



FRESH CONVERSATIONS

Iowa Department of Public Health

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Staying **WHOLE** in a Processed World



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DID YOU KNOW? Supermarkets now have 4x the number of items than they did in the 1960s.

Think back to what your local grocery store looked like 40 years ago, 20 years ago or even 10 years ago. The grocery shopping experience continues to evolve. Marketing techniques have changed. Packaging looks different. Your choices as a consumer are endless. Think about the main influences that drive your decision while shopping.

- **It could be health concerns** - what is the most nutritious choice?
- **It could be price** - what fits best into my budget?
- **It could be familiarity** - what have I tried that I feel comfortable buying?

One or all of these may influence your buying decision while in the grocery store. As more products become available, this decision becomes even harder.

Think even deeper - what is the real function of food? Why are these questions so important?

Your body needs essential vitamins and minerals to survive and thrive. Health experts tell you to eat carrots for *vitamin A*, bananas for *potassium*, and whole grain bread for *fiber*. But what essential vitamin do packaged cookies provide you? Through ultra-processing, the beneficial nutrients are often lost. The more room you leave for ultra-processed foods in your diet, the less room you have for whole foods that provide you the essential vitamins and minerals your body needs to run properly.

After considering all of these things, decision making during grocery shopping becomes an even greater part of maintaining your health and wellness. As the number of ultra-processed foods in your grocery store continues to rise, it is important to be equipped with knowledge as you are strolling the aisles on your next grocery store trip.

Sources: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/07/190725092534.htm>
<http://sasjournal.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/SJAVS-24A304-311.pdf>

Food Labels 101: How to be Your Own Detective

Do you ever look at the back of a food label and wonder what it is trying to tell you? You are not alone. Approximately 59% of consumers have a hard time understanding food labels. Here are some tips to help you decide what to buy.

What nutrients should I get more of?

- Calcium, fiber, potassium, vitamin D.
- Look for products with 20% or more daily value.

What nutrients should I get less of?

- Saturated fat, trans fat, sodium, added sugars.
- Look for foods with 5% or less daily value.

What clues help me on the ingredient list to know a food is considered “ultra-processed”?

- Dyes** → **Macaroni and cheese, breakfast cereals, processed breads**
- Flavor Enhancers** → **Chips, canned soups, processed meat**
- Sugar** → **Flavored yogurt, granola bars, instant oatmeal**

Ingredients: Whole Grain Oats, Corn Starch, Sugar, Salt

DID YOU KNOW? Ingredients are listed by quantity on a food label—from highest to lowest. Try looking for products that list whole foods as the first three ingredients and be skeptical of foods with long lists of ingredients.

A War on Words

Research has shown that adding health claims to front labels makes consumers believe a product is healthier than the same product without health claims. Manufacturers use these claims on labels for marketing their products but can make it hard for the consumer to choose the healthiest options in the grocery store.

Sources:
<https://ymcamidtn.org/healthy-living-resources/blog/9-misleading-food-labels>
<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/how-to-read-food-labels#misleading-claims>

Natural: This means that at one point the manufacturer worked with a natural source like apples or rice, despite potentially having additives to it.

Gluten Free: This means the product doesn't contain wheat, rye, spelt or barley. Many foods are labeled gluten-free for marketing despite never containing gluten in the first place.

Lightly Sweetened: There are no FDA regulations for this term. To understand sugar content, be sure to look at “added sugars” on the label. Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020 recommend added sugars add up to no more than 10% of daily calories. *That's the equivalent to 12 teaspoons per day!*

Low Fat or Fat Free: A product is legally allowed to claim “fat free” if it has .5 g fat or less. Typically means the fat has been removed and sugar has been added.

Wheat or Multi Grain: This sounds very healthy but only means that a product contains more than one type of grain, most likely refined grains.

Organic: This claim says very little about whether the product is healthy. For example, organic sugar is still sugar.



Fortified? Enriched?



SHAKE IT OFF!
In 1924, salt was the first fortified food in which iodine was added to address the growing health concern of goiters in the U.S.

Have you ever noticed the term “fortified” or “enriched” on a food label? What does that mean?

Food fortification (or enrichment) means that vitamins and minerals have been added to a food to prevent or correct a deficiency. Food fortification became commonplace during the first and second world wars to help replace nutrients that were lost during food processing.

