

GLOSSARY

For the purposes of the Interactive Nutrition Facts Label materials, the following terms are defined as follows:

A

Acid-Base Balance

In medicine, the state of having the right amount of acid and base in the blood and other body fluids. Keeping a normal acid-base balance is important for the body to work the way it should.

Amino Acid

A chemical building block of proteins. There are 20 standard amino acids. A protein consists of a specific sequence of amino acids. The body produces many amino acids and others come from food.

Anemia

A condition caused when the body does not have enough red blood cells or hemoglobin.

Antibodies

A protein produced by the immune system in response to a foreign substance such as a virus or bacterium.

Antioxidant

Man-made or natural substances that may prevent or delay some types of cell damage.

Arteries

A blood vessel that carries blood from the heart to tissues and organs in the body.

B

Bile

A fluid made by the liver and stored in the gallbladder. Bile is excreted into the small intestine, where it helps digest fat.

Blood Pressure

The force of blood pushing against the walls of the arteries as the heart pumps blood. It includes two measurements: systolic (blood pressure when your heart beats while pumping blood) and diastolic (blood pressure when the heart is at rest between beats). Blood pressure numbers are written with the systolic number above or before the diastolic number (for example, 120/80).

Blood Pressure, High (also called Hypertension)

A condition in which blood pressure remains elevated over time. Hypertension makes the heart work too hard, and the high force of the blood flow can harm arteries and organs, such as the heart, kidneys, brain, and eyes. Uncontrolled hypertension can lead to heart attacks, heart failure, kidney disease, stroke, and blindness.

Bowel Movement (also called Defecation)

Movement of feces (undigested food, bacteria, mucus, and cells from the lining of the intestines) through the bowel and out of the body.



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Calcium

A mineral important for optimal bone health. It is also important for many body processes, such as blood clotting, hormone secretion, muscle contraction, and nervous system function.

Calorie

A unit commonly used to measure energy content of foods and beverages as well as energy use (expenditure) by the body. A kilocalorie is equal to the amount of energy (heat) required to raise the temperature of 1 kilogram of water 1 degree centigrade. Energy is required to sustain the body's various functions, including metabolic processes and physical activity. Carbohydrate, fat, protein, and alcohol provide all of the energy supplied by foods and beverages. If not specified explicitly, references to "calories" refer to "kilocalories."

Calorie Balance

The balance between calories consumed through eating and drinking and calories expended through physical activity and metabolic processes.

Carbohydrate

One of three main nutrients in food that provide calories, or "energy" for the body. Each gram of carbohydrate provides 4 calories. The human body breaks down carbohydrates into glucose, which is the primary energy source for the body's cells, tissues, and organs.

Cardiovascular Disease

A group of diseases affecting the heart and blood vessels (arteries, capillaries, and veins). Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in both men and women in the U.S.

Cartilage

A tough, flexible tissue that lines joints and gives structure to the nose, ears, larynx, and other parts of the body.

Cavities (also called Dental Caries)

The decay of a tooth, in which it becomes softened, discolored, and/or porous.

Cell

The basic subunit of any living organism; the simplest unit capable of independent life. Although there are some single-celled organisms, such as bacteria, most organisms consist of many cells that are specialized for particular functions.

Cell Membrane

The outer membrane of a cell made up of a mix of proteins and lipids (fats) that separates the cell from its surrounding environment and regulates the materials that enter and leave the cell.

Cholesterol

A natural sterol present in all animal tissues. Free cholesterol is a component of cell membranes and serves as a precursor for steroid hormones (estrogen, testosterone, aldosterone), and for bile acids. Humans are able to synthesize sufficient cholesterol to meet biologic requirements, and there is no evidence for a dietary requirement for cholesterol.

Cholesterol, Blood

Cholesterol that travels in the serum of the blood as distinct particles containing both lipids and proteins (lipoproteins). Two kinds of lipoproteins are: high-density lipoprotein (HDL or "good") cholesterol and low-density lipoprotein (LDL or "bad") cholesterol.

Cholesterol, Dietary

Cholesterol found in foods of animal origin, including meat, seafood, poultry, eggs, and dairy products. Plant foods (such as fruits, grains, vegetables, and oils) do not contain dietary cholesterol.

