

Reading food labels fact sheet

By law, food labels in Australia must contain a nutrition information panel and an ingredients list. Here's what they should show:

- **Nutrition information panel** - this shows the amount of energy (in kilojoules), and nutrient content including protein, total fat, saturated fat, carbohydrate and sugars, in measurements per serve and per 100 grams.
- **Ingredients list** - this lists the amount of ingredients by weight in descending order (highest to lowest). So if the first few ingredients listed are fat or sugar (see below for other names for these), then it is one of the major ingredients in the product and therefore likely to be high in energy.

Look for fat or sugar ingredients under different names

Fat and sugars have many disguises, so it's good to know how they may be described in the ingredients list. Here's what you might find:

Other names for fat	Other names for sugar
vegetable oil/fat	sucrose
animal oil/fat	maltose
ghee	lactose
dripping	dextrose
shortening	fructose
copha	glucose
lard	molasses
tallow	treacle
coconut oil	malt extract
palm oil	raw or brown sugar
chocolate chips	cane sugar
milk solids	castor sugar
monoglycerides	syrup
diglycerides	disaccharides
chocolate	monosaccharide
butter	polysaccharide
	honey
	invert sugar

Example of a food label

This diagram shows you an example of a food label and explains what it all means!

Chapter 4

Example of a food label

Apple Muffins

INGREDIENTS: flour, sucrose, apple pieces, vegetable oil, skim milk powder, fructose, coconut, baking powder, wheat starch, salt, flavour, spices

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION:

Servings per pack	6	
Serving size approximately	60 g	
	per 60g 1 muffin	per 100g
Energy	743kJ (178 cal)	1239 kJ (296 Cal)
Protein	3.4g	5.6g
Fat		
- total	5.3g	8.8g
- saturated	0.8g	1.3g
Carbohydrate		
- total	30.2g	51.0g
- sugars	17.2g	28.6
Fibre	0.3g	0.5g
Sodium	260mg	435mg
Potassium	90.6mg	150mg
Cholesterol	0.0	0.0

description of product

flour is the main ingredient followed by sucrose and apple pieces

vegetable oil is the major source of fat

coconut adds extra fat as well as flavour

a flavour has been added - either synthetic or natural (herbs & spices)

note the use of 2 sugars - sucrose and fructose

there are 6 muffins in the pack

each muffin weighs 60g

the figures in this column tell how much energy and other nutrients are in each muffin - 743kJ of energy, 3g protein, 5g fat etc

the figures in this column are the same as percentages. Thus, 8g of fat per 100g means that a muffin contains 8% fat. This is a moderate level. Bread has a low fat content of 2% while most cakes contain around 30% fat.

the dietary fibre content of 0.5g is very small. 100g of wholemeal bread contains about 6-9g of fibre.

This is low in saturated fat. Most of the fat is from vegetable oil and coconut

there is 30g of total carbohydrate in each muffin - this includes 17g of sugar. Subtracting 17 from 30 gives the figure of 13g for starch content.

there is no cholesterol as no ingredient contains animal products.

when comparing similar products, check the energy, fat and carbohydrate content per 100g of the product.

the sodium content is high. Products with less than 400mg of sodium per 100g are moderate in salt, while products with less than 100mg are low in salt.