During the 1930’s, the American diet relied heavily on refined flours, but flour processing decreased the content of many vitamins. So, bakers added high vitamin yeasts to their breads to increase vitamin content. By the end of 1942, most white bread was fortified. By 1943, the US Army would not purchase any flour that was not fortified.

Fast forward to today, food fortification is voluntary for manufacturers in the U.S. but you may continue to see many fortified foods in the grocery store such as ready to eat breakfast cereal, cereal bars, milk, bread, and juices.

Sources:

https://www.kelloggsnutrition.com/en_AE/knowledge/nutrition/foodfortification.html#ndxr-item-2
<https://foodinsight.org/is-food-fortification-necessary-a-historical-perspective/>

Be Active. Eat Healthy!

This month, I will take action by...

Goal:

Set small steps to reach your goal!



TAKE STEPS around your community to keep your walk interesting and fun.

Keep It Interesting

Are you looking for ways to make exercise more interesting? Try taking a walk around your neighborhood. Walking cultivates community. The more we walk, the more we know about where we live, the people we meet and share our neighborhood with. This is why walkable communities are vibrant communities. The easier it is to walk, the more people are out walking!

Other ways to make your walk more interesting:

- Try a new starting point by walking on a different trail or at a park. You can also take a walk from your senior center or church instead of home.
- Take a walk to the bank or grocery store that is close by instead of getting in your car to drive.
- Learn about the history of your community by taking a walk. Start by first looking for things you haven’t noticed before - look at the architecture of the buildings, read about the history of memorials or statues, notice the types of native trees and plants that grow, listen to the sounds of local birds.
- Listen to a podcast or audiobook on your walk. Podcasts are free, and they cover news, science, current events and so much more. Download podcasts on your computer, through the podcast app on your smartphone, or through your favorite music listening service. Most libraries also offer free audiobooks for members with a library card.

Need help finding a food pantry, free hot meals or community garden?

Call 2-1-1 for resources available in your area.



Pizza on a Potato



Serves 1, 1 potato, \$1.14 per serving

Ingredients:

- 1 potato (scrubbed clean)
- 2-3 tablespoons pizza sauce or tomato sauce
- 1/2 cup frozen vegetable mix or chopped raw vegetables (like peppers, onions, mushrooms)
- 1/4 cup cheese, shredded (mozzarella or Monterey Jack)

Instructions:

1. Bake potato at 425° F for about 60 minutes or microwave on high about 15 minutes, until soft and cooked through.
2. Cut in half lengthwise.
3. Spread 2-3 tablespoons pizza sauce or tomato sauce on each half.
4. Run warm water over frozen vegetables until thawed. Strain them in a colander. Spread frozen or fresh vegetables on each half of potato.
5. Sprinkle cheese over vegetables.
6. Microwave until cheese bubbles or bake at 375° F for 5-10 minutes (until cheese is melted).

Top with other pizza toppings. Some ideas are Parmesan cheese, cooked ground beef or sausage, pepperoni slices, and olives, etc.
Food Safety Tip: Meat should be cooked ahead of time to 160°F.

Nutrition Information: 330 calories, 7 grams fat, 53 grams carbohydrates, 5 grams fiber, 6 grams total sugar (0 grams added sugar), 15 grams protein, 290 milligrams sodium

This recipe is provided by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. For more resources like this, visit the Spend Smart. Eat Smart. website at <http://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu>. Spend Smart. Eat Smart. is a registered trademark of Iowa State University.

Starts with an _____

Study a nutrition facts label for 1 minute.

Afterwards, try to think of a word that you may find on a nutrition facts label or ingredient list that starts with each letter listed below.

A _____ M _____

C _____ P _____

F _____ S _____

I _____ V _____

SPEND SMART. EAT SMART.

Iowa State University Extension provides [SPEND SMART. EAT SMART.](http://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu) a free website that provides a wealth of information!

- Menu planning and tracking food expenses
- How to read food labels
- Affordable recipes
- Reducing food waste
- Physical activity and recipe videos

Visit: spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu



Answers: A (Added, Amount), C (Carbohydrates, Calcium), F (Fat, Fiber), I (Iron), M (Mineral), P (Protein, Potassium), S (Sodium, Sugar), V (Vitamin)