

UNDERSTANDING FOOD LABELS

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LEARNING POINTS

- 1 Food labels are a source of useful nutritional information, but they are often confusing and incomplete.
- 2 Parents or carers may need help on how to read and interpret food labels.
- 3 Nutritional information is mandatory with energy content and amounts of some nutrients alongside Reference Intakes displayed.
- 4 Fresh foods do not require a food label.
- 5 Reference Intakes (RI) on labels are set by a European Committee and are for adults not children.
- 6 Reference Nutrient Intakes (RNI) are set by the Department of Health and are age-specific minimum recommendations for the UK. They are not shown on food labels.
- 7 Foods labelled as suitable for the age range of less than three years should comply with strict regulations on nutrient and pesticide content. Foods without such age-specific labelling do not have to comply with these regulations, even if they are packaged to appeal to young children.
- 8 In the UK there are two at-a-glance systems of labelling the nutritional values of foods: Traffic lights and RIs. However, a red light or high value does not necessarily mean a food is unhealthy, as a healthy diet is composed of a balanced combination of different foods.
- 9 The amounts of salt, fat and sugar on a label denotes the total of the amounts naturally present in the fresh ingredients and the added amounts.

FOOD LABELS: WHAT THEY TELL YOU AND WHAT THEY DON'T

Toddlers need a healthy balanced diet to ensure they receive all the energy and nutrients that are essential for growth and development. [see Factsheets 1.1 and 1.2](#)

Food labels provide important nutritional information for parents and carers. However, this information is often confusing and incomplete. Although the labelling of commercial foods and drinks is regulated by European laws, much of the information that consumers need to choose nutritious food is not included because it is not compulsory. Moreover, many people find it difficult to understand the information on a label. Parents and carers may therefore need advice on how to interpret the information on labels when trying to make healthy food choices for their children.

This Factsheet will help you understand labels and how to interpret the information on them.



WHAT HAS TO BE ON A FOOD LABEL?

The law requires food labels to contain the following information:

- A product name or description - some food names are protected by law, and must comply with certain compositional regulations. For other food names there are no standards but the name should not mislead the consumer
- An ingredients list - the ingredients must be listed in descending order by weight, with the largest quantity ingredient first and the smallest last
- The amount of any ingredients included in the name of the food: e.g. the percentage amounts of the ingredients yogurt and strawberries must be displayed on the label of a food named as 'Strawberry Yogurt'
- Any of the 14 ingredients that can commonly cause food allergy must be emphasised in the ingredients list – usually in **bold** – see page 07 – Allergy Information
- The 'use by' date which indicates the last date that the food is guaranteed to be safe to eat. This is because all packaged food will deteriorate but at different rates depending on the food type
- The contact details of the food producer, packer or seller
- The place of origin, in certain cases
- Any special storage conditions that should be observed
- Instructions for use.

Foods that do not require a label include:

- Fresh foods

WHAT ELSE MAY BE ON A FOOD LABEL?

Almost all food labels have to include information about energy and certain nutrients. These must be displayed in the following order:

- Energy (kilojoules and kilocalories)
- Fat (of which saturates)
- Carbohydrate (of which sugars)
- Fibre
- Protein
- Salt

For a full list of nutrients and their functions see Factsheet 1.1i

This nutritional information may have been derived from the chemical analysis of the finished product or it may have been calculated from the nutritional content of the ingredients, using standard reference data.

Most labels do not display any information about vitamins and minerals, such as iron and zinc. However this information can be useful when deciding how nutritious the food is, particularly for toddlers or vegetarians. It must be included if a nutrition or health claim is made about the nutrient.

NUTRITION AND HEALTH CLAIMS

Manufacturers can make nutrition claims for their products, such as 'low-fat' or 'good source of calcium'. When they do this, the label must include the amount of the nutrient in the product. By law manufacturers are not allowed to mislead the customer or incorrectly describe a food. European Commission rules regulate specific nutrition and health claims. For instance foods labelled as a source of vitamin C and/or the health benefits of vitamin C must contain at least 15 per cent of an adult's RI for vitamin C per adult portion.



