

Understanding Food Labels



Food Labels

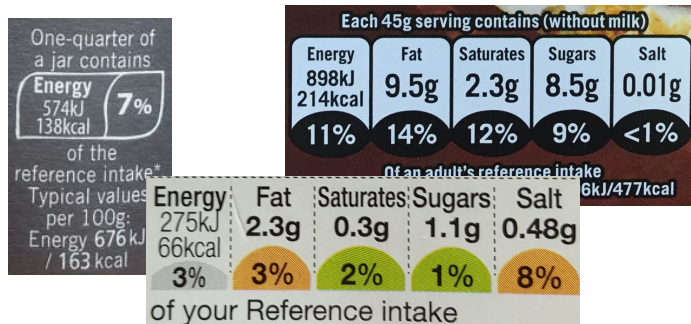
About three quarters of the salt we eat is hidden in processed foods

Checking product labels can help you to work out how much salt you are eating and allows you to compare brands and choose those that are lower in salt. You can find out if the foods you buy are high in salt by looking at the nutritional information on the label.

Foods LOW in salt have 0.3g salt per 100g or less
Foods MEDIUM in salt have between 0.3g and 1.5g salt per 100g
Foods HIGH in salt have more than 1.5g salt per 100g OR more than 1.8g per portion

Nutrition Information

Nutrition information can usually be found on the **back of product packaging**, which shows the amounts of each nutrient per 100g and per serving. Some companies also show nutrition information on the **front of product packaging** too, which can have different formats:



Front of Pack Labels

The front of pack label will display the **energy** value in kilocalories (kcal) and kilojoules (kJ) along with the amount of **fat, saturates, sugar and salt** in grams. It also shows the percentage contribution each one makes towards the respective Reference Intake. This is the amount you should not exceed in a day. For example, the **Reference Intake for salt for adults is 6g**, so if a food contains 0.6g of salt per serving then it contains 10% of the Reference Intake.

Some products will display only the energy value, while some will display the full range of nutrients using a black, blue or grey design.



Colour-Coded Front of Pack Labels

The label might also be colour-coded to show if the product is **high (red)**, **medium (amber)** or **low (green)** in fat, saturates, sugars and salt.

A product that has mostly **greens** on the nutrition label indicates that it is a **healthy choice**, whereas products with predominantly **reds** on the nutrition label should be **limited and only eaten in small amounts**. If the nutrient values are given per serving then the size of the portion will also be stated e.g. 'per slice' or 'per ¼ jar'.

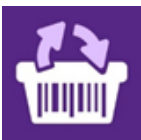
Working out how much salt is in your food

When salt is given **per portion**, you should check the portion size stated on the packaging to see if this the amount that you or your child will actually eat. For example, a label may state that a portion is a quarter of the product, but realistically you may eat half or even the whole product. If this is the case you will need to work out how much salt is in the amount you are eating.

For example, a can of soup may state a serving size as ½ can, so if you eat the whole can you will need to double the amount of salt.

When salt is only given per 100g, you can work out how much salt is in a portion using the per 100g figure. Look at the weight of the pack as a guide and think about how much of the product you/your child will be eating in relation to this, and whether this is more or less than 100g.

Use the free **FoodSwitch** app to make a healthier choice



Some products do not have colour coded nutrition information on front of pack, making it difficult to know if it is a healthy choice. **FoodSwitch helps to fill the gap!**

By simply scanning the barcode of a food or drink, FoodSwitch shows you how much salt, sugar and fat is in the food you're eating, and helps you find similar, healthier alternatives with less.

The app has **5 different filters** including SaltSwitch, which shows you healthier choices with less salt than the item you scanned. FoodSwitch is available to download from iTunes or Google Play.

For more information visit www.actiononsalt.org.uk/foodswitch

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