

I recently taught the youth group about reading nutrition labels, and I thought maybe some of you adults would be interested in what to look for. You can print this and take it to the store with you. Keep in mind, it is hard to find products that don't contain some of these unwanted items, so remember - everything in moderation!

Happy eating, Katie Dobson, Faith Community Nurse

READING NUTRITION LABELS

CALORIES Do not need to count unless you need to lose weight, but control portions, limit fat & "bad" ingredients & "bad" foods (chips, soda, and candy)

CALORIES FROM FAT < 30% of total calories ex: Calories-150 Calories from fat-50

Saturated: LESS is better

Trans fat: NONE! Not always listed (see hydrogenated oils in ingredients)

Monounsaturated fat: GOOD in moderation; Found in olive, canola, peanut oils, avocados, nuts, seeds

Polyunsaturated fat: OK in moderation; Found in oils, some nuts & seeds

SODIUM LESS is better (20% is high, 5% is low)

FIBER MORE is better. For bread look for 2-3 grams/ serving (1 slice). For cereal, at least > 2 gm

WHAT YOU DON'T WANT IN THE INGREDIENTS:

- HYDROGENATED OR PARTIALLY HYDROGENATED OILS
- High-fructose corn syrup
- Artificial colorings
- BHA or BHT
- Monosodium glutamate
- Hydrolyzed vegetable protein or autolyzed yeast extract
- Potassium bromate
- Propyl gallate
- Sulfites
- Sodium nitrate sodium benzoate or benzoic acid
- Artificial sweeteners such as aspartame, sucralose and saccharin

WHOLE GRAINS NOT necessarily labeled: whole grain, multi-grain, 100% wheat, seven grain stone ground, bran, or cracked wheat.

LOOK FOR: Whole wheat, whole oats, brown rice, bulgar, graham flour, oatmeal, whole grain corn, whole rye, wild rice; mostly, look at fiber content (unprocessed grains will have more fiber)

GOOD NUTRITION

PROTEINS: 2- 5 servings/ day, including 2-3 dairy

Lean meats, nuts, beans, eggs, milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, cheese

VEGETABLES & FRUIT: at least 5/day; try 1 with each meal and 1 with each snack;
vary colors

- Some easy, transportable fruits and veggies: edamame, baby carrots, grape or cherry tomatoes; dried apricots, cranberries, or mango; sweet potato fries, jicama or bell peppers cut into sticks
- Fresh or frozen veggies and fruits are more nutritious than canned

BREADS & GRAINS: Look for whole wheat instead of “wheat” or white, brown or wild rice instead of white (see label reading)

“BAD FOODS” (as if you don’t know what these are): Soda, candy, chips, white flour, fatty meats; see label reading for things you DON’T want in the ingredients. Anything found in nature is probably healthier than packaged foods.

IDEAS FOR HEALTHY SNACKS AND QUICK MEALS:

- Peanut butter or almond butter and banana with honey on whole wheat
- Bean and cheese burrito with salsa
- Whole wheat pasta with red sauce
- Grilled chicken or turkey burger on wheat bun with pineapple
- Stir fry with lean meat and frozen veggie mix