HOW TO UNDERSTAND A FOOD LABEL

A typical food label might look like this:

Strawberry Yogurt

Ingredients:

Whole **Milk** Yogurt (88%) Strawberries (5%) Sugar, Tapioca Starch, Natural Flavouring, Concentrated Lemon Juice.

Nutrition Information:

Typical Values	Per 125g pot	Per 100g
Energy	123Kcal/526KJ	98Kcal/411KJ
Fat	4.6g	3.7g
of which saturates	3g	2.4g
Carbohydrate	14.5g	11.6g
of which sugars	13.75g	11.0g
Fibre	0.3g	0.2g
Protein	5.4g	4.3g
Salt	0.25g	1.5g
Calcium	194mg*	155mg

*24% of the Reference Intake

PRODUCT NAME

This product is Strawberry Yogurt.

INGREDIENTS

The ingredients are listed in descending order of weight. The largest ingredient in this product is whole milk yogurt and the smallest ingredient is concentrated lemon juice. Because yogurt and strawberry are mentioned in the product name of the food, the percentage of them in the product must be included.

There is 88g yogurt and 5g strawberries in 100g of the strawberry yogurt. Sugar is the next largest ingredient and must be less than 5g in 100g yogurt, otherwise it would have to be listed above 'strawberries' in the ingredients list. Flavourings are considered very stable, very safe and do not have to be named on the label.

The natural flavouring may have been extracted from strawberries but it is more likely to be a copy of the chemicals that give strawberries their distinct flavour. Information is given per 100g of food and per portion. Usually these are adult portions, so the amounts a toddler might eat may have to be estimated and calculated separately. In this case a toddler is likely to eat the whole 125g pot of yogurt.

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

- The weight of each nutrient is listed per 100g and/or per portion
- Fat is expressed in grams and is the total of saturated, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats
- 'Of which saturates' is the amount of saturated fat which is given in grams. This fat will all be in the milk used to make the yogurt as there are no other ingredients present which contain fat
- Carbohydrate is expressed in grams and is the total figure for both starch and sugar
- 'Of which sugars' is expressed in grams and represents the sugar added plus any natural sugars in the ingredients. In this case it includes the added sugar as well as the lactose (milk sugar) in the yogurt and the fructose (fruit sugar) in the strawberries. It is impossible to work out from this information how much sugar is actually added: it will be less than five grams, as sugar appears below strawberry in the ingredients list
- The amount of starch in the whole pot is the difference between the figure for carbohydrate and sugar. Hence it can be estimated that $(11.6 - 11.0 = 0.6)$ 0.6g tapioca starch is present in this pot of yogurt
- Fibre is measured in grams. It is found in cereals, fruit and vegetables. The small amount in this product is from the strawberries
- Protein is expressed in grams
- Salt is measured in grams. The small amount in this product includes the natural sodium found in milk as there is no added salt shown in the ingredients list. The equivalent salt content is calculated by, multiplying the weight of sodium in the milk by 2.5
- Calcium is measured in milligrams (mg). The percentage RDA is an adult value. Young children need less total calcium than adults so this pot of yogurt provides 55 per cent of a one-to-three-year-olds daily calcium requirement as the RNI for this age group is 350mg calcium
- Allergy information: this yogurt only contains one of the 14 ingredients that commonly cause allergies. This is milk.



WHAT ARE RIs AND RNIs?

