



If Food Labels Meant What They Said

(This is what they would say.)

Calories

What the Label Says	What it Means
Calorie free	There are less than 5 calories per serving.
Low calorie	There are 40 calories or less per serving, or 50 calories or less per gram for small servings.
Reduced calorie	There are 25% fewer calories per serving than in a comparable amount of a similar food.

Fats

What the Label Says	What it Means
Fat free (total fat)	There is less than 0.5 grams of fat per serving.
Low fat (total fat)	There 3 grams of fat or less per serving. If evaluating a meal, there are 3 grams or less per 100 grams of food (about 3.5 ounces), with 30% or less total calories coming from fat.
Saturated fat free*	There is less than 0.5 grams of saturated fat and less than 0.5 grams of trans fatty acids per serving.
Low saturated fat*	There is 1 gram or less of saturated fat combined with 0.5 grams of trans fat per serving and less than 15% of total daily calories coming from saturated fat. When evaluating meals, 1 gram or less per 100 grams of food (about 3.5 ounces)
Reduced saturated fat*	There is 25% less saturated fat combined with trans fat than in a comparable amount of similar food.
Zero trans fat	There is 0.5 grams or less of trans fat per serving.

*Note: Next to all of the saturated fat claims, manufacturers must declare the amount of cholesterol if the item contains 2 or more milligrams of cholesterol per serving and the amount of total fat if it is more than 3 grams total fat per serving.

Sugars

What the Label Says	What it Means
Sugar free	There is less than 0.5 grams per serving, with no sugar or ingredients containing sugar (unless specified in ingredient list as adding "a trivial amount of sugar").
Reduced sugar	There is 25% less sugar than in a comparable amount of a similar food.

Sodium

What the Label Says	What it Means
Sodium free	There are less than 5 milligrams of sodium per serving.
Low sodium	There are 140 milligrams of sodium or less per serving of food or per 100 grams of food (about 3.5 ounce serving).
Reduced sodium	There is 25% less sodium in that item compared to the amount of sodium in a similar item.
Very low sodium	There are 35 milligrams of sodium or less per serving or 100 grams of food (about 3.5 ounce serving).

Other Claims

What the Label Says	What it Means
Fresh	A raw food that has never been frozen, heated or preserved in any way.
Fresh frozen	A food that was quickly frozen while still fresh to preserve nutrients.
Healthy	Conforms to FDA requirements for low fat and saturated fat, must have limited amounts of cholesterol and sodium, and contains at least 10 percent of the daily value for vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, iron, protein or fiber.

*Comparative Claims**

What the Label Says	What it Means
Light or lite	Contains one-third less calories, or one-half the fat of an equal serving of a similar food; or, sodium in a low-calorie, low-fat food is reduced by 50% as compared with a similar food.
More, fortified, enriched, added	Naturally contains, or was altered to include, vitamins, minerals, protein, dietary fiber, or potassium with a daily value at least 10% more per serving than a similar food.
Reduced, less, fewer	A food that naturally contains, or was altered to contain, 25% less of one nutrient or total calories per serving than a similar food.
Lean	There is less than 10 grams fat, 4.5 grams saturated fat combined with trans fat, and 95 milligrams cholesterol per serving or 100 grams of meat, poultry, seafood, or game meat (about 3.5 ounces).
Extra Lean	There is less than 5 grams fat, 2 grams saturated fat combined with trans fat, and 95 milligrams cholesterol per serving or 100 grams of meat, poultry, seafood or game meat (about 3.5 ounces).
High potency	Used when a specific vitamin or mineral is present in a serving of food at 100 percent or more of its recommended dietary intake.
High, rich in, excellent source of	Contains 20% or more of the daily value (DV) for protein, vitamins, minerals, dietary fiber, or potassium per serving.
Good source of, contains, provides	Contains anywhere from 10 percent to 19 percent of the daily value of a particular nutrient per serving.
Modified	Signals that a product was altered to change its nutritional content.

*Note: Messages that provide nutrient content claims in relation to another, similar product.