



Nutrition Labels to Get a Facelift

The days of trying to guess how many calories were in the half bag of chips you just ate could be over. After years of discussion, the FDA recently announced a proposed makeover of the Nutrition Facts Panel that appears on packaged foods. This will be the first change since the current version was introduced in 1993.



What is the Nutrition Facts Panel?

The Nutrition Facts Panel is the go-to location for nutrient information on packaged foods. Typically located on the back of packages near the ingredients, the Nutrition Facts Panel currently includes information on serving size, calories, fat, carbohydrates, protein and a variety of other nutrients including vitamins and minerals. In addition to actual amounts, you will also find information on what amounts we should be getting every day - presented as % Daily Value.



What is changing?

The FDA is proposing changes to both the look and content of the Nutrition Facts Panel. The biggest visual change is to calories, which will be in substantially larger print. Servings per container, which is important, but often overlooked, will also appear in larger print. Calories from fat will no longer be displayed, reflecting the view that the type of fat is the more relevant information. Vitamins A and C are also leaving the label to make room for Vitamin D and potassium, which are considered nutrients in need of more attention in our diets. Added sugars will also be included to make it easier to tell them apart from those naturally occurring in food. Along with the label changes, the FDA is also proposing changes to the way serving sizes are determined, which will closely match how we typically eat or drink.



When will we see the new labels?

We should start to see the new look in about two years. The FDA is now accepting public comments on the new label proposals. After the comments are considered, a final rule and guidance on the Nutrition Facts Panel will be issued. From this time, manufacturers will have two years to change their packaging.



REFERENCES:

1. Food Labeling: Revision of the Nutrition and Supplement Facts Labels: A Proposed Rule by the Food and Drug Administration. Available at: <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2014/03/03/2014-04387/food-labeling-revision-of-the-nutrition-and-supplement-facts-labels>
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