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# Eat Well!

## A Newsletter for Healthy Eating

# Health and Nutrition Claims

Ian Butler, Dietetic Intern

**T**here is a lot to look at on food packages. It is difficult to know what health claims to pay attention to and if the claim is reliable. Fortunately, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) closely regulates most packaged foods made and sold in the United States.

#### What is a health claim?

A health claim describes the link between a food substance and the reduced risk of a condition or disease. Only health claims that are approved by the FDA can be used on a food label. Approval of health claims is dependent on current research showing the reduction of disease or condition as a result of consuming a food or nutrient.

The FDA requires a health claim to have two essential components. The claim must include both a:

1. Substance, whether a food, food component, or dietary ingredient, and a

2. Disease or health-related condition.

A statement lacking either one of these components does not meet the criteria of a health claim.

#### Nutrient and structure function claims

Health claims are not the only type of claim that can be found on food packaging. There are also nutrient claims and structure-function claims.

- A **nutrient claim** only states the amount of a substance there is in a product. For example, an item with the label "low sodium" indicates that you can consume this food regularly without getting more salt than is recommended for the average diet.
  - These claims must have a specific wording to them and not just imply that the item may or may not contain an amount of a nutrient.

*Continued on page 2*



**Looking for ways to save money on food?** The *Eat Well!* newsletter has always given you great ideas on how to save money on food. Now these ideas are even easier to spot. Look for this picture in the Eat Well newsletter to find great tips to save money on food. **SAVE MONEY.**

(Look for a few examples of nutrient claims in the Food Bites section.)

- A **structure-function** claim describes the benefits of a food on a part of the body. An example of this is “helps support healthy teeth and bones.” This type of claim does not have to be approved by the FDA.
  - To be considered legal, these claims cannot mention a disease without scientific backing.

Health claims can help you find foods that help prevent many diseases, such as heart disease, certain types of cancers, diabetes, and obesity. Look for other health claims to help you make healthier food choices.

## References

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- Code of Federal Regulations. 2017. [https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=c7e427855f12554dbc292b4c8a7545a0&mc=true&node=pt21.2.101&rgn=div5#se21.2.101\\_172](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=c7e427855f12554dbc292b4c8a7545a0&mc=true&node=pt21.2.101&rgn=div5#se21.2.101_172).

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## Food Bites

### General Terms on Food Labels

Kathy Savoie, Extension Educator

**Good source of:** the product provides between 10 and 19 percent (%) of the Daily Value for a given nutrient per serving.

**High:** 20 percent (%) or more of the Daily Value for a given nutrient per serving; can also use the words *rich in* or *excellent source of*.

**Less:** at least 25 percent (%) less of a given nutrient or calorie than the comparison food; can also use the words *fewer* or *reduced*.

**Light or lite:** one-third fewer calories than the comparison food; 50 percent (%) or less of the fat or sodium than the comparison food; any use of the term other than as defined must specify what it is referring to (for example, “light in color” or “light in texture”).

## Reference

- Rolfes, Pinna and Whitney. *Understanding Normal and Clinical Nutrition*. Eleventh Edition. Cengage Learning. 2018.



## Kid's Korner

### Maine Open Farm Day

*A day of fun at a farm near you!*

Would you like to visit a farm to see how animals are raised or food is grown? If so, you are in luck!

*Open Farm Day* is an annual event where several farms around the state open their gates for families to visit. Many farms will have demonstrations, displays and farm-raised products for sale. Activities might include barn and field tours, milking, hay rides, petting zoos, nature trails, samples for tasting and refreshments.

Mark your calendar and plan for a day of fun at a farm near you.

**This year's Open Farm Day will be held on Sunday, July 23, 2017.**

For more information, visit [http://www.maine.gov/dacf/ard/market\\_promotion/open\\_farm\\_day.shtml](http://www.maine.gov/dacf/ard/market_promotion/open_farm_day.shtml).



# Food Safety Corner

## Know Your Food Labels

By Kathy Savoie, Extension Educator



More than 90% of consumers may be wasting food and money because of confusion about the meaning of dates on food labels.

### Are dates on food labels for food safety or quality?

Food manufacturers provide dates to help consumers and retailers decide when food is of best quality. These dates are not an indicator of the product's safety (except for infant formula).

### The Bottom Line

Regardless of the date, consumers should evaluate the quality of the food product prior to consumption. How food is handled before and after it is purchased affects food safety. Spoiled foods will develop an off odor, flavor or texture due to naturally occurring spoilage bacteria.

