

Do We Really Need a Nutrition Label to Tell Us What's Unhealthy?

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PROPOSED LABEL / WHAT'S DIFFERENT

Nutrition Facts
8 servings per container
Serving size 2.9 cup (70g)
Amount per 2.9 cup
Calories 230

% DV*

12%	Total Fat 5g
5%	Saturated Fat 1g
	Trans Fat 0g
6%	Cholesterol 1mg
7%	Sodium 140mg
12%	Total Carbs 27g
14%	Dietary Fiber 4g
	Sugars 1g
	Added Sugars 0g
	Protein 3g

10% Vitamin D 2mcg
20% Calcium 260mg
45% Iron 8mg
5% Potassium 200mg

* Percent Daily Values are based on a diet of other people's misdeeds.

Callouts:

- Servings: larger, bolder type
- Updated Daily Values
- % DV comes first
- New: added sugars
- Change of nutrients required
- Serving sizes updated
- Calories: larger type
- Actual amounts declared
- New footnote to come

FDA

With the recent announcement that the [Food and Drug Administration's Nutrition Facts label](#) [1] will get its first major facelift in 20 years, it seems we can't go one week without hearing about it. But all the hype in the media has me wondering: *Do we really need a label to tell us what's unhealthy?*

Public health experts now say the revamped Nutrition Facts label being placed on the front of packages isn't enough. [Consumers need a label with a clear statement](#) [2] that outright tells them whether a food is healthy or should be avoided.

Umm, what? When did our society become so misinformed that we need packaging to warn us of the food's unhealthy nature?

I'll let you in on a little secret: I've never read the Nutrition Facts label on my food and I don't expect to start.

With the FDA working on a [label overhaul of two different versions](#) [3], experts writing for [The New England Journal of Medicine](#) [4] say they aren't going far enough. Former FDA Commissioner David Kessler and former Center for Disease Control and Prevention official William H. Dietz say Nutrition Facts labels could be further improved by:

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- Indicating overall nutritional value
- Making ingredient lists clearer
- Creating a daily value for sugar
- Putting labels on the front of packages
- Giving the labels some context

I've never been a believer in counting my calories, fat or sugar intake. My reasoning? Not all calories are created equal. I certainly don't need a Nutrition Facts label to tell me that a cookie is bad for me or that an avocado has just as many grams of fat as a chocolate-glazed donut.

While I don't read the Nutrition Facts label, I do believe whole-heartedly in the ingredients list. And for me, this works. All I need to know is what's in, or perhaps more importantly what's not in, my food. You would think my decision to not eat any foods with added sugar would have me scouring the nutrition labels throughout my pantry, but it doesn't.

Sugar hides under many different names, and while many consumers don't know them by heart, I know first-hand that 10 minutes of research will leave you with the knowledge of which ingredients to avoid and by which name. More importantly, you won't need a label telling you: *This is bad for you. Don't eat it!*

I'd love to hear your thoughts on the revamping of the Nutrition Facts label on packaged foods. Do you believe the new label will have the effect the government is looking for?

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<http://www.foodmanufacturing.com/blogs/2014/07/do-we-really-need-nutrition-label-tell-us-whats-unhealthy>

Links:

[1] <http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/GuidanceDocumentsRegulatoryInformation/LabelingNutrition/ucm385663.htm>

[2] <http://www.foodmanufacturing.com/news/2014/07/health-advocates-nutrition-labels-are-not-enough>

[3] <http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/GuidanceDocumentsRegulatoryInformation/LabelingNutrition/ucm385663.htm#images>

[4] http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp1404899?query=featured_home