Association. healthyforgood.heart.org/eat-smart/articles/understanding-food-nutrition-labels. Accessed 7 February 2018.

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Smart Facts

1,500 MG

is the ideal daily limit of sodium, recommended by the American Heart Association.

MORE THAN 75%

of the sodium Americans eat comes from processed, prepackaged, and restaurant foods.

5 CALORIES

or less in any food makes it defined as "calorie free."

Sources: American Heart Association. sodiumbreakup.heart.org/how_much_sodium_should_i_eat. Accessed 7 February 2018.

Guiding Stars. guidingstars.com/guiding-stars-news/10-surprisingly-unfamiliar-nutrition-facts-label-facts/. Accessed 7 February 2018.



IS HEALTHY EATING REALLY MORE EXPENSIVE ?

BY RACHEL SAVIEO

How many times have you heard about dollar menu items and cheap combo meals at fast food restaurants? These cheap deals can make it easy to believe eating healthy must cost far more than a meal at the local burger joint. The truth is you can maintain a healthy diet on a budget by making smart choices as you shop. Here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- **Don't wait to get to the store to see what's on sale.** You may be swayed to purchase what's on sale in addition to the items you came to buy and can end up spending more than you planned. Instead, review the store's flyer before you go to determine the meals you will have for the week, and create a list based on that.
- **Buy in-season produce.** It can be easy to get into a routine and buy the same fruits and vegetables year-round. But in-season produce is more economical and has higher quality. It also helps you stay on track to a complete diet that includes a variety of vitamins and minerals.
- **Save on protein.** Meat and poultry are often the most expensive items in your grocery cart. Help your budget by considering alternatives to meat and chicken, such as beans, eggs, nuts, or fish.
- **"Healthy" doesn't necessarily mean "organic."** Unless you have a medical condition, you can have a balanced diet without worrying about labels like 'organic' and 'gluten-free'. Simply focus on eating more whole foods, rather than those that are processed.
- **Look on the lower shelf.** Food companies spend millions of dollars in product placement to have their products right in your line of sight at the store. You can usually find generic or lower-cost items on the shelves below.
- **Have a 'pantry meal' once a month.** Financial guru Pete the Planner suggests this as a way to ensure you have "free" meals once in a while. The idea is to not buy any specific ingredients for a meal, and create a free meal from items that are already in your pantry or freezer. This can be a fun family activity to bring out creativity while eating well on a budget.



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It can be tempting to go for the \$4 fast food meal, but keep in mind the real long-term costs of an unhealthy diet. It's okay to go for the quick meals once in a while, but maintain an overall well-balanced diet with plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables to ensure you have a long, healthy life.

Sources: Huffington Post. [huffingtonpost.com/margaret-marshall/is-eating-healthy-really-_b_9069318.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/margaret-marshall/is-eating-healthy-really-_b_9069318.html). Accessed 31 January 2018.
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Pete the Planner. [petetheplanner.com/8-tips-for-keeping-your-grocery-budget-in-check/](https://www.petetheplanner.com/8-tips-for-keeping-your-grocery-budget-in-check/). Accessed 31 January 2018.

IS A DIETITIAN PART OF THE PLAN ?

BY JOHN THOMAS

Eating well is certainly its own reward, but is learning how to eat well a covered benefit? Under some health plans, the answer is “yes” because they cover visits with a registered dietitian, nutritional counseling, or similar services. To find out if you’re covered, consider these steps:

- **Check your policy.** This might seem obvious, but many employees never look at their plan documents.
- **Ask.** Your benefits provider has a toll-free number you can call or an email address you can use to get answers. If you don’t get answers, ask your HR team to help.
- **Be specific.** Ask specifically whether your plan covers visits with a registered dietitian or nutrition counselor, and under what conditions. Some plans cover such services as preventive care, while others cover them for certain diagnoses.
- **Check on referrals.** You might need to be referred by your primary care provider for dietitian services to be covered.
- **Know who you’re seeing.** Coverage typically depends on who delivers services. Are you visiting a nutrition counselor? A registered dietitian? Something else? The answer to that could dictate whether or not you’re covered.
- **Know the limits.** Plans that do cover dietitian services often limit the number of covered visits.
- **Know your diagnosis.** In many cases, coverage depends on your diagnosis. For example, plans might provide coverage for children with autism, obese adults, people with diabetes or hypertension, and other conditions.
- **Talk to your doc.** Even with plans that do cover dietitian and/or nutritionist services, the way your provider codes your bill can make a difference in your coverage. Make sure your provider codes your bill correctly, reflecting any diagnoses that would be affected by such services.



March is National Nutrition Month[®]

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics designated March as National Nutrition Month[®]. This year’s theme is “Go Further with Food.” It’s a reminder that the food we choose to fuel our day and activities can make a real difference. It also encourages us to plan meals and snacks in advance to help reduce food loss and waste. Learn more at eatright.org/nnm.

Source: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. eatright.org/resource/food/resources/national-nutrition-month/toolkit. Accessed 1 February 2018.

HARVEST OF THE MONTH: GUAVAS

BY MEGAN MILLER

Perhaps you've heard "an apple a day keeps the doctor away?" In some tropical climates, the phrase can probably change to "a few guavas in the season keep the doctor away for the whole year." Guavas, though little known, boast an overwhelming amount of benefits for your health. They have antioxidant properties, are proven to inhibit the growth and metastasis of cancerous cells, control diabetes, improve eyesight, regulate blood pressure, improve thyroid health, treat scurvy, eliminate diarrhea and dysentery, relieve constipation, reduce oxidative stress, and assist in dental care.

How to Select

Guavas come in many varieties like yellow, red, or purple, and can have flesh that is yellow, pink, or red. Pick a fresh, ripe guava, free of blemishes. The fruit should give to gentle pressure.

How to Store

Refrigerate ripe guavas immediately, and use within four days. If your guava needs to ripen first, store it on the counter for a day or two.



How to Prepare

Guavas can be eaten raw, juiced, sliced, or even added on top of ice cream! Wash the fruit under running water, then halve. Remove the fibrous center and the seeds; the seeds are actually edible, and contain dietary fiber. Fruit/vegetable smoothies are a very common method of consuming guavas.

Sources: Organic Facts. organicfacts.net/health-benefits/fruit/health-benefits-of-guava.html. Accessed 9 January 2018.
Produce for Better Health Foundation. fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/guava. Accessed 9 January 2018.



Recipe: Pineapple Guava and Strawberry Smoothie

Ingredients (makes 8 servings):

1 cup peeled, seeded, and chopped pineapple guava
6 medium strawberries, hulled and halved
1 cup ice
¼ cup plain yogurt
¼ cup orange juice
2 Tbsp agave nectar
2 crosswise slices guava

Directions:

1. Whirl pineapple guava, strawberries, yogurt, orange juice, and agave nectar with 1 cup ice in blender until smooth, about 1 minute.
2. Pour into two glasses and garnish each with a slice of guava.

Nutrition Information:

PER SERVING: 135 calories, 2g fat, 0.9g saturated fat, 4mg cholesterol, 17mg sodium, 28g carbohydrates, 6.1g fiber, 3.8g protein

Source: MyRecipes. myrecipes.com/recipe/pineapple-guava-strawberry-smoothie. Accessed 8 January 2018.