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Collagen

A fibrous protein found in cartilage and other connective tissue. Among its many functions, collagen gives strength to tendons, ligaments, and bones and helps skin wounds to heal.

Connective Tissue

Tissue that supports, protects, and gives structure to other tissues and organs in the body.



Daily Value

The reference amount of a nutrient (in grams, milligrams, or micrograms) to consume or not to exceed each day. Daily Values have been established for infants through 12 months of age, children 1 through 3 years of age, adults and children 4 years of age and older, and pregnant and lactating women. For more information, visit: <https://www.fda.gov/media/99069/download>.

Daily Value, Percent (%)

% Daily Value (%DV) on the Nutrition Facts label shows how much a nutrient in a serving of the food contributes to a total daily diet. %DV is the percentage of the Daily Value for each nutrient in a serving of the food.

Dairy Products

Food products made primarily from milk of milk-producing animals, such as milk (whole, 2% reduced-fat, 1% low-fat, non-fat, evaporated, etc.), lactose-free and lactose-reduced milk, cream, butter, cultured milk, kefir, sweetened condensed milk, yogurt, ice cream, and natural and processed cheeses.

Diet

Your diet is made up of what you eat and drink. There are many different types of diets, such as vegetarian diets, weight loss diets, and diets for people with certain health problems.

Dietary Guidelines for Americans

A cornerstone of nutrition policy in the United States that is required to be published every 5 years based on current nutrition and medical science. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans are implemented by any Federal nutrition, food, or health program as a crucial tool for professionals to help Americans make healthy dietary choices to help promote health and prevent chronic disease. It serves as the evidence-based foundation for nutrition education materials that are developed by the Federal government for the public.

Digestion

The process of breaking down food into substances the body can use for energy, tissue growth, and cell repair.

Digestive System

The organs that take in food and turn it into products that the body can use to stay healthy. Waste products the body cannot use leave the body through bowel movements. The digestive system includes the mouth, salivary glands, esophagus, stomach, liver, pancreas, gallbladder, small and large intestines, and rectum.



Eating Pattern (also called Dietary Pattern)

The combination of foods and beverages that constitute an individual's complete dietary intake over time. This may be a description of a customary way of eating or a description of a combination of foods recommended for consumption.

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Energy Drink

A beverage that contains caffeine as an ingredient, along with other ingredients (such as taurine, herbal supplements, vitamins, and added sugars). It is usually marketed as a product that can improve perceived energy, stamina, athletic performance, or concentration.

Enrichment

The addition of specific nutrients (i.e., iron, thiamin, riboflavin, and niacin) to refined grain products in order to replace losses of the nutrients that occur during processing.

Enzyme

A protein that speeds up chemical reactions in the body.



Fast Food

Foods designed for ready availability, use, or consumption and sold at eating establishments for quick availability or take-out.

Fat

One of three main nutrients in food that provide calories, or “energy,” for the body. Each gram of fat provides 9 calories. Fat is necessary for proper growth and development, helps the body absorb fat-soluble vitamins, and supports key body processes (such as blood clotting, nervous system function, reproduction, and immune response).

Fat, Monounsaturated

Fatty acids that have one double bond and are usually liquid at room temperature. Sources include vegetable oils (such as canola, olive, high oleic safflower, and sunflower), as well as nuts and seeds.

Fat, Polyunsaturated

Fatty acids that have two or more double bonds and are usually liquid at room temperature. Sources include vegetable oils and some nuts and seeds. Polyunsaturated fats provide essential fats, such as *n*-3 and *n*-6 fatty acids.

Fat, Saturated

Fatty acids that have no double bonds. Fats high in saturated fatty acids are usually solid at room temperature. Sources include animal products (such as meat and dairy products) and tropical oils (such as coconut and palm oils).

Fat, Solid

Fats that are solid at room temperature. Solid fats are found in animal foods, except for seafood, and can be made from vegetable oils through hydrogenation. Some tropical plant oils, such as coconut and palm, are considered as solid fats due to their fatty acid composition. Solid fats contain more saturated fats and/or *trans* fats and less monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats compared to liquid oils. Common fats considered to be solid fats include: butter, beef fat (tallow), chicken fat, pork fat (lard), shortening, coconut oil, palm oil, and palm kernel oil. Sources of solid fats include, full-fat (regular) cheeses, creams, whole milk, ice cream, marbled cuts of meats, regular ground beef, bacon, sausages, poultry skin, and many baked goods made with solid fats (such as cookies, crackers, doughnuts, pastries, and croissants).

