

## Patient Information

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### Top Tips for Understanding Food Labels

#### 'A lot' and 'a little' figures

The figures below show us what is meant by 'a lot' or 'a little' total fat or sugar. When you are looking at the nutrition information panel on a food compare what is listed in the per **100g** column with the figures below to see if the food is high or low in fat and sugar.



- Foods which contain 'a lot' of sugar and / or fat should only be included occasionally while foods which contain 'a little' sugar and / or fat can be included regularly.
- Many food manufacturers use a specific traffic light system on the front of their packaging to show if the food is high in fat or sugar. Sometimes the manufacturer will list it per portion instead which can make the food look healthier than it really is. If in doubt check the per 100g column on the nutrition information panel on the back of the food.
- Nutrition claims such as 'low fat' and 'reduced sugar' can help to point you in the direction of healthier choices, but it's important to understand what the claims mean.
  - **'Low fat'** - contains no more than 3g fat per 100g or 1.5g fat per 100ml of product. Low fat products can still be high in sugar.
  - **'Reduced fat'** - contains at least 30% less fat than a similar standard product; however the product can still be relatively high in fat and may be high in sugar.
  - **'Low sugar'** - contains no more than 5g of sugar per 100g or 2.5g per 100ml of product. Low sugar products can still be high in fat.

- **‘Reduced sugar’** - contains at least 30% less sugar than a similar standard product; however the product may still be relatively high in sugar and may be high in fat.
- **‘No added sugar’** - the product has no additional sugar added into it. It may contain a natural source of sugar e.g. the natural fructose in fruit juice or the natural lactose in milk.
- **‘90% fat/sugar free’** - the product contains 10g fat or sugar per 100g of the food i.e. it would be a medium fat/sugar food.

**The only way to be sure that a product making a nutrition claim is a healthy option (that can be included regularly) is to check the amounts in the nutrition information panel against the ‘a lot’ and ‘a little’ figures above.**

Food labels provide a lot of information on them. To make life simple focus on the ingredients list and the values listed for ‘sugars’ and ‘total fat’.

<b>NUTRITION INFORMATION</b>		
<b>Ingredients:</b> wheat flour, vegetable fat, sugar, skimmed milk powder, emulsifier, soya lecithin, cocoa solids.		
<b>Typical Values</b> (Cooked as per instructions)		
	<b>per SERVING</b>	per 100g
Energy	1426 k J.	953 k J.
	340 kcal	227 kcal
Protein	9.0g	6.0g
Carbohydrate	28.2g	18.8g
of which sugars	3.0g	2.0g
of which starch	25.2g	16.8g
Fat	21.2g	14.2g
of which saturates	7.6g	5.1g
of which monosaturates	10.9g	7.3g
of which polyunsaturates	2.7g	1.8g
Fibre	1.6g	1.1g
Salt	1.5g	1.0g
Sodium	0.6g	0.4g

**INGREDIENTS LIST**

The ingredients on a product are listed in descending order by weight. If any types of fat or sugar come near the top of the ingredients list then it’s a clue that the food could contain a lot of fat or sugar.

**SUGARS**

The carbohydrate figure includes both sugars and starches. Ignore the carbohydrate figure and **focus on the sugars figure**. The figure given for sugars includes both added sugar and natural sugars (e.g. fruit sugar or milk sugar).

To know if a food contains added sugar check the ingredients list for the added sugars listed below:

**Sucrose, dextrose, glucose syrup, corn syrup, fructose, golden syrup, honey and fruit juice concentrate.**

**TOTAL FAT**

There are 3 main types of fat; saturates, polyunsaturates and monounsaturates.

The label always shows the total amount of fat and may provide information on the different types of fat as well. Ignore the different types of fat and **focus on the total amount of fat**.

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Review Date: SEPT 2019

Leaflet code: PWM