

Step 3 to MyPlate Food Labels

Look at the food labels. Pay special attention to the fat content of food, and to calories. Learn which foods are high in fat and choose lower-fat substitutes.

Current recommendations are for children to receive less than 30% of their calories from fat each day. Try to select lower fat foods and plan out your meals as shown in the MyPlate graphic. That usually means smaller portions of starches and sometimes meats. It is important to fill up the “empty spaces” with vegetables and fruits so your child will feel satisfied.

Sample label for
Macaroni & Cheese

1 **Start Here** →

2 **Check Calories**

3 **Limit these Nutrients**

4 **Get Enough of these Nutrients**

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g) Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
<i>Trans</i> Fat 3g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A	4%
Vitamin C	2%
Calcium	20%
Iron	4%

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Quick Guide to % DV

- 5% or less is Low
- 20% or more is High

5 **Footnote**

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Step 1: Look closely at the serving size and the number of servings per package. Ask yourself “How many servings is my child eating?” In this example, one packet is two servings.

Step 2: Check the number of calories. A single package may contain several servings. For example, if the entire package was eaten, then 500 calories (not 250) were consumed. As a guideline, low calorie foods are about 40 calories per serving, moderate foods are about 100 per serving, and high calorie foods are 400 or more per serving. Too many calories per day leads to weight gain.

Step 3: Limit sodium, sugars, cholesterol and fats. Too much of these nutrients can lead to future health problems such as heart disease and high blood pressure. Aim for foods with 0 g of trans fat per serving.

Step 4: Try to include foods high in these nutrients every day to stay healthy.

Step 5: Remember that younger children should eat many fewer calories than teens and adults. An athletic teen would burn off several “servings” of macaroni and cheese in a day, but an 8-year-old would not need nearly that much! A single serving as part of a balanced meal would be a much better way to eat. Try following the MyPlate guideline below and keeping an eye on serving sizes for several months. When your child comes back we will offer him/or her more details on healthy eating.

Step 6: Use this section to write down your questions to ask your child’s doctor when you come back for follow up. If you would like to schedule some time with a dietician we can arrange that.

For additional suggestions check out the 10 Healthy Tips at www.choosemyplate.gov