What can you do? Make sure your refrigerator is at 40 degrees or lower for proper storage of perishable foods and use common sense...when in doubt, throw it out!

### Commonly Used Date Labels



### Source

Food Product Dating, USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service.

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# Ask Eat Well

Deborah Barnett

Community Education Assistant, Kennebec County

Deborah “Debbie” Barnett has been a part of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Eat Well Nutrition Education Program for five years.

“I absolutely love the variety of people I get to interact with!” says Debbie. “The excitement of the students in school and the shared ideas of our newest community members are two of the most gratifying things I have experienced on the job.” Debbie looks for the positive in every day whether it be spending time with her three grandchildren, playing with her dog, Jed, going on small adventures with her fiancé or just relaxing by the lake. Her motto is: “It’s All Good!”



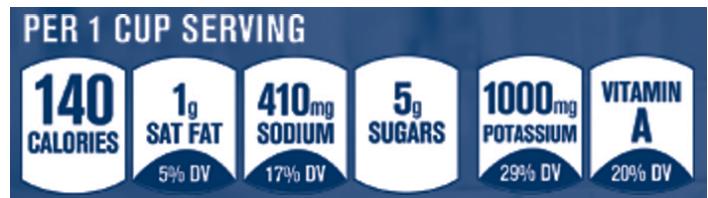
## Q. What are the “Facts up Front” that are seen on food packages?

**A.** Think for a moment about the package your favorite food comes in. We know that the job of an advertiser is to make the packaging as desirable as possible so we, as consumers, want to buy that product. The important information about what is inside of the packaging is on the back (or side) of that container in the form of the *Nutrition Facts Label*. This is where we find serving size, calorie information, amount of fat, sodium and sugar, along with ingredients.

The next time you are in the grocery store, take a look at the front label. You may see something new. The *Facts Up Front* are starting to appear on many of our packaged products. These are small squares containing very important nutritional information. It is the same information we can find on the *Nutrition Facts Label* but it is on the front of the container making it easier for us to make healthier food choices.

The serving size is noted either above or just below the information blocks. You might find information on things such as the number of calories, and the amount of fat, sugar, sodium, and potassium. The nutrient amounts are presented in both weight, gram (g) or milligram (mg) and percent (%) Daily Value.

Check it out when you are shopping. Making the healthier food choice is getting a little more convenient!





## Quick and Easy Eat Well Recipe

### Crustless Spinach Pie



#### Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup fat-free (skim) milk
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1½ cups low-fat cheese, shredded, any type
- 4 cups chopped, fresh spinach (or other greens, such as bok choy, kale, or Swiss chard)

#### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Melt butter in 9"x13" pan and spread on bottom and sides of pan.
3. Beat eggs well in a mixing bowl, add flour, milk, garlic powder and baking powder. Pour into the 9"x13" pan. Stir in cheese and spinach.
4. Bake for 30-35 minutes until edges are brown and firm all over.

Makes 8 servings Serving size: 1 slice Cost per recipe: \$4.47 Cost per serving: \$0.56

#### Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 slice (99g)  
 Servings Per Container 8

Amount Per Serving

|              |                      |                |
|--------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Calories 140 | Calories from Fat 40 | % Daily Value* |
|--------------|----------------------|----------------|

|                |    |
|----------------|----|
| Total Fat 4.5g | 7% |
|----------------|----|

|                  |     |
|------------------|-----|
| Saturated Fat 3g | 15% |
|------------------|-----|

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Trans Fat 0g |  |
|--------------|--|

|                  |    |
|------------------|----|
| Cholesterol 15mg | 5% |
|------------------|----|

|              |     |
|--------------|-----|
| Sodium 230mg | 10% |
|--------------|-----|

|                        |    |
|------------------------|----|
| Total Carbohydrate 15g | 5% |
|------------------------|----|

|                  |    |
|------------------|----|
| Dietary Fiber 1g | 4% |
|------------------|----|

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Sugars 2g |  |
|-----------|--|

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Protein 10g |  |
|-------------|--|

|               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| Vitamin A 30% | Vitamin C 8% |
|---------------|--------------|

|             |         |
|-------------|---------|
| Calcium 15% | Iron 8% |
|-------------|---------|

\*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 |
|-------------------------|-----|

|                             |     |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Saturated 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 |
|-------------------|-----|

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Calories per gram: |  |
|--------------------|--|

|       |                |           |
|-------|----------------|-----------|
| Fat 9 | Carbohydrate 4 | Protein 4 |
|-------|----------------|-----------|