- **RI (Reference Intake)** of a nutrient is the average amount recommended to be eaten every day. RIs are set by a European Committee. The figures indicate suitable amounts for adults, not for babies, toddlers or children.
 - **RNI (Recommended Nutrient Intake)** is the minimum amount of a nutrient that is recommended for specific age groups in the UK. RNIs have been set by the Department of Health and there are several age group bands. Children require differing amounts of nutrients as they grow. The age bands are quite narrow: birth to three months, four to six months, seven to nine months, 10 to 12 months, one to three years, four to six years, seven to 10 years, 11 to 14 years, 15 to 18 years, 19 to 50 years, 50+ years. For each age group there is a complete set of RNIs for each nutrient. The exceptions are fat, carbohydrate and sugar which have a dietary reference value (DRV) set. DRV is the recommended average amount not a minimum amount.
- RIs are not applicable for toddlers. Table 1 shows the average energy requirements and RNIs or DRVs for nutrients for toddlers aged one to three years compared to the RIs that are shown on food labels.

Table 1.

	Reference Intakes		Recommended Nutrient Intakes or Dietary Reference Values	
	Adult		Boys 1-3 yrs	Girls 1-3 yrs
Energy in Kilocalories	2000kcal	Calories	765–1171kcal	717–1076kcal
Fat	70g	Fat	30–45g	28–42g
Saturated Fat	20g	Saturated Fat	9–14g	9–13g
Carbohydrates	260g	Carbohydrates	96–146g	90–135g
Sugars	90g	Free sugars*	9.6–14.6g	9–13.5g
Protein	50g	Protein	14.5g	14.5g
Salt	6g	Salt	2g	2g

* Fat calculated as 35% of energy

* Saturated fat calculated as 11% of energy

* Carbohydrates calculated as 50% of energy

* Free sugars calculated as 5% of energy. They include table sugar, added sugars in various forms (see list on page 08) and fructose in fruit juices and processed fruit. They do not include lactose in milk and milk products, nor fructose in fresh whole fruit.

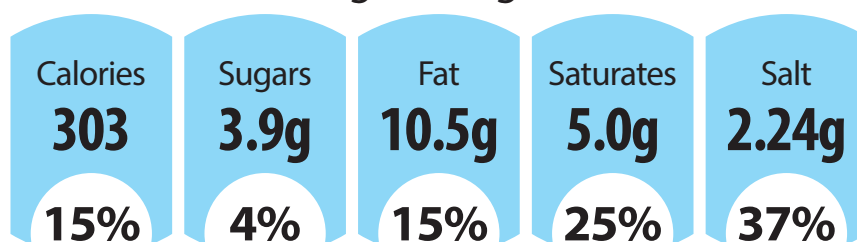
FRONT OF PACK LABELLING

Manufacturers can choose to display simple nutrition information on the front of pack: Either energy alone, or energy along with fat, saturates, salt and sugar: energy is expressed in kilojoules (kJ) and kilocalories (kcal) and amounts in grams and percentages of the RI for the nutrients.

The disadvantages of this labelling are:

- percentages do not apply to other age groups such as toddlers
- consumers need to understand percentages, and research indicates that few do

Each 140g serving contains:



of an adult's Reference Intake

**So 2.24g = 37%
of your salt RI**

TRAFFIC LIGHT COLOURS

Traffic light colours may be used in addition to the nutritional information using three colours to indicate whether a food or drink has a high, medium or low amount of the following:

- energy
- fat
- saturated fat
- sugar
- salt

These will be shown either per 100g or per serving (portion size) which will be specified – as an adult serving size.

High levels of nutrients are marked in red, low levels are marked in green and medium levels are marked in amber.

There are disadvantages to using traffic light colours as all foods are classified according to the same high, medium or low standard, regardless of the type of food or how nutritious the food may be overall (see Table 2). This can mislead the consumer into thinking a nutritious food should be avoided because it has some 'red lights' on the label.

For example cheese is a nutritious food for toddlers because it contains calcium. But it will always be labelled as high in saturated fat and salt because cheese is made from whole milk and preserved with salt. Similarly any food containing milk or fruit will be labelled as high in sugar because of the natural sugars in milk (lactose) and fruit (fructose). Bread and bread rolls are classified as having a medium salt content.

Example labels

Pepperoni pizza 1 (per ½ pizza)

Energy	Fat	Saturates	Sugars	Salt
1601kJ 383 kcal	22g	8.7g	2.7g	2.6g
19%	31%	43%	3%	43%

of an adult's Reference Intake.

