Food Label Reading Worksheet

Practice four checks on the Nutrition Facts label: serving size, sodium, dietary fiber and added sugars.

Hypothetical labels. Labels A and B are invented for practice and show only the lines this worksheet uses. They do not describe any real product. The Daily Values used are FDA's: sodium 2,300mg, dietary fiber 28g, added sugars 50g.

Hypothetical Label A: whole-grain flakes (partial label, invented values for practice)

Label line	Amount per serving	% Daily Value
Serving size	1 cup (40g)	Not listed
Servings per container	About 10	Not listed
Sodium	230mg	10%
Dietary Fiber	7g	25%
Total Sugars	9g	No %DV
Includes Added Sugars	6g	12%

Hypothetical Label B: granola (partial label, invented values for practice)

Label line	Amount per serving	% Daily Value
Serving size	2/3 cup (55g)	Not listed
Servings per container	About 6	Not listed
Sodium	115mg	5%
Dietary Fiber	3g	11%
Total Sugars	14g	No %DV
Includes Added Sugars	12g	24%

Questions

1. **Serving size.** Write the serving size from Label A and from Label B. Is one serving the same amount of food on both labels?

2. **Servings you eat.** You pour 2 cups of Product A. How many servings is that? Write the sodium (mg and %DV), dietary fiber (g and %DV) and added sugars (g and %DV) in your bowl.

3. **Sodium.** FDA’s general guide: 5% DV or less per serving is low and 20% DV or more is high. Classify the sodium in one serving of A, one serving of B, and your 2-cup bowl of A.

4. **Dietary fiber.** Which label lists more dietary fiber per serving? Is that a high source by the same 5% and 20% guide?

5. **Added sugars.** Label B says “Total Sugars 14g, Includes 12g Added Sugars.” How many grams of its sugars are not added? Is 24% DV for added sugars low or high?

6. **Check the math.** Using FDA’s Daily Values (sodium 2,300mg, dietary fiber 28g, added sugars 50g), show that Label A’s sodium is 10% DV and its fiber is 25% DV, and that Label B’s added sugars are 24% DV.

7. **Your own label.** Pick a packaged food at home. Record its serving size, servings per container, the servings you usually eat, and the sodium, dietary fiber and added sugars (amount and %DV) for that many servings.

My label

Line	Per serving	For the servings I eat
Food and serving size		
Servings per container / servings I eat		
Sodium (mg, %DV)		
Dietary fiber (g, %DV)		
Added sugars (g, %DV)		

Answer key

1. **Serving size.** Label A: 1 cup (40g). Label B: 2/3 cup (55g). No. A serving of B weighs 15 grams more than a serving of A, so per-serving numbers do not describe the same amount of food. FDA advises making sure the serving size is the same before you compare products.
2. **Servings you eat.** 2 servings, so double every number: sodium 460mg (20% DV), dietary fiber 14g (50% DV), added sugars 12g (24% DV).
3. **Sodium.** One serving of A (10% DV): neither low nor high. One serving of B (5% DV): low. Two cups of A (20% DV): high.
4. **Dietary fiber.** Label A: 7g, 25% DV, which is high (20% DV or more). Label B lists 3g, 11% DV: neither low nor high.
5. **Added sugars.** 14g minus 12g leaves 2g that are not added sugars. 24% DV is high (20% DV or more). For Label A, 9g minus 6g leaves 3g.
6. **Check the math.** 230 ÷ 2,300 = 0.10, or 10%. 7 ÷ 28 = 0.25, or 25%. 12 ÷ 50 = 0.24, or 24%. You do not have to do this at the store; the %DV column does the math for you.
7. **Your own label.** There is no single right answer. Multiply each number by the servings you eat, then use the 5% and 20% guide: more often choose foods higher in %DV for dietary fiber and lower in %DV for sodium and added sugars.

Sources

U.S. Food and Drug Administration: How to Understand and Use the Nutrition Facts Label; Daily Value on the Nutrition and Supplement Facts Labels; Serving Size on the Nutrition Facts Label; Added Sugars on the Nutrition Facts Label. www.fda.gov/NutritionFactsLabel. USDA FoodData Central, fdc.nal.usda.gov, for foods without a label.

General education for adults, not individual nutrition advice. Daily Values are based on a 2,000-calorie daily diet, which FDA uses as a general guide; your calorie needs may be higher or lower. This worksheet does not set a personal target for any nutrient. If you follow a diet prescribed by your health care team, use the targets they gave you.

From the Cardio Guardian Editorial Team. Online version: getcardioguardian.com/nutrition/food-label-reading-worksheet/