Fat, *Trans*

Trans fat is an unsaturated fat. *Trans* fat occurs naturally in some animal foods and is present at very low levels in refined vegetable oils, but it is not essential in the diet. Partially hydrogenated oils contain artificial *trans* fats and were the major source of *trans* fats in foods. *Trans* fat has detrimental health effects and partially hydrogenated oils are no longer added to foods.

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Fiber, Dietary

A type of carbohydrate that cannot be easily digested in the small intestine. Dietary fiber can increase the frequency of bowel movements, lower blood glucose and cholesterol levels, and reduce calorie intake. Dietary Fiber on the Nutrition Facts label includes naturally occurring fibers in plants (such as beans, fruits, nuts, peas, vegetables, seeds, whole grains, and foods made with whole grain ingredients) and certain isolated or synthetic non-digestible carbohydrates added to food that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has determined have beneficial physiological effects to human health. For more information, visit: <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-labeling-nutrition/questions-and-answers-dietary-fiber>.

Fluid Balance

A state of equilibrium in which the amount of fluid consumed equals the amount lost in urine, feces, perspiration, and exhaled water vapor.

Food Groups

A method of grouping similar foods for descriptive and guidance purposes. Food groups in the USDA Food Patterns are defined as vegetables, fruits, grains, dairy, and protein foods. Foods are grouped within food groups based on their similarity in nutritional composition and other dietary benefits. Some of these groups are divided into subgroups, such as dark-green vegetables or whole grains, which may have intake goals or limits.

Fortification

The deliberate addition of one or more essential nutrients to a food, whether or not it is normally contained in the food. Fortification may be used to prevent or correct a demonstrated deficiency in the population or specific population groups; restore naturally occurring nutrients lost during processing, storage, or handling; or to add a nutrient to a food at the level found in a comparable traditional food. When cereal grains are labeled as enriched, it is mandatory that they be fortified with folic acid.

Fruit, Whole

All fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruit (but not fruit juice).



Glucose

A simple sugar the body manufactures from carbohydrates in the diet. Glucose is the main sugar found in the blood (also called blood sugar) and the main source of energy for the body.

Grain

Seeds from certain cereal crops grown for food (such as barley, cornmeal, millet, oats, rice, and wheat).

Grain, Refined

Grains and grain products with the bran and germ removed; any grain product that is not a whole-grain product. Many refined grains are low in fiber but enriched with thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, and iron, and fortified with folic acid.

Grain, Whole

Grains and grain products made from the entire grain seed, usually called the kernel, which consists of the bran, germ, and endosperm. If the kernel has been cracked, crushed, or flaked, it must retain the same relative proportions of bran, germ, and endosperm as the original grain in order to be called whole grain. Many, but not all, whole grains are also sources of dietary fiber.

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H

Hemoglobin

A protein inside red blood cells that carries oxygen from the lungs to tissues and organs in the body and carries carbon dioxide back to the lungs.

Hormones

A messenger molecule that helps coordinate the actions of various tissues; made in one part of the body and transported, via the bloodstream, to tissues and organs elsewhere in the body.

I

Immune System

The body's system for protecting itself from viruses and bacteria or any foreign substances. It is made up of different organs, cells, and proteins.

Ingredient List

The ingredient list on food and beverage packages shows each ingredient in a food by its common or usual name. Ingredients are listed in descending order by weight, so the ingredient that weighs the most is listed first, and the ingredient that weighs the least is listed last.

Insulin

A hormone made by the islet cells of the pancreas. Insulin controls the amount of glucose in the blood by moving it into the cells, where it can be used by the body for energy.

Iron

A mineral important for red blood cell formation. It is also important for many body processes, such as growth and development, immune function, reproduction, and wound healing.

M

Meats and Poultry

Foods that come from the flesh of land animals. Organs (such as liver) are also considered to be meat or poultry.