Typical values (as sold) per 100g: Energy 1322kJ/316kcal

Pepperoni pizza 2 (per ½ pizza)

Energy	Fat	Saturates	Sugars	Salt
2174kJ 519 kcal	30g	11g	4.4g	1.9g
26%	43%	55%	5%	32%

of an adult's Reference Intake.

Typical values (as sold) per 100g: Energy 1229kJ/294kcal

Table 2: Classification of high, medium and low nutrient levels in food and drinks using traffic light colours <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/how-to-read-food-labels/>

Classification	High	Medium	Low
Colour on traffic light label:	Red	Amber	Green
Amounts per 100g food/drink			
Sugar	≥ 22.5g	5–22.5g	≤ 5g
Fat	> 17.5g	3–17.5g	< 3g
Saturated fat	> 5g	1.5–5g	< 1.5g
Salt	> 1.5g	0.3g–1.5g	< 0.3g



FOODS MARKETING FOR BABIES AND TODDLERS

If a food is labelled as suitable for an infant or toddler under three years of age (e.g. 10+ months) it should comply with regulations on nutrient content which includes a minimum level of certain key nutrients and a maximum limit on salt, sodium, fat and sugar. They must also comply with a very low maximum limit on pesticides.

Foods without age indications do not have to comply with these regulations. Therefore a yogurt that is not marked with an age recommendation, but whose packaging is clearly aimed at young children, will not be limited in the amount of sugar added nor have to have a minimum nutrient content.

ALLERGY INFORMATION

Labels are required by law to highlight any ingredient that is considered a common allergen. If a pre-packaged food contains any of the following 14 ingredients, they must be clearly emphasised in the ingredients list.

- celery
- cereals containing gluten (wheat, barley, rye and oats)
- crustaceans i.e. shellfish such as prawn, crab and lobster
- eggs
- fish
- lupin
- milk
- molluscs i.e. another type of shellfish such as mussels and oysters
- mustard
- nuts that grow on trees such as almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, brazil nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios and macadamia nuts
- peanuts
- sesame seeds
- soybeans
- sulphur dioxide and sulphites if they are above 10mg per kg in solid food or per litre of liquid (these are preservatives often used in some foods and drinks).

see Factsheet 4.2 for more information on managing food allergy.

WHAT FOOD LABELS DO NOT TELL YOU

1 Whether the food is nutritious and a good choice as part of a healthy diet

A food label that displays a high amount of salt, fat and sugar does not necessarily indicate if this is acceptable or not for that type of food, or the nutritious ingredients used to make it. The amounts may be acceptable for that food type or they may be excessively high because excess salt, fat or sugar has been added.

A healthy balanced nutritious diet includes a combination of foods from the five food groups. see Factsheet 1.2 Nutritious foods vary in their nutritional content, some being high in certain nutrients and low in other nutrients. The combination of foods in a healthy balanced diet includes some foods that are high in salt, fat or sugar. As long as these foods are eaten in combination with other foods that are low in these nutrients, the overall meal should have a healthy balance.

Nutritious foods that are classified as:

- high in fat: cheese, egg yolk, quiche, pizza, dried milk powder and some cakes and puddings
- medium or high in salt: cheese, bread and processed meat
- high in sugar: fruit, milk puddings, fruit puddings and some cakes

see Factsheet 1.9 for advice on choosing nutritious convenience foods.

- Pour contents into a small saucepan.
- Simmer for 2-3 minutes, stirring.
- Serve immediately.

Nutritional Information

Typical Values	Per 100g	Per pack 170g
Energy	283kJ/68kcal	481kJ/116kcal
Protein	1.5g	2.6g
Carbohydrate	3.4g	5.8g
of which sugars	1.7g	2.9g
Fat	5.4g	9.2g
of which saturates	3.5g	6.0g
Fibre	1.0g	1.7g
Sodium	0.4g	0.7g

- Pour contents into a microwave, cover loosely.
- Cook on HIGH for 1-1½ minutes, half way through.
- Serve immediately.

