

A) Understanding Food Labels Key Words

Attacks

Mineral

Balance

Oxygen

Carbohydrates

Saturated

Cholesterol

Serving

Column

Teeth

Energy

Trans

Fibre

Vegetables

Infection

Wrapping

B) Introduction

Learning Outcomes

At the end of Lesson 4, learners should be able to:

- a) **use** the words that are listed in the key words list and discuss what they mean in the context of this lesson and their lives
- b) **describe** the information that is found most commonly on food labels
- c) **recognize** if there is a healthy, or too high or too low an amount of a certain nutrient on food labels
- d) **indicate** what nutrients are needed for healthy aging

Lesson 4 literacy activities

The types of literacy activities in Lesson 4 are:

- a) **Reading** exercise on “Understanding Food Labels”
- b) **Fill-in-the-blanks** with words from the above reading material that are on the key words list
- c) **Word search** - to find the words that are listed in the Understanding Food Labels key words list
- d) **Reading** Nutrition Facts on food labels
- e) **Writing** exercises such as working on Activity Sheets # 1 to # 8, and completing blank Nutrition Facts labels that are published by the Canadian Diabetes Association and Dietitians of Canada. These are included in this lesson, but more copies can be obtained from www.healthyeatingisinstore.ca.

Activities are explained further in the lesson. Facilitators may use additional literacy activities to help learners enhance their understanding of food labels.

C) Reading Exercise

Facilitator Notes: According to the SMOG test, the following text is written at about a Grade 8 reading level, or literacy level 2 and may be read using *assisted* or *choral* reading techniques. In *assisted* reading, facilitator and learners take turns reading parts of the text, whereas *choral* reading involves reading together. These techniques are described further in Section 2 of the manual of the Nova Scotia Tutor & Instructor Training and Certification Program.

Learner Activity**Understanding Food Labels**

Most of the packaged foods we buy today have a label called Nutrition Facts. These labels can be seen on the wrappings of canned goods, grain products, some vegetables, dairy foods, frozen dinners, drinks, candy, chips, etc.

All of these labels have headings, such as serving size, calories, and nutrients like fat, cholesterol, sodium, carbohydrate, protein, vitamins and minerals. There is also a column with the heading “% Daily Value” which helps us see if how much of that type of nutrient is needed in a day in that packaged food.

We need a certain amount of FAT to give us energy and to provide nutrients for our body. However, eating too

C) Reading Exercise (continued)

much of certain kinds of fat, such as saturated fat and trans fat could lead to heart disease or Type 2 diabetes.

Our body makes most of the **CHOLESTEROL** we need, and we also get some from the foods we eat. We need cholesterol to build cells and hormones, but too much of it in our blood can lead to heart attacks or strokes.

SODIUM is another name for salt. Salt helps to balance our body fluids, but for some people, eating too much of it can be harmful.

CARBOHYDRATES provide us with energy for our muscles and our brain. Sugar and fibre are two types of carbohydrates shown on Nutrition Facts labels.

PROTEINS are needed to build muscle, bones and teeth. **VITAMIN A** keeps our skin and eyesight healthy, and **VITAMIN C** helps us fight infection.

CALCIUM is needed for strong bones and teeth, and **IRON** allows our red cells to carry oxygen in our blood to various parts of our body.

(Adapted from: Fact Sheet #2 *All about Nutrients* from the Canadian Diabetes Association/Dietitians of Canada website.)

D) Fill-in-the-Blanks Activity

Facilitator Notes: Having read the first text, learners are then asked to re-read the same text by filling the blanks with words from the key word list. This activity helps to re-enforce learning from the first reading and to place words in context.

Learner Activity**Understanding Food Labels**

Most of the packaged foods we buy today have a label called Nutrition Facts. These labels can be seen on the _____ of canned goods, grain products, some _____, dairy foods, frozen dinners, drinks, candy, chips, etc.

All of these labels have headings, such as _____ size, calories, and nutrients like fat, cholesterol, sodium, carbohydrate, protein, vitamins and _____. There is also a _____ with the heading “% Daily Value” which helps us see how much of that type of nutrient is needed in a day in that packaged food.

We need a certain amount of FAT to give us _____ and to provide nutrients for our body. However, eating

D) Fill-in-the-Blanks Activity (continued)

too much of certain kinds of fat, such as _____ fat and _____ fat could lead to heart disease or Type 2 diabetes.

Our body makes most of the CHOLESTEROL we need, and we also get some from the foods we eat. We need _____ to build cells and hormones, but too much of it in our blood can lead to heart _____ or strokes.

SODIUM is another name for salt. Salt helps to _____ our body fluids, but for some people, eating too much of it can be harmful.

CARBOHYDRATES provide us with energy for our muscles and our brain. Sugar and _____ are two types of _____ shown on Nutrition Facts labels.

