

## UNDERSTANDING FOOD LABELS

In the past, one of the most confusing parts of food labels were terms used to describe the food. For instance, “light” might have referred to color, texture, or calories. By law, terms now used on food labels mean the same thing for all foods. These terms can help you choose healthy foods.

### CALORIE TERMS

<b>Calories</b>	less than 5 calories per serving
<b>Low Calorie</b>	40 calories or less per serving
<b>Reduced calorie</b>	at least 25% fewer calories per serving when compared with similar food
<b>Light, Lite</b>	one-third fewer calories or 50% less fat per serving; if more than half the calories are from fat, fat content must be reduced by 50% or more

### CHOLESTEROL TERMS

<b>Cholesterol free</b>	less than 2 milligrams cholesterol per serving and 2 grams or less saturated fat per serving
<b>Low cholesterol</b>	20 milligrams or less cholesterol per serving and 2 grams or less saturated fat per serving
<b>Reduced cholesterol</b>	at least 25% less cholesterol when compared with similar food, 2 grams or less saturated fat per

### FAT TERMS

<b>Fat free</b>	less than ½ gram fat per serving
<b>100% fat free</b>	meets requirements for <i>fat free</i> (less than ½ gram fat per serving)
<b>Low fat</b>	3 grams or less fat per serving
<b>_% fat free</b>	meets requirements for <i>low fat</i> ; the percentage is based on the amount of fat (by weight) in 100 grams of the food
<b>Reduced fat</b>	at least 25% less fat when compared with a similar food
<b>Saturated fat free</b>	less than ½ gram saturated fat per serving
<b>Low saturated fat</b>	1 gram or less saturated fat per serving and no more than 15% of calories from saturated fat
<b>Reduced saturated fat</b>	at least 25% less saturated fat per serving when compared with a similar food

serving

## SUGAR TERMS

<b>Sugar free</b>	less than ½ gram sugars per serving
<b>Low sugar</b>	may not be used as a claim
<b>Reduced sugar</b>	at least 25% less sugar per serving when compared with a similar food
<b>No added</b>	(1) no amount of sugars or any other ingredient that contains sugars that functionally substitute for added sugars is added during processing or packaging; (2) the product contains no ingredients that contain added sugars; such as jam, jelly, or concentrated fruit juice; (3) the product it resembles and substitutes for normally contains added sugars; and (4) the label declares that the food is not “low calorie” or “calorie reduced” as appropriate

## SODIUM TERMS

<b>Sodium free</b>	less than 5 milligrams sodium per serving
<b>Salt free</b>	meets requirements for <i>salt free</i>
<b>Very low sodium</b>	35 milligrams or less sodium per serving
<b>Low sodium</b>	140 milligrams or less sodium per serving
<b>Reduced sodium</b>	at least 25% less sodium when compared with a similar food
<b>Light in sodium</b>	50% less sodium per serving; restricted to foods with more than 40 calories per serving or more than 3 grams fat per serving
<b>Unsalted, Without added salt, No salt added</b>	(1) no salt is added during processing (2) the product it resembles and substitutes for is normally processed with salt; and (3) the label bears the statement “not a sodium free food” or “not for control of sodium in the diet” if the food is not sodium free

## OTHER LABEL WORDS

<b>Good Source, Contains, Provides</b>	contains 10% to 19% of the Daily Value per serving
<b>High, Rich in, Excellent Source of</b>	contains 20% or more of the Daily Value per serving
<b>More, Fortified,</b>	contains at least 10% more of the Daily Value for protein, vitamins,

<b>Fresh</b>	raw food that has not been frozen, heat processed, or similarly preserved
<b>Fresh frozen, Frozen fresh</b>	food quickly frozen while very fresh

**WORD SUBSTITUTION:** may sometimes be used in place of basic label terms

<b>Enriched, Added</b>	minerals, dietary fiber, or potassium per serving. May not be used as a claim on meat or poultry products.
<b>Fiber</b>	any food making a fiber claim must meet the requirements for a <i>good source or high</i> claim; must declare the level of total fat per serving if food is not <i>low fat</i> .
<b>Lean</b>	packaged seafood, game meat, cooked meat, or cooked poultry with less than 10 grams total fat, less than 4 grams saturated fat, and less than 95 milligrams cholesterol per serving (and in 100 grams of the food)
<b>Extra lean</b>	packaged seafood, game, meat, cooked meat, or cooked poultry with less than 5 grams total fat, less than 2 grams saturated fat, and less than 95 milligrams cholesterol per serving (and in 100 grams of the food)

<b><u>Label term</u></b>	<b><u>Possible substitutions</u></b>
<b>Free</b>	Free of, no, zero, without, trivial source of, negligible source of, dietarily insignificant source of non (nonfat only)
<b>Low</b>	Few, contains a small amount of, low source of, low in, little, a little
<b>Reduced</b>	Reduced in, ___ % reduced, fewer, lower, lower in, less

\*Label terms used on meal-type products such as entrees, main dish products and dinners may have different criteria for nutrient levels.