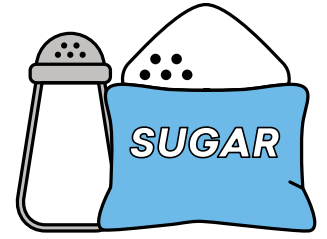


Sugar, salt and fat and label reading



Consuming a lot of added sugar, salt and saturated fat is not good for our health.

Reducing our intake of sugar, salt and fat can help us manage our weight better and reduce our risk of chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some cancers.

Salt (sodium)

A high intake of salt is linked to conditions such as high blood pressure, heart attacks, kidney problems, fluid retention, stroke and osteoporosis (weak bones). Packaged and processed foods can have high levels of salt. Salt is also known as sodium chloride but there are other forms of sodium in food additives. Remember to check the ingredients list.

Tip

When buying products, choose the varieties that are lower in saturated fat and higher in unsaturated fat.

Fats

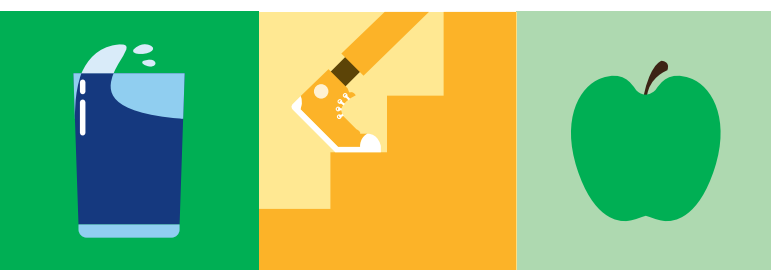
Fats are an essential part of our diet and are important for good health. There are two main types of fats: **saturated (unhealthy) fats and unsaturated (healthy) fats**. To stay healthy, it is important to eat unsaturated fats in small amounts as part of a balanced diet.

Tip

Choose fresh or minimally-processed foods. Check the ingredients on all packaged foods and drinks and look for low sugar and low salt varieties. **Use herbs and spices to flavour foods instead of adding salt when you're cooking.**

Unsaturated (healthy) fats	Saturated / trans (unhealthy) fats
<p>Sources of unsaturated (healthy) fats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nuts and seeds (including spreads)• Fish• Avocados• Plant based cooking oils like olive, canola, peanut, sunflower, soybean, rice bran, sesame and safflower	<p>Sources of saturated (unhealthy) fats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fat you can see on meat and chicken• Some plant foods like palm and coconut oil. These can be hidden in some manufactured foods.• Biscuits, pastries, cakes, muffins, slices, and crisps• Takeaway foods
<p>These fats help to lower harmful cholesterol levels and keep our hearts healthy and strong.</p>	<p>Too much saturated fat can increase blood cholesterol and increase our risk of heart disease.</p>

Content in this fact sheet is based on some material provided by the National Health and Medical Research Council and FSANZ Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.



Sugars and fats

There are two types of sugar:

1. **Natural sugars** are found in milk, fruit, vegetables, legumes, nuts and seeds. These foods also contain a range of important nutrients and are good for us.
2. **Added sugars** have been refined and can be added to food or drink. They are often found in foods and drinks like cakes, confectionery, biscuits and sugary drinks. These discretionary (or sometimes) foods should only be eaten occasionally and in small amounts.



Tip

Some products can contain a mixture of natural and added sugar, such as yoghurt, custard, fruit juices and some dried fruit. Use your label reading skills to ensure the sugar content is not too high.

High in added sugars	High in fat	High in added sugars and fat
Sweetened waters, soft drinks, cordials and energy drinks	Bacon rashers, salami	Cakes, muffins, biscuits
Fruit drinks	Pastry and quiches	Chocolate
Syrups	Butter, cream, ghee, Copha (coconut oil), dairy blends	Dessert custards and puddings
Jams and marmalade	Tacos, nachos, enchiladas	Doughnuts and pastries
Some pre-made sauces	Crisps and potato chips	Ice cream
Dairy desserts and flavoured yoghurts	Deep fried takeaway foods	Iced buns and slices
Lollies/confectionery	Meat pies	Some muesli bars



Nutrition Information Panel

Understanding Nutrition Information Panels can help us to make healthier food and drink choices.