- Meat (also known as Red Meat): all forms of beef, pork, lamb, veal, goat, and non-bird game (for example, venison, bison, and elk).
- Poultry: all forms of chicken, turkey, duck, geese, guineas, and game birds (for example, quail and pheasant).

Meats and Poultry, Lean

Any meat or poultry that contains less than 10 g of fat, 4.5 g or less of saturated fat, and less than 95 mg of cholesterol per 100 g and per labeled serving size, based on USDA definitions for food label use. Examples include 95% lean cooked ground beef, beef top round steak or roast, beef tenderloin, pork top loin chop or roast, pork tenderloin, ham or turkey deli slices, skinless chicken breast, and skinless turkey breast.

Meats and Poultry, Processed

All meat or poultry products preserved by smoking, curing, salting, and/or the addition of chemical preservatives. Processed meats and poultry include all types of meat or poultry sausages (for example, bologna, frankfurters, luncheon meats and loaves, sandwich spreads, chorizos, kielbasa, pepperoni, salami, and summer sausages), bacon, smoked or cured ham or pork shoulder, corned beef, pastrami, pig's feet, beef jerky, marinated chicken breasts, and smoked turkey products.

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Metabolism

A sequence of chemical reactions that take place in cells in the body. These reactions are responsible for the breakdown of nutrients and the generation of energy and the materials that cells and organisms need to grow, reproduce, and stay healthy. Metabolism also helps get rid of toxic substances.

Mineral

A nutrient that the body needs in small amounts to function and stay healthy.



Nerves

A bundle of fibers that receives and sends messages between the body and the brain. The messages are sent by chemical and electrical changes in the cells that make up the nerves.

Nervous System

The organized network of nerve tissue in the body. It includes the central nervous system (the brain and spinal cord), the peripheral nervous system (nerves that extend from the spinal cord to the rest of the body), and other nerve tissue. The nervous system coordinates the activities of muscles, monitors organs, constructs and processes data received from the senses, and initiates actions.

Nutrient

A chemical compound contained in foods that are used by the body to function and grow. Nutrients include proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, and water.

Nutrient Content Claim

The Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990 (NLEA) permits the use of label claims that characterize the level of a nutrient in a food (i.e., nutrient content claims) if they have been authorized by FDA and are made in accordance with FDA's authorizing regulations. Nutrient content claims describe the level of a nutrient in the product, using terms such as *free*, *high*, and *low*, or they compare the level of a nutrient in a food to that of another food, using terms such as *more*, *reduced*, and *lite*. The requirements that govern the use of nutrient content claims help ensure that descriptive terms, such as *high* or *low*, are used consistently for all types of food products and are thus meaningful to consumers.

Nutrient, Essential

A vitamin, mineral, fatty acid, or amino acid required for normal body functioning that either cannot be synthesized by the body at all, or cannot be synthesized in amounts adequate for good health, and thus must be obtained from a dietary source.

Nutrients of Public Health Concern

Nutrients that are overconsumed or underconsumed and current intakes may pose a substantial public health concern. Underconsumed nutrients, or "shortfall nutrients," are those with a high prevalence of inadequate intake either across the U.S. population or in specific groups, relative to expert group standards. Overconsumed nutrients are those with a high prevalence of excess intake either across the population or in specific groups, relative to expert group standards.

For the purposes of the Interactive Nutrition Facts Label materials, the following terms are defined as follows:



Oils

Fats that are liquid at room temperature. Oils are important to consider as part of a healthy dietary pattern as they provide essential fatty acids. Commonly consumed oils include canola, corn, olive, peanut, safflower, soybean, and sunflower oils. Oils also are naturally present in nuts, seeds, seafood, olives, and avocados. The fat in some tropical plants, such as coconut oil, palm kernel oil, and palm oil, are not included in the oils category because they contain a higher percentage of saturated fat than do other oils.

Osteoporosis

A disease characterized by too little bone formation, excessive bone loss, or a combination of both, leading to bone fragility and an increased risk of fractures of the hip, spine, and wrist.



Partially Hydrogenated Oils

Partially hydrogenated oils are created during a manufacturing process called “partial hydrogenation” in which hydrogen is added to liquid vegetable oil to make it more solid, and therefore more resistant to becoming spoiled or rancid. The process generally does not make the oil completely solid, resulting in “partially” hydrogenated oils. Partially hydrogenated oils were used by food manufacturers to improve the texture, shelf life, and flavor stability of foods. Most uses of partially hydrogenated oils, the major source of artificial *trans* fat in the U.S. food supply, have been phased out as of 2018.

