

# READING LABELS

You almost have to have an honours degree to decipher packaged food, and decide whether you should or would put it in your body, these days! The best advice I can give you is to not eat anything that comes packaged and eat only fresh, natural foods.



As grandiose a plan as that may be, it is probably not that practical for many people. So, assuming you are going to eat food that has been pre-packaged here are some hints to help you make the wisest health choice you can:

1. Be wary of any food product that has a label.
2. Pay no attention to the front of the package. That is; the name and the claims – Turn it over the answer lies in the ingredients
3. When comparing products, the one with the least calories, the least fat and the least sugar is not necessarily the healthiest product. Nor will it be the best if fat loss is your goal.
4. The most important factor is; what is the source of the calories, fat and sugar? This can only be read from the ingredients list.
5. The ingredient list is ordered from most to least, in terms of quantity.
6. Choose products with the most natural ingredients.
7. Avoid products with a lot of sugars. They will be listed in many ways, watch out for any word that ends in ...ose.
8. Avoid products with numbers – these refer to artificial and synthetic ingredients that have been added. For example; sweeteners, colours, flavours etc.
9. Go for the product with the least words in the ingredients list (keeping the above factors in mind).
10. Use the nutritional panel to determine whether the product contains 'trans fat' and if so avoid it. In the above panel it states that the total fat (per 100g) is 8g and that saturated fat makes up 3g. This is all the information they give – you can assume that the 5g difference is 'trans fat' because if it were a good fat, they would list it.

Chili with Beans	
Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size: 1 cup (253 g)	
Servings per container: 2	
Amount per serving	
Calories 260	Calories from Fat 72
% Daily Value	
Total Fat 8g	13%
Saturated Fat 3g	17%
Cholesterol 130mg	44%
Sodium 1010mg	42%
Total Carbohydrate 22g	7%
Dietary Fiber 9g	36%
Sugars 4g	
Protein 25g	

**ADDED INGREDIENTS**  
Sugar • Water • Dextrose • Glucose Syrup • Sweetened Condensed Milk • Modified Maize Starch • Flavourings • Stabilisers (E440, E410) • Acidity Regulator (E270) • Colour (E150(a)).

**Good luck and enjoy your shopping experience**