The Nutrition Information Panel on a food label is the easiest way to choose foods with less saturated fat, salt (sodium) and sugar, and more fibre. All packaged foods and drinks are required to have a Nutrition Information Panel except for herbs, spices, salt, vinegar, tea, coffee, water, and prepared sandwiches and rolls.

Serving Size

Serving size is determined by the food business. This is why it can vary from one product to another.

Quantity per 100g

Because products have different serving sizes we need to **use the per 100g column** to compare products.

The five key nutrients to look for on a label are:

Some plant foods are high in healthy fats such as avocado, nuts, seeds and plant-based cooking oils and some may have higher saturated fat levels too. You generally don't need to check the Nutrition Information Panel for these types of foods.

1. Total Fat

Total fat includes saturated (unhealthy) fats and unsaturated (healthy) fats. Generally choose packaged foods that have less than **10g of fat per 100g**.

For milk, yoghurt and ice cream, choose less than **3g of fat per 100g**, where available. For cheese, choose less than **15g of fat per 100g**, where available.

2. Saturated Fat

Aim for the lowest amount of saturated fat, per 100g. **Less than 1.5g of fat per 100g for solid foods is best.**

3. Sugars

Avoiding sugar completely is not necessary, but try to avoid large amounts of added sugars. Generally choose foods with less than **15g of sugar per 100g**, unless the product includes fruit, traditional dried fruits (sultanas, raisins, apricots, prunes) or dairy ingredients. If the sugar content is greater than 15g, check that 'sugar' (or alternative names for added sugar) is not listed high in the ingredient list.

4. Fibre

Fibre is the only nutrient that we look at per serve (**not per 100g**). Not all labels include fibre. Choose foods with **2g of fibre or more per serve**.

5. Sodium (salt)

Choose lower sodium options. Food with less than **400mg of sodium per 100g are good, and less than 120mg per 100g is best.**

Nutrition Information

Servings per package – 16

Serving size – 30g (2/3 cup)

	Per serve	Per 100g
Energy	432kJ	1441kJ
Protein	2.8g	9.3g
Fat		
Total	0.4g	1.2g
Saturated	0.1g	0.3g
Carbohydrate		
Total	18.9g	62.9g
Sugars	3.5g	11.8g
Fibre	6.4g	21.2g
Sodium	6.4mg	21.2mg

Ingredients: Cereals (76%) (wheat, oatbran, barley), psyllium husk (11%), sugar, rice, malt extract, honey, salt, vitamins.

Health Star Ratings

An alternative to reading food labels is to use the Health Star Rating system. Look out for this first, and if the product doesn't have a Health Star Rating, then review the Nutrition Information Panel.

What are Health Star Ratings?

The Health Star Rating gives packaged food a rating based on its nutritional content. It helps us compare similar packaged products at a glance to make healthier choices. The Health Star Rating provides a rating from half a star to five stars – the more stars, the healthier the choice. Try and choose products that have at least 3.5 stars.

Health Star Ratings are displayed on the front of packaged foods and can be displayed in two ways.



Tip

Not all foods will have a Health Star Rating. However fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables or canned vegetables (with no added salt or sugar) will automatically have a Health Star Rating of 5.

Tip

The Health Star Rating is a voluntary system so some food products may not have a Rating.

Who developed the Health Star Rating system?

The Health Star Rating system was developed by the Australian state and territory governments in collaboration with industry, public health and consumer groups.

Who calculates the Health Star Ratings?

The number of stars is determined using a calculator designed to assess the nutrients in foods (The Health Star Rating Calculator). The calculator was developed in consultation with Food Standards Australia New Zealand and nutrition experts.

Tip

When looking for the Health Star Rating, remember to compare similar packaged products only. For example, compare one breakfast cereal with another, not cereal with yoghurt.

What is the Health Star Rating based on?

Packaged products are given a rating based on their nutritional content, taking into account:

- Energy
- Saturated fat, salt and sugar
- Fibre, protein, fruit, vegetable, nut and legume content

