

# Decoding food labels



Learning how to read food labels can help you decide which foods are the healthiest options for you and your family.

## Health Star Rating (HSR)

The Health Star Rating is a label on the front of some food packages. It is a quick way of checking whether a packaged food is a healthy choice. Healthier products earn more stars.

The Health Star Rating should be used to compare similar foods, e.g. two breakfast cereals, not foods in different categories, e.g. a breakfast cereal and a yoghurt. Unpackaged foods like fruit and veg, and single ingredient foods like sugar don't use the Health Star Rating. The system is currently voluntary, so manufacturers can choose whether or not to display their star rating.



Read more about the HSR at [www.healthstarrating.gov.au](http://www.healthstarrating.gov.au)

## Nutrition Information Panel (NIP)

In Australia, most packaged foods must display a nutrition information panel. The panel shows the amount of nutrients 'per serving size' and 'per 100g'. As the serving size on the package may differ for similar products, and may be different from what you actually eat, it is best to use the 'per 100g' column to compare products.

**To decide if a product is a healthy choice, use the following guide:**

Compare numbers in the 100g column	Best choice 😊	Okay sometimes 😐	Poor choice 😞
<b>TOTAL FAT</b>	Less than 3g	3 – 10g	More than 10g
<b>SATURATED FAT</b>	Less than 1.5g	1.5 – 3g	More than 3g
<b>SUGAR</b>	Less than 5g	5 – 15g	More than 15g
<b>SODIUM (salt)</b>	Less than 120mg	120 – 400mg	More than 400mg
<b>FIBRE</b>	Choose <b>high fibre</b> . Use the <b>per serve column</b> and choose more than <b>3g fibre per serve</b> .		

**DRINKS:** Choose **water first**

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## Ingredients list

Ingredient lists can also help you decide if a product is healthy. Ingredients are listed from most to least amounts, so the main ingredients are listed first. Look out for added fat, sugar and salt.

These can appear on the ingredients list under many different names. All types of sugar and salt are similar nutritionally and will be used in the body in a similar way. Don't be fooled by the marketing claims! Choose foods with minimal trans fats and less than 1.5g of saturated fat per 100g.

### **Other names for sugar, salt and fat:**

- brown sugar, coconut sugar/nectar, corn syrup, cane sugar, date syrup, dextrose, disaccharides, fructose, fruit juice concentrate, glucose, golden syrup, honey, invert sugar, lactose, malt, malt extract, molasses, raw sugar, rice malt syrup, sorbitol, sucrose

## Sugar



- celery salt, chicken salt, garlic salt, onion salt, pink salt, rock salt, sea salt, sodium

## Salt



- beef fat, butter, coconut oil, copha, dripping, hydrogenated oil, lard, oil, palm oil, shortening, triglycerides, vegetable oil

## Fat