INGREDIENTS: Water, Milk, Double Cream Thickeners (Modified Maize Starch, Xanthan Gum), Salt, Red Pepper Concentrate, Yeast (Ammonia Caramel), Black Pepper, Garlic Pepper Extract (Salt, Pepper).

Allergen Advice **Contains: Milk**

2 The added sugar content

Even though the total amount of sugar is displayed on the label it is not always easy to determine how much sugar has been added. This total figure for sugar includes natural sugars occurring in the food as well as sugar added as an ingredient. Natural sugars are:

- **lactose** – in milk
- **fructose** – in fruit
- **maltose** – present in starchy foods

Additional sugar may be added in various forms:

- sucrose or table sugar
- dextrose
- all syrups including glucose, golden, corn, maple, agave, etc
- fructose
- honey
- fruit juice concentrate

Therefore the added sugar listed in the ingredients may be divided into two or three forms giving the impression that very little sugar has been added. For example biscuits, cakes or puddings may be sweetened with a combination of sugar, glucose syrup and fruit juice concentrate.

When looking for low-sugar foods it is best to compare the amounts of sugar per 100g within food products and buy the one with the lower sugar content. However it should not be assumed that any foods are sugar-free because there are natural sugars in most foods. It is important that toddlers enjoy their food and a little sugar is appropriate in their diet.

see Factsheet 4.5

3 The added salt content

Sodium occurs naturally in some foods and is also a component of salt. Sodium or salt are present in most foods. For example fresh meat and milk contain small amounts of sodium naturally but no salt. The total salt on the label includes the natural sodium in ingredients as well as any salt that is added to enhance flavour or as part of the cooking process or as a food preservative. Labels display only the total salt content (multiplying sodium content by 2.5). From the salt weight on the label it is not possible to know how much salt has been added during processing and how much natural sodium from fresh foods is present.

4 The added fat content

Nutritious foods such as eggs, meat, oily fish, milk and cheese all naturally contain some fat along with the fat soluble vitamins A, D and E. This fat is an acceptable part of a healthy balanced diet. Ready meals and food products that include these food ingredients will naturally contain some fat. Additional fat is added to some foods by adding oil, cream, lard, margarine or butter to enhance flavour and as part of the cooking process. The total fat content on the food label does not indicate how much fat is found naturally in the ingredients and how much is added to enhance flavour or as part of the cooking process.



FINDING OUT MORE

Food labels do not contain all the information needed to judge a food's true nutritional content. For this it is necessary to know the amounts of all the nutrients present, as described in [Factsheet 1.1i](#)

This information may be available directly from the food company, either on its website or by e-mail, mail or telephone. Registered dietitians can give more information on the nutritional value of various foods and can be contacted via a GP, Primary Care Trust or www.freelancedietitians.org.

[Factsheet 1.2](#) describes how to offer toddlers a combination of foods to provide all the nutrients needed for growth and development. These foods can be fresh and unlabelled or carefully chosen packaged and labelled foods. [Factsheet 1.9](#) gives tips on how to choose nutritious packaged food by using common sense and some of the information on labels.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS FOUND ON FOOD LABELS

Antioxidants - help foods last longer by preventing the fats, oils and certain vitamins from combining with oxygen in the air and becoming rancid and losing colour. If this happens it makes food taste 'off'. Vitamin C, also called ascorbic acid or E300, is one of the most widely used antioxidants in food.

Colours - are added to food and drinks to give them a consistent colour. They may be used to replace the natural colour lost during food processing or storage. Natural colours come from foods e.g. caramel (E150a), which is used in products such as gravy and sweet drinks; and curcumin (E100), a yellow colour extracted from turmeric roots. Many colourings are artificially created and all are tested for safety. However the Food Standards Agency (FSA) warns that combinations of the following artificial colours: sunset yellow (E110), quinoline yellow (E104), carmoisine (E122), allura red (E129), tartrazine (E102) and ponceau 4R (E124) may be linked to a negative effect on children's behaviour. These colours were often used in soft drinks, sweets and ice cream but most manufacturers are now replacing them.

