

## **Highlights of the New Nutrition Facts Label**

By Laurie Bates

To help make it easier for you to choose your family's foods wisely, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is changing the Nutrition Facts label for packaged foods.

The redesign of the 20-year-old Nutrition Facts layout will give consumers access to more recent and accurate nutrition information about the foods we're eating. The FDA based the changes on updated scientific information, new nutrition and public health research, dietary recommendations from experts, and public input.

The familiar look of the label remains, but the updates will help ensure you have access to additional useful information.

The changes include increasing the type size for: "Calories", "Servings per container", and "Serving size".

The number of calories and the serving size are in bold on the new labels.

The new labels will also state the actual amount of vitamin D, calcium, iron and potassium, in addition to the percent of Daily Value. Food manufacturers may voluntarily declare the gram amount for other vitamins and minerals.

The footnote is changing to better explain what the percent Daily Value means. It will read: "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."

### **New Label Reflects Updated Information About Nutritional Science**

"Added sugars" will be listed on the new label in grams and as percent Daily Value. We've learned that it may be hard to meet nutrient needs while staying within calorie limits if you consume more than 10 percent of your total daily calories from added sugar. The addition of this information will reflect the *dietary guidelines* urging Americans to cut down on sugars from processed foods such as cakes and cookies.

- The list of nutrients required or permitted on the label is being updated. Vitamin D and potassium will be required on the label. Calcium and iron will still be required. Vitamins A and C are no longer required but may be included on a voluntary basis.
- "Total Fat," "Saturated Fat," and "Trans Fat" will still be required. But the FDA is removing "Calories from Fat" because research shows the type of fat is more important than the amount.
- Daily values for nutrients like sodium, dietary fiber and vitamin D are being updated based on newer scientific evidence. Daily values are recommended amounts of nutrients to consume or to not exceed and are used to calculate the percent Daily Value (% DV) that manufacturers include on the label. The % DV helps us understand the nutrition information in the context of a total daily diet.

### **The Label Changes Updates Serving Sizes and Labeling**

By law, serving sizes must be based on amounts of foods and beverages that people *actually* eat, not what they *should* eat. Since the serving size requirements' publication in 1993, how much people eat and drink has changed. For example, the reference amount used to set a serving of ice cream was previously ½ cup but is changing to ⅔ cup. The reference amount used to set a serving of soda is changing from 8 ounces to 12 ounces.

Package size affects what people eat. So for packages that are between one and two servings, such as a 20-ounce soda or a 15-ounce can of soup, the calories and other nutrients will be labeled as one serving because people typically consume it in one sitting.

For certain products that are larger than a single serving but that could be consumed in one sitting or multiple sittings, manufacturers will provide “dual column” labels to list the amount of calories and nutrients on both a “per serving” and “per package”/ “per unit” basis. Examples would be a 24-ounce bottle of soda or a pint of ice cream. With dual-column labels, we'll easily understand how many calories and nutrients we're getting if we eat or drink the entire package/unit at one time. Some of the changes, such as the addition of vitamin D and potassium and deletion of vitamin A and C reflect changes in our eating patterns. Surveys have found we don't get enough of vitamin D and potassium, but we tend to get enough of A and C, which manufactures may still list if they choose.

### **Compliance Date**

The FDA extended the compliance dates for the Nutrition Facts and Supplement Facts label and the Serving Size, from July 26, 2018 to January 1, 2020, for manufacturers with \$10 million or more in annual food sales. Manufacturers with less than \$10 million in annual food sales would receive an extra year to comply – until January 1, 2021.

<https://www.fda.gov>