Physical Activity

Any bodily movement produced by the contraction of skeletal muscle that increases energy expenditure above a basal level; generally refers to the subset of physical activity that enhances health.

Potassium

A mineral important for many body processes, such as heart function, muscle contraction, nervous system function, and fluid balance.

Protein

One of three main nutrients in food that provide calories, or “energy,” for the body. Each gram of protein provides 4 calories. Proteins are made up of amino acids and are needed for the body to function properly. They are the basis of body structures, such as skin and hair, and are important for many body processes.



Red Blood Cell

A cell that carries oxygen to all parts of the body.



Seafood

Marine animals that live in the sea and in freshwater lakes and rivers. Seafood includes fish (such as salmon, tuna, trout, and tilapia) and shellfish (such as shrimp, crab, and oysters).

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Serving Size

A standardized amount of a food, such as a cup or an ounce, used in providing information about a food within a food group, such as in dietary guidance. Serving size on the Nutrition Facts label is determined based on the Reference Amounts Customarily Consumed (RACC) for foods that have similar dietary usage, product characteristics, and customarily consumed amounts for consumers to make “like product” comparisons.

Sodium

A mineral and one of the chemical elements found in salt. Sodium is an essential nutrient needed by the human body in relatively small amounts (provided that substantial sweating does not occur) and is important for many body processes, such as fluid balance, muscle contraction, and nervous system function.

Soy Products

Food products made primarily from soybeans or soy containing ingredients. They include products such as tofu, tempeh, miso, edamame, soy beverages, soy sauce, teriyaki sauce, soy protein, soy flour, soybean oil, and soy-based breads, cereals, and pasta.

Sugar Alcohols

A type of carbohydrate that chemically have characteristics of both sugars and alcohols but are not completely absorbed by the body—providing a sweet taste with fewer calories per gram than sugar. Sugar alcohols are found naturally in small amounts in a variety of fruits and vegetables and are also commercially produced from sugars and starch. Commercially produced sugar alcohols are added to foods as reduced-calorie sweeteners and are found in many sugar-free and reduced-sugar products.

Sugar-Sweetened Beverages

Liquids that are sweetened with various forms of added sugars. These beverages include, but are not limited to, soda (regular, not sugar-free), fruitades, sports drinks, energy drinks, sweetened waters, and coffee and tea beverages with added sugars.

Sugars

Sugars are the smallest and simplest type of carbohydrate and provide a sweet taste. The human body breaks down sugars into glucose, which is the main energy source for the body’s cells, tissues, and organs.

Sugars, Added

Added sugars include sugars that are added during the processing of foods (such as sucrose or dextrose), foods packaged as sweeteners (such as table sugar), sugars from syrups and honey, and sugars from concentrated fruit or vegetable juices.



Thyroid (also called Thyroid Gland)

A gland located beneath the larynx (voice box) that makes thyroid hormone and calcitonin. The thyroid helps regulate growth and metabolism.

Thyroid Hormone

A hormone that affects heart rate, blood pressure, body temperature, and weight. Thyroid hormone is made by the thyroid gland and can also be made in the laboratory.

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Variety

A diverse assortment of foods and beverages across and within all food groups and subgroups selected to fulfill the recommended amounts without exceeding the limits for calories and other dietary components.

Vegetables

Healthy dietary patterns include a variety of vegetables from all five vegetable subgroups—dark green; red and orange; beans, peas, and lentils; starchy; and other. These include all fresh, frozen, canned, and dried options in cooked or raw forms, including 100% vegetable juices. Vegetables in their nutrient-dense forms have limited additions such as salt, butter, or creamy sauces.

Vein

A blood vessel that carries blood to the heart from tissues and organs in the body.

Vitamin

A nutrient that the body needs in small amounts to function and stay healthy.

Vitamin D

A vitamin that helps your body absorb calcium and is important for optimal bone health. It is also important for many body processes, such as blood pressure regulation, hormone production, and immune and nervous system function. Vitamin D is found in many foods and is also produced by the body when your skin is exposed to sunlight.