

Patient Education: You Can Do It!

by: Ginger Kanzer-Lewis, RN, BC, EdM, CDE



Written for emerging and developing health facilitators who wish to shorten the path from novice to technician to master -- as well as those seeking

to further their development--this book is educational and entertaining. Gain the knowledge and skills needed to teach your patients to turn on and tune in, using games, exercises, tips, and tricks proven to work.

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Eating Smart: The Ins and Outs of Label Reading

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Two components of a healthy lifestyle are shopping smart and eating right. A majority of Americans pay attention to nutrition information on food labels, but need help deciphering nutrition facts and how it applies to them. Being a smart shopper has been made easier with the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1994. Today, food labels are regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Current nutrition trends include a lack of: time to keep track of diet, understanding of nutrition guidelines and the desire for a quick fix approach to weight control. Remember there are no good or bad foods, only good or bad diets. No single food or type of food ensures good health, just as no single food or type of food is necessarily detrimental to health. Taste and food preferences, weight control, physiological influences, lifestyle influences, environmental factors, societal influences, media, and product safety are all reasons why people choose to eat what they do.

Keeping a food journal or diary can assist in making smart choices. The journal helps increase awareness of what is being consumed and identifies ways to help control portion sizes. Balance is key in choosing a variety of naturally nutrient-rich foods from each food group.

Dietary Guidelines for Americans, Food Guide Pyramid, Healthy People 2010, Nutrition Labeling, and Reference Dietary Intakes are all nutrition tools with similar messages, but the differences can be confusing to consumers. The confusion to consumers can be seen in the following examples:

SERVING SIZES

Food	FDA	ADA Exchange List	Food Guide Pyramid
Bread	2 slices (50 g)	1 slice (1 oz.)	1 slice (1 oz.)
Margarine/Oil	1 Tbsp (15 g)	1 tsp	Limit
Juice	1 cup	1/2 cup	3/4 cup

Nutrition Facts Label

The information on the Nutrition Facts label is regulated and more reliable than other statements on food packages. Health experts recommend limiting the top nutrients: total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol and sodium and getting enough of the bottom nutrients: dietary fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium and iron.

Serving Sizes

One of the first things to look at on a food label under Nutrition Facts is serving size. It is important to know how many servings are in the food package and how many servings a person plans to eat. The label is deliberately specific for similar food products to allow consumers to identify differences in nutrients among similar foods and to select based on nutritive values of comparable quantities.

Total Fat

A few easy tips can help calculate if a food item is high in fat. One way is to multiply calories from fat by 3 and if the number is greater than the total calories, it's high in fat. Another way is to allow up to 3 grams of fat per 100 calories.

Cholesterol

A goal for cholesterol is to limit dietary cholesterol intake to less than 300 mg per day.

Sodium

A goal for sodium is to choose items with less than 400 mg/serving for a single item and less than 800 mg/serving for an entrée/convenience meal.



Mark Your Calendar!

Upcoming Meetings

American Diabetes Association

◆ 65th Annual Scientific Sessions

June 10-14, 2005

San Diego, CA

www.diabetes.org

American Association of Diabetes Educators

◆ 32nd Annual Meeting and Exhibition

August 10-13, 2005

Washington D.C.

www.aadenet.org

Fiber and Sugar Alcohols

It is true, fiber and sugar alcohols are not completely digested. The fiber recommendation of 20 – 35 grams per day for adults is typically not reached. One way to increase fiber intake is to choose foods with 3 grams or more of fiber per serving. If a food has 5 grams of fiber or more, the grams of fiber can be subtracted from the Total Carbohydrate value. If a food has 10 grams or more of sugar alcohol, half the grams can be subtracted from the Total Carbohydrate value.

Even if a food is “low” in carbohydrate or fat, it may not be low in calories or considered a health food. Use common sense to meet your carbohydrate and fat goals and try not to lose track of the bigger picture. Take steps to build good eating habits and keep active. Building good eating habits and keeping active takes time and persistence.

Understanding Label Lingo

A label showing free, zero, no, without, trivial source of, negligible source of, dietary insignificant source of, must meet the following standards:

- ◆ Fat Free – < 0.5 grams of fat per serving
- ◆ Calorie Free – < 5 calories per serving
- ◆ Sodium Free – < 5 mg per serving
- ◆ Sugar free – < 0.5 grams per serving
- ◆ Cholesterol free – < 2 mg per serving

A label showing low, little, few, contains a small amount of, low source of, must meet the following standards:

- ◆ Low Fat – 3 grams or less per serving
- ◆ Low Calorie – 40 calories or less per serving
- ◆ Low Cholesterol – 20 mg or less per serving
- ◆ Low Sodium – 140 mg or less per serving
- ◆ Low Sugar – not defined

Reduced, less, lower, fewer means reduced fat, calories, cholesterol, sodium, or sugar with at least 25% less per serving than the traditional item.

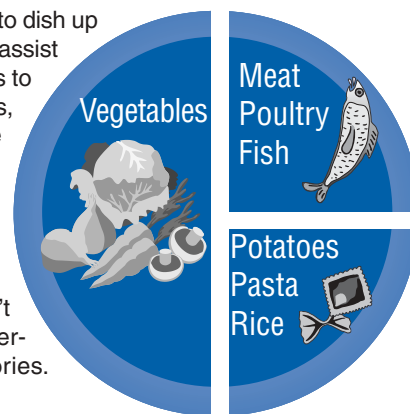
Light (Lite) means 50% less fat per reference amount or one-third fewer calories if less than 50% of calories from fat.

To carry a health claim, food labels must meet three criteria:

1. Labels must not exceed specific levels for total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium.
2. Labels must contain at least 10% of the Daily Value, before supplementation, for any one or all of the following: protein, dietary fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, and iron.
3. Labels must meet nutrient levels that are specific for each approved health claim.

The Dinner Table

After food items have been selected, it's important to dish up a healthy portion to eat smart. One tool to help assist with portion control is the plate method. The idea is to fill half of the plate with vegetables, one-fourth of plate with starch (1/2 - 1 cup or the size of a fist), and one-fourth of the plate with protein (3 oz. or the size of the palm of your hand). Other tips include using smaller plates and avoiding second servings. Timing is also a tip; don't forget it takes approximately 20 minutes for the stomach to signal the brain when it is full. Don't forget to drink plenty of water or non-caloric beverages with your meals to help save on empty calories.



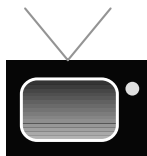
Healthy lifestyle for healthy weight involves limiting the amount of calories in a diet, getting enough exercise, and making smart food choices.



In The Loop....

dLife TV

dLife TV is a new television series dedicated to empowering the millions of Americans living with diabetes. The half-hour talk show is good conversation, timely medical information, inspirational stories, recipes for healthy food, and includes celebrity hosts and a studio audience. It premiered in late March of 2005 on CNBC on Sunday evenings (check local listings for show times). Tune in to hosts and guests sharing their own struggles and successes with diabetes in a fun, enlightening and inspirational half-hour weekly program. For more information, tune into dLife TV or visit: www.dlife.com



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