

The nutrition facts label: Deciphering calorie counts to make smarter food choices.

Santos Lima*

Department of Food Technology, Institute Federal of Sertão Pernambucano, Petrolina, Brazil

Introduction

The nutrition facts label is a powerful tool that can help you make smarter food choices. It provides important information about the nutrient content of food, including the calorie count [1]. In this comprehensive guide, we will explore how to decipher calorie counts on the nutrition facts label so that you can make informed decisions about what you eat.

Understanding calories

Calories are a measure of the energy content of food. The number of calories in food is determined by the amount of carbohydrates, protein, and fat it contains [2]. Carbohydrates and protein provide four calories per gram, while fat provides nine calories per gram. Alcohol also provides seven calories per gram.

The importance of calorie counting

Calorie counting is the process of tracking the number of calories you consume in your diet each day. It is an essential tool for anyone who wants to lose weight, maintain their weight or improve their overall health. Counting calories can help you achieve your goals by providing a clear picture of how much energy you are taking in and how much you are burning through physical activity [3].

Here are some reasons why calorie counting is important:

Weight loss: Calorie counting can help you lose weight by creating a calorie deficit. This means that you consume fewer calories than you burn through physical activity, which leads to weight loss. Knowing how many calories you are consuming and burning helps you make informed choices about what to eat and how much to exercise.

Portion control: Calorie counting helps you to understand appropriate portion sizes for different types of food. You can easily determine the calorie content of your food and adjust your serving sizes accordingly. This can help prevent overeating, which is a common cause of weight gain.

Nutrient balance: Calorie counting can help you maintain a healthy balance of macronutrients (protein, carbohydrates, and fat) and micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) in your diet. By tracking the number of calories you consume from

each macronutrient group, you can ensure that you are getting the right amount of each nutrient your body needs.

Improved health: Calorie counting can lead to improved overall health. By tracking your calorie intake, you can identify unhealthy habits and make positive changes to your diet. You can also learn to make healthier food choices and improve your diet overall.

Accountability: Counting calories can help keep you accountable for what you eat. It provides a way to track your progress and see the results of your efforts. This can be motivating and help you stay on track towards your health goals.

Deciphering calorie counts on the nutrition facts label

a. **Serving size:** The serving size listed on the nutrition facts label is important because it tells you how much of the food you are eating contains the number of calories listed on the label.

b. **Calories:** The number of calories listed on the label is the total number of calories in one serving of the food. This number is based on the serving size listed on the label.

c. **Daily value:** The daily value listed on the label is the recommended amount of the nutrient that the average person should consume per day. The daily value for calories is 2,000 calories per day.

d. **Nutrients:** The nutrition facts label also provides information about the nutrients in food, including carbohydrates, protein, fat, fiber, and vitamins and minerals. This information can be used to make informed decisions about the nutrient content of food and to ensure that you are getting the nutrients your body needs.

Making smarter food choices

a. **Focus on whole foods:** Whole foods, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins, are typically lower in calories and higher in nutrients than processed foods. Focus on incorporating more whole foods into your diet to help manage your calorie intake and ensure that you are getting the nutrients your body needs.

b. **Pay attention to portion sizes:** Understanding portion sizes is important for managing your calorie intake. Use the

*Correspondence to: Santos Lima, Department of Food Technology, Institute Federal of Sertão Pernambucano, Petrolina, Brazil, E-mail id: santoslima@gmail.com

Received: 04-Feb-2023, Manuscript No. AAJNHH-23-90415; Editor assigned: 07-Feb-2023, Pre QC No. AAJNHH-23-90415(PQ); Reviewed: 21-Feb-2023, QC No. AAJNHH-23-90415; Revised: 23-Feb-2023, Manuscript No. AAJNHH-23-90415(R); Published: 27-Feb-2023, DOI: 10.35841/ajnhh-7.1.134

serving size listed on the nutrition facts label as a guide for how much of the food you should eat.

c. **Limit processed foods:** Processed foods are often high in calories, unhealthy fats, sugar, and salt. Limiting your intake of processed foods can help you manage your calorie intake and ensure that you are getting the nutrients your body needs.

d. **Be mindful of added sugars:** Added sugars can contribute to excess calorie intake and increase the risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. Pay attention to the added sugars listed on the nutrition facts label and limit your intake of foods that are high in added sugars [4, 5].

Conclusion

The nutrition facts label is a powerful tool that can help you make informed decisions about the food you eat. By understanding how to decipher calorie counts on the nutrition facts label, you can better manage your calorie intake, ensure that you are getting the nutrients your body needs, and reduce your risk of chronic diseases. Focus on incorporating more whole foods into your diet, paying attention to portion sizes, and limiting your intake of processed foods and added sugars.

By making smarter food choices, you can live a healthier, more fulfilling life.

References

1. O'Campo P, Xue X, Wang MC, et al. Neighborhood risk factors for low birthweight in Baltimore: a multilevel analysis. *Am J Public Health.* 1997;87(7):1113-8.
2. Magadi M, Madise N, Diamond IA. Factors associated with unfavourable birth outcomes in Kenya. *J Biosoc Sci.* 2001;33(2):199-225.
3. Midhet F, Becker S, Berendes HW. Contextual determinants of maternal mortality in rural Pakistan. *Soc Sci Med.* 1998;46(12):1587-98.
4. Diez-Roux AV. Bringing context back into epidemiology: variables and fallacies in multilevel analysis. *Am J Public Health.* 1998;88(2):216-22.
5. Von Korff M, Koepsell T, Curry S, et al. Multi-level analysis in epidemiologic research on health behaviors and outcomes. *Am J Epidemiol.* 1992;135(10):1077-82.