

# Food Labels Guide

## for Cancer Survivors



This fact sheet is one in a series developed for cancer survivors who have finished active treatment. Eating well and maintaining a healthy weight may help lower the chances of some cancers returning and improve overall health.

**It can be difficult to read or understand food labels when you're shopping, especially when you're in a hurry. Use this handy wallet-sized nutrition guide to help you. Cut around the dotted line, fold the sides together down the middle, and glue together.**

### Saturated fat

Saturated fat is linked to high blood cholesterol levels, which can increase the risk of heart disease and stroke. Saturated fat is found mainly in animal foods, particularly from red meat; full-cream dairy products; coconut milk and oil; and palm oil. You should limit your intake of foods that are high in saturated fats.

### Total fat

Total fat means both the saturated and unsaturated fat content of food. Unsaturated fats can help to lower cholesterol. They include olive and canola oils, nut oils, avocado oil, and deep sea fish oils such as sardines, tuna and salmon. Unsaturated fats can be eaten in moderation, but

it is important to check the total fat content of a food before deciding how often to eat it, especially if you are trying to lose weight.

### Sugar

Sugar occurs naturally in food such as fruits and dairy products, but it is also added to many processed foods including cereals, spreads, tinned vegetables, sauces, biscuits, confectionery and drinks. Although sugar gives us energy, in high quantities it can be bad for our health.

### Sodium (salt)

Salt is also called sodium chloride. It is recommended that adults have no more than 4 g of salt (or 1600 mg of sodium) a day. To keep a check on the amount of salt in foods, it is useful to look at the levels of sodium. You can convert milligrams of sodium into milligrams of salt by multiplying by 2.5.

Example:

**Per serving of peanut butter (20 g)**  
**124 mg sodium x 2.5 = 310 mg salt**

**Per 100 g of peanut butter**  
**620 mg sodium x 2.5 = 1550 mg**

## Cancer Council's Nutrition Guide



Check your labels to see if you're making healthy choices for your family

Per 100g	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
	Eat most	Eat in moderation	Limit intake
<b>Total fat</b>	≤ 3 g	3.1 – 19.9 g	≥ 20 g
<b>Saturated fat</b>	≤ 1.5 g	1.6 – 4.9 g	≥ 5 g
<b>Sugar</b>	≤ 5 g	5.1 – 14.9 g	≥ 15 g
<b>Sodium</b>	≤ 120 mg	121 – 599 mg	≥ 600 mg

Adapted with permission from The Parents' Jury – [www.parentsjury.org.au](http://www.parentsjury.org.au)  
See also CHOICE's criteria – [www.choicefoodforkids.com.au](http://www.choicefoodforkids.com.au)

### Nutrition Guide Tips

- Ingredients are listed from the main ingredient (highest weight) to the smallest ingredient. Check the top three ingredients in the food you buy.
- Don't rely solely on nutrition claims on the packaging, such as 'lite', 'low-fat' or 'sugar-free' to make your purchase. Always look at the nutrition label to make sure you really know what is in the product.
- Is there an endorsement or approval stamp on your food? Check the fine print to find out what it means. Who has the stamp come from? A product may have health benefits for some people that aren't suitable for others.
- For more information on healthy eating, see [www.cancerCouncil.com.au/reduce-risks/eating-moving/](http://www.cancerCouncil.com.au/reduce-risks/eating-moving/)





# Food Labels Guide

*This fact sheet provides general information only and is not a substitute for individual health advice. You should talk to your doctor or dietitian about your specific situation.*

**Cancer Council NSW** 153 Dowling Street,  
Woolloomooloo NSW 2011  
**Email** [feedback@nswcc.org.au](mailto:feedback@nswcc.org.au)

© Cancer Council NSW 2012. **ABN** 51 116 463 846