E numbers - are food additives that have passed safety tests and been approved for use throughout the European Union. Some of these additives will be nutritious, such as vitamin C while others will be synthetic chemicals. The additives assigned E numbers include antioxidants, colours, flavour enhancers, preservatives and sweeteners. Additives may be labelled by their E number, their chemical name or both. Some manufacturers use E numbers on labels and some do not.

Ingredients: Cane Sugar, Wheat Flour, Glucose Syrup, Treacle, Thickener (E1442), Vegetable Oil, Flavouring, Citric Acid, Colour (E129), Emulsifiers (E471), Salt, Liquorice Extract, Sodium Bicarbonate.
Contains: Wheat.
May contain traces of peanuts and other nuts.

Emulsifiers - are additives such as lecithins (E322) that are used to help mix ingredients that would normally separate out (such as oil and water).

Flavour enhancers - are used to bring out the flavour in foods. Monosodium glutamate (E621), known as MSG, is the most well known and it is added to processed foods, especially soups, sauces and sausages. Savoury snacks, ready meals and condiments also contain them.

Flavourings - are controlled by different laws so they do not have E numbers. Flavourings are added in much smaller amounts than the other additives and they give a particular flavour or smell. They may be extracted from food or more usually they are synthetic copies of the chemicals in food that provide the flavour. They are considered very stable and very safe and do not have to be named on ingredient labels.

Gelling agents - are used to change the consistency of food. The most common gelling agent is pectin (E440), which is used to make jam.

Hydrogenated oil or fat - hydrogenation is one of the processes that can be used to turn liquid oil into solid fat. The final product of this process is called hydrogenated vegetable oil, or sometimes hydrogenated fat. Hydrogenated fat contains more saturated fats and trans fats than fat that has not been hydrogenated. It is used in some biscuits, cakes, pastry, margarine and other processed foods.

Ingredients - are specific foods or food products which make up a food - milk, meat, oil, sugar or salt, for instance.

Lupins - are plants and the seeds of some types can be used in foods such as seeded bread and can also be ground to make lupin flour, which is used sometimes in foods such as pastries. This is more common in Europe than the UK.

Nutrients - are chemicals within foods that are needed by the body - protein, fat, carbohydrate, sugar, vitamins, minerals such as iron, zinc and sodium. For a full list of nutrients and their functions, sources and requirements see **Factsheet 1.1i**.

Preservatives - delay food from 'going off' giving it a longer shelf life. Most food that has a long shelf life is likely to include preservatives, unless another method of preserving has been used such as pasteurising, freezing, canning or drying. For example, to stop mould or bacteria growing, dried fruit is often treated with sulphur dioxide (E220); and bacon, ham, corned beef and other cured meats are often treated with nitrite and nitrate (E249 to E252) during the curing process. More traditional preservatives such as sugar, salt and vinegar are also still used to preserve some foods. For example sugar in jam and tinned fruit, salt in cheese and vinegar to pickle vegetables. Foods containing the preservative sodium benzoate (E211, most commonly found in soft drinks) in combination with the colours listed above should not be given to toddlers as a recent study has shown that it may have a negative effect on behaviour. Some antioxidants (see above) are also preservatives.

Stabilisers - such as locust bean gum (E410) made from carob beans, help stop mixed ingredients such as oil and water from separating out.

Sweeteners - are often used instead of sugar in products such as fizzy drinks, squash, yogurt and chewing gum. 'Intense sweeteners', such as aspartame (E951), saccharin (E954) and acesulfame-K (E950) are many times sweeter than sugar and so only very small amounts are added. Toddlers do not need to completely avoid sweeteners but the less they have the better as sweeteners are artificial chemicals.

The sweetener sorbitol (E420) is often used in quantities that can cause diarrhoea in toddlers and should be avoided.

