

Nutritional Information and Data

Key Words

Nutrition Profile: the type and amount of different nutrients a food product contains.

Nutritional requirement: The amount of each nutrient needed daily for individuals and different life stages

Nutritional analysis: finding out how much of each nutrient is in a portion of food (e.g. 100g), or a whole recipe, or a food product you make or buy.

Dietary Reference Value: The amount of a nutrient that is enough to ensure that the needs of nearly all the adult population (97.5%) are being met. By definition, many within the group will need less.

GDA (Guideline Daily Amounts): guide to the amounts of calories (kcal/Kj) sugar, fat, saturated fat and salt an average adult should aim to eat (and not exceed) to have a healthy, balanced diet).

What are nutritional requirements?

People need many different nutrients if they are to maintain health and reduce the risk of diet-related diseases. These are different for each nutrient and also vary between individuals and life stages, e.g. women of childbearing age need more iron than men.

Why do nutritional requirements vary?

Each nutrient has a particular series of functions in the body and some nutrients are needed in larger quantities than others. For example, protein is needed in gram (g) quantities. Vitamin C is needed in milligram (mg) quantities (1/1000 gram) and vitamin B₁₂ is needed in microgram (µg) quantities (1/1000000 gram). Individual requirements of each nutrient are related to a person's age, gender, level of physical activity and state of health. Also, some people absorb or utilise nutrients less efficiently than others and so will have higher than average nutritional requirements, e.g. among older people, vitamin B₁₂ absorption can be relatively poor.

The food label must show **per 100g or 100ml** and **per serving**. Per 100g. This helps consumers work out the percentage of each nutrient for comparison with similar products of the **identical** weight or volume. The amount of nutrients **per portion** of the food product. This helps consumers understand how much energy and nutrients are supplied by a whole portion of the product.

How is nutritional information shown as a food label?

Nutrient	Per 100g	Per serving (150 g)
Energy	586kj/140 kcal	879kj/210kcal
Fat:	1.5g	2.25g
Of which:		
Saturates	0.2g	0.3g
Monounsaturates	0.9g	1.35g
Polyunsaturates	0.4g	0.6g
Carbohydrate	50.0g	75.0g
Of which:		
Sugars	2.5g	3.25g
Starch	42.0g	63.0g
Fibre	5.5g	8.25g
Protein	8.0g	12.0g
Salt	0.2g	0.3g

How to read and understand nutrition needs on a food label: It is used to inform customers about the nutritional profile of a food product.

The nutrients that are required by law to be included are:

Energy value: kilojoules (kj) and kilocalories (kcal)

Protein grams (g)

Fat (total): (g)

Saturated fats: (g)

Carbohydrate (total): (g)

Sugars: (g)

Salt (NOT) sodium because the word salt is known to consumers (g)

Other nutrients that, if included, **must** be written in

100g/100ml serving (this is voluntary):

Monounsaturated fats (monounsaturates) (g)

Polyunsaturated fats (polyunsaturates) (g)

Polyols (sugar free sweeteners): (g)

Starch: (g)

Fibre: (g)

Fibre: (g)

Any vitamin or mineral present in significant amounts: Micrograms (µg) or Milligrams (mg)

If a health claim is made about a food product e.g. 'This product is high in Iron' the amount that is present must be shown near the nutritional value table

The **Food Standards Agency** have designed a simple visual way called the **Traffic Light Labelling System'** to enable consumers to identify if food products have high, medium or low amounts of fat, saturates, sugar or salt using the traffic light labelling system.

RED means that the food product contains a **HIGH** amount of fat, saturates, sugar or salt.

AMBER means that the food product contains a **MEDIUM** amount of fat, saturates, sugar or salt.

GREEN means that the food product contains a **LOW**

The colours explained when thinking about fat, saturated fat, sugars and salt:

Red = high danger level, poor choice for healthy eating, e.g. butter in fried products.

Amber = caution in quantities eaten e.g. sugar in fruit.

Green = free to go low levels. Healthiest choice, e.g. vegetables



For the average adult, this is the **Guideline to Daily Amounts (GDA)**

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Per 100g of food			
	Low	Medium	High
Fat	Less than 3g	3g - 20g	More than 20g
Saturated fat	Less than 1.5g	1.5g - 5g	More than 5g
Salt	Less than 0.3g	0.3g - 1.5g	More than 1.5g
Sugars	Less than 5g	5g - 15g	More than 15g

The traffic light labelling system helps the consumer with food choices because it:

- *Increases consumer awareness of suitability of foods for them and their age, gender and Physical Activity Level (PAL).
- *Allows consumer to make **informed** choices
- *Allows consumer to make comparisons between products/work out health benefits of food products.
- *Presents accurate up to date information on salt, fats, sugar content for their RNI (Reference Nutrient intake)
- *The information is linked to the %GDA (guided daily amounts) the person is recommended to eat.
- *Quickly identifies nutritional content levels of the food
- *Instant, visual information allowing quick access to nutrient content especially for people who do not have English as a first language.
- *Easy to read/interpret because it uses the traffic light colour where red is linked to stop or danger.

Consumers should aim for more green, less red and moderate amounts of amber foods.

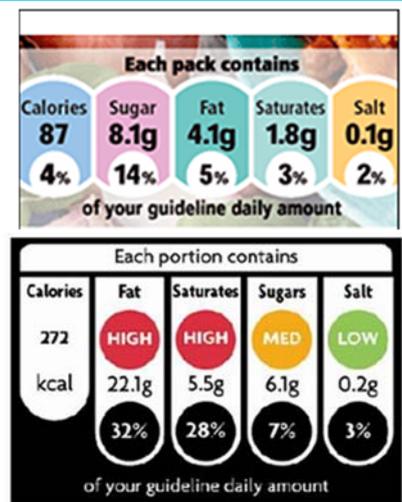
Where red or amber are used, the consumer can adjust the other foods eaten in the day to balance out the ambers and reds.

So, why do the following appear on nutritional labels on food products:

The amount of different types of fat: So that consumers can manage their consumption of saturates (linked to CHD) and polyunsaturates.

The amount of sugars: So that consumers who are managing their intake of sugar for a kilocalorie reduced or diabetic diet can manage the amount of sugar per portion/100g or ml.

The amount of fibre: Consumers requiring a high or low fibre diet can see the amount they are consuming



Factors to consider when planning meals:

- **Healthy eating:** How to produce balanced meals which meet the dietary guidelines, for example, DRV or the Eatwell Guide for different life stages.
- **Physical activity level (PAL):** Whether physically active or mostly sedentary (inactive), which will affect how much energy different people need from food every day.
- **Income/cost of food:** How much families have to spend on food. Having a food budget will help families to plan meals.
- **Eating habits:** Meal times, eating with others or eating alone, snacking or grazing. Each family member's likes and dislikes for different foods.
- **Celebration/occasion/religion:** Different religious and cultural factors may affect what food is purchased, for example, Muslims buy halal meat.
- **Preferences/enjoyment:** The family's likes and dislikes will be important in what food should be purchased.
- **Food availability/seasonality:** Many families prefer to buy food in season – this can improve sensory characteristics and reduction in food miles.