PROTEINS are needed to build muscle, bones and _____. VITAMIN A keeps our skin and eyesight healthy, and VITAMIN C helps us fight _____.

CALCIUM is needed for strong bones and teeth, and IRON allows our red cells to carry _____ in our blood to various parts of our body.

E) Word Search Exercise

Facilitator Notes: In this activity learners are asked to circle the words in the puzzle that are found on the key words list in Section A. Learners may find it helpful to list the keywords in the margin. This activity helps with word recognition and recall. (Answers are found in the appendices.)

Learner Activity

V	S	K	C	A	T	T	A	B	C	B	S
E	L	A	R	E	N	I	M	C	Z	A	E
G	K	N	E	G	Y	X	O	W	T	L	T
E	L	Z	W	N	B	L	C	U	Q	A	A
T	Q	Y	B	Z	U	G	R	N	Z	N	R
A	R	E	N	M	N	A	O	Q	R	C	D
B	D	T	N	I	T	I	B	Y	Z	E	Y
L	W	S	V	E	T	E	E	T	H	Q	H
E	Q	R	D	C	R	S	N	A	R	T	O
S	E	C	E	F	J	G	K	R	B	C	B
Z	N	W	G	N	I	P	P	A	R	W	A
I	L	O	R	E	T	S	E	L	O	H	C

F) Reading a Nutrition Facts Label

Facilitator Notes: This exercise requires learners to read the following food label as well as the meaning of the circled numbers on the following pages. The information was adapted from Fact Sheet #3 entitled *Take 5 to read the facts* from the Canadian Diabetes Association/Dietitians of Canada website www.healthyeatingisinstore.ca.

Learner Activity

Frozen Chicken Alfredo Crustini Dinner

Nutrition Facts Serving size-1 piece -128g		← (1)
Amount	% Daily Value	← (2)
Calories 320		← (3)
Fat 15 g	23 %	← (4)
Saturated 6 g + Trans 3.5 g	48 %	
Cholesterol 20 mg		
Sodium 690 mg	29 %	
Carbohydrates 38 g	13 %	← (5)
Fibre 3 g Sugars 8 g	12 %	
Protein 9 g		
Vitamin A	8 %	
Vitamin C	0 %	
Calcium	12%	
Iron	15 %	

F) Reading a Nutrition Facts Label (continued)

1

Serving Size

This section of the label means if you eat the serving size shown on the label (1 piece in this case) you will get the amount of calories and nutrients that are listed.

2

% Daily Value

This scale shows how much nutrient is in a serving, on a scale of 0% to 100%, and is the percent number required in a day.

3

Calories

Calories tell you how much energy is obtained from one serving.

4

Get *fewer* of these nutrients:

- Fat, saturated fat, and trans fat
- Cholesterol
- Sodium

Choose foods with *low* % Daily Values of fat and sodium, especially if you are at risk for heart disease or diabetes.

F) Reading a Nutrition Facts Label (continued)

- 5** **Get *more* of these nutrients**
- Carbohydrates
 - Fibre
 - Vitamin A and C
 - Calcium
 - Iron

Choose foods with *high* % Daily Value of these nutrients. If you have diabetes, you must be careful how much carbohydrate you eat, as this will affect your blood sugar level.

G) Writing Exercises

Facilitator Notes: The following writing activity sheets were also prepared by the Canadian Diabetes Association and Dietitians of Canada to help consumers understand nutrition facts on food labels. More of these activity forms can be obtained from their website. These activities are excellent for group work where learners can share their findings and compare and contrast the nutrients on their food labels.

a) “Figure out the facts” activity sheets:

Activity sheets # 1 to # 8 have various exercises in how to read labels and understand what the information means. Learners should be invited to complete as many as they can.

b) Blank nutrition facts labels activity sheets:

These are a few pages with blank Nutrition Facts labels. Learners can be asked to bring their own food labels from home to complete these in class or to take them home to complete.

References and Resources

Title	Information
<i>Healthy Eating is in Store for You-Instructor's Guide</i>	This guide was produced by the Canadian Diabetes Association and Dietitians of Canada to help consumers understand nutrition information on food labels. It is designed for instructors working with individuals with low income, low literacy, senior citizens, etc. It can be downloaded from www.healthyeatingisinstore.ca
<i>Nutrition Labelling Toolkit for Educators</i>	This is an excellent tool kit found on Health Canada's website to help community health educators who want to present information on Canadian food labeling. Downloadable from www.hc-sc.gc.ca . Search for "Nutrition Labelling Toolkit for Educators-Ready-to-go presentation: Core Unit".
<i>Revealing Trans Fats</i>	This is a U.S. article describing <i>trans fats</i> and other varieties of fats and tips on how to keep their consumption low. Available from www.fda.gov/fdac .