Thickeners - such as wheat starch, help give body to food in the same way as adding flour thickens a sauce.

Relevant Documents and Further Reading

European Food Labelling Laws are set out within EU Regulation No 1169/2011 Published 25.10.2011
https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/labelling_nutrition/labelling_legislation_en

Processed cereal-based foods and baby foods for infants and young children are currently covered by EU Commission Directive 2006/125/EC
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32006L0125>

Reference Nutrient Intakes (RNIs) are listed in Department of Health (1991) Dietary Reference Values for Food Energy and Nutrients within the United Kingdom COMA Report No.41

Energy Requirements for Children 1-3 years are taken from Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (2011) Dietary Reference Values for Energy
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sacn-dietary-reference-values-for-energy>

Food labels [Internet]. nhs.uk. 2018 [cited 10 December 2018]. Available from: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/how-to-read-food-labels/>

Additional copies of this Factsheet can be downloaded from www.infantandtoddlerforum.org

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UNDERSTANDING FOOD LABELS GUIDANCE & TIPS FOR PARENTS



- Food labels contain a lot of useful information. But they can be confusing and do not always tell you everything you need to know.
- By law food labels must include nutritional information, an ingredients list, guidance on storage, a 'best before' date, allergy advice and instructions for use.
- There are 14 ingredients that commonly cause allergies. If a food contains any of these, they must be emphasised in the ingredients list.
- Food labelling laws do not apply to fresh food or individual packs within multipacks.
- If a food is labelled as suitable for children under three years old, it should comply with strict rules on what it can and cannot contain. If the food does not contain an explicit age recommendation, these rules do not apply, even if the food is clearly packaged to appeal to young children.
- RI means Reference Intake. It is set for adults not children.
- RNI means Reference Nutrient Intake. It gives the recommended intake for specific ages.
- Traffic light colours on labels offer a quick way to judge the amount of calories, fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt in a food. It uses red, amber and green labels to show whether a food or drink has a high, medium or low amount of the following:
 - calories • fat • saturated fat
 - sugar • salt
- A red or amber light does not necessarily mean a food is unhealthy. You need to judge its overall content, and consider it within a healthy balanced daily diet. For example cheese is a nutritious food for toddlers because it contains calcium, protein and certain vitamins, but it will be labelled as high in saturated fat and salt because of how cheese is made. Milk and fruit are healthy foods but both contain natural sugars. Foods containing milk or fruit will therefore usually be labelled high in sugar.
- When looking for low sugar foods it is best to compare the sugar contents of comparable foods.
- Do not expect any foods to be sugar-free because there are natural sugars in most foods. It is important that toddlers enjoy their food and a little sugar is normal.
- If you want to know more about the content of a food you can visit the food company's website or contact it directly. For more detailed dietary advice you can contact a registered dietitian via your GP, Primary Care Trust or www.freelancedietitians.org.

	Reference Intakes		Recommended Nutrient Intakes or Dietary Reference Values	
	Adult		Boys 1-3 yrs	Girls 1-3 yrs
Energy in Kilocalories	2000kcal	Calories	765–1171kcal	717–1076kcal
Fat	70g	Fat	30–45g	28–42g
Saturated Fat	20g	Saturated Fat	9–14g	9–13g
Carbohydrates	260g	Carbohydrates	96–146g	90–135g
Sugars	90g	Free sugars*	9.6–14.6g	9–13.5g
Protein	50g	Protein	14.5g	14.5g
Salt	6g	Salt	2g	2g

* Fat calculated as 35% of energy

* Saturated fat calculated as 11% of energy

* Carbohydrates calculated as 50% of energy

* Free sugars calculated as 5% of energy. They include table sugar, added sugars in various forms and fructose in fruit juices and processed fruit. They do not include lactose in milk and milk products, nor fructose in fresh whole fruit.



Practical advice for healthy eating habits
from pregnancy to preschool

Supported by an unrestricted educational grant
from Danone Nutricia Early Life Nutrition

