

Check the label

How to use nutritional labels on pre-packed foods to find calorie, fat, saturates, sugars and salt content information.

Nutritional labels give you information which can help you make a healthier and more informed choice when deciding which food and drink products to buy. By checking the label each time you buy something, you will take more control of your shopping habits.

Whilst it is mandatory for nutrition information to be displayed on the back of all food packaging, some supermarkets and food manufacturers also display nutritional information on the front of pre-packed food in a handy traffic light system.

Using the traffic light label is very helpful when you want to compare the calorie, fat, sugar and salt content of different food products at a glance and helps you make a more informed choice. On this page, we will give tips on how to check the nutritional information on pre-packaged foods and help you understand what it means.

Traffic light labels

The traffic light labelling system will tell you whether a food has high, medium or low amounts of fat, saturated fat, sugars and salt. It will also tell you the number of calories and kilojoules in that particular product.

- energy (kilojoules (kj) and calories (kcal))
- fat
 - saturates
 - sugar
 - salt

Each serving (150g) contains

Energy 1046kJ 250kcal	Fat 3.0g LOW	Saturates 1.3g LOW	Sugars 34g HIGH	Salt 0.9g MED
13%	4%	7%	38%	15%

of an adult's reference intake

Typical values (as sold) per 100g: 697kJ/ 167kcal

Traffic light label

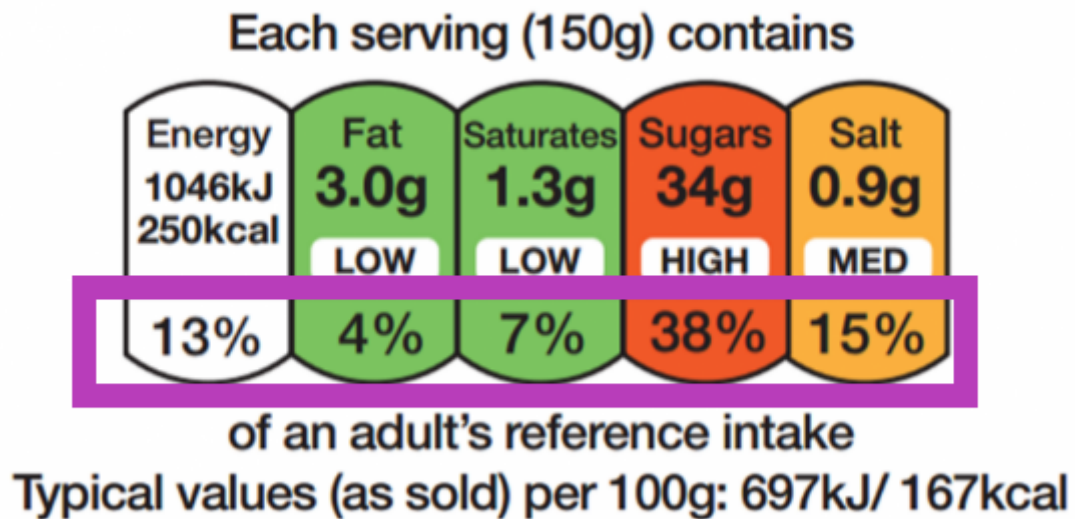
- **Red** means the product is high in a nutrient and you should try to cut down, eat less often or eat smaller amounts.
- **Amber** means medium. If a food contains mostly amber, you can eat it most of the time.
- **Green** means low. The more green lights a label displays, the healthier the food choice is.

TIPS

Did you know? When you see 'kcal' on the nutritional label, it means the number of calories that product has.

Reference Intake indicators

Reference Intake is shown in percentages and provides information on how the amount of fat, saturates, sugars and salts within that product fits into your daily recommended diet. In the case of this food label, the amount of sugar is 38% of the total recommended daily intake, therefore you should be careful of the amount of sugar consumed in other foods throughout the day.



Traffic light label highlighting the Reference Intake indicator

Calories

Eating and drinking more calories than we need can lead to weight gain. Excess weight gain can lead to obesity. Obesity increases the risk of some types of cancer including bowel cancer and breast cancer and increases the likelihood of developing serious conditions including coronary heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes.

Knowing the calorie content of food and drink can help ensure you're not consuming more calories than you need and can help you make a more informed choice.

TIPS

Did you know? The recommended calorie intake for men is 2500 calories per day and 2000 calories per day for women.

Useful food shopping tips

- Use the colour coded labels and choose more greens and ambers than reds.
- Use the reference intake % to decide whether that food is a good choice.
- See if other similar products have lower amounts of sugar, fats and salts.