

Building Blocks
Healthy Eating, Physical Activity, and Oral Health
A Lesson Plan Module for Teachers
Junior Kindergarten – Grade 6

Healthy Eating
Grade 5
Lesson 4

Lesson 4 – A Look at Labels

Curriculum Expectations:

Students will identify critical content information on food labels (e.g., ingredients, calories, additives, fat content).

Objectives:

Students will learn about reading food labels by analyzing food packages.

Suggested Outline

Section 1: Introduce Today’s Lesson

Section 2: Discussion/Background Information

Section 3: Activity

Section 4: Conclusion

Section 1: Introduce Today’s Lesson

Today we will learn about reading food labels by analyzing food packages using the “Nutrition Information Panel” handout and completing the “A Look at Labels” activity sheet.

Section 2: Discussion/Background Information

Reading Food Labels

Food labels provide various types of information about food products and can be useful in helping consumers make decisions about food purchases. Government regulations outline what type of information is mandatory on labels as well as how this information must be presented. In Canada, nutrition labeling refers to the standardized presentation of the nutrient content of a food. Food labels contain information to help choose foods for healthy eating.

On a food label, there are three different places to look for nutrition information – under Nutrition Information, in a Nutrition Claim, or in the Ingredient List. Nutrition Information includes the categories *serving size* and *nutrients per serving*. It is not always found on food labels since it is optional. Other information about nutrition can be found in the Ingredient List and in Nutrition Claims. For more information, see the *Additional Resources* section at the end of the *Background Information*.

In Canada, it is not mandatory for a food company to put a Nutrition Information panel on its product. There are new regulations being developed that may change that. If a



company would like to put a Nutrition Information panel on its product, it must include the following information in a specific order about the product:

• Serving Size • Carbohydrate • Energy • Sodium • Protein • Percentage Recommended Daily Intake • Fat • Nutrient Claim

The Ingredient List indicates the amount of food in a product in descending order based on weight. Therefore, the first ingredient on the list is found in the largest quantity, the second ingredient in the next largest amount, and so on. For example, a cereal package that lists sugar as the first ingredient contains more sugar than any other ingredient.

Other information found on food packages includes:

• Name of Food • Manufacturer's name and address • Brand name • Net quantity of product • Durable life date and storage instructions (e.g., best before date or date code) • English and French

Nutrient claims, such as Light, Low in Saturated Fat, Low in Unsaturated Fat, Cholesterol Free, or A High Source of Fibre, may appear on the front panel of a food package. When these types of claims are made, the food manufacturer must back up its claim with information somewhere else on the label. For example, if a claim of Low Fat is made, a complete fat profile must be listed in the Nutrition Information panel.

Section 3: Activity

Distribute copies of the *Nutrition Information Panel*. Use this handout to note key information points about the listed terms to the students.

Distribute food packages collected from a variety of different food products. Have the students find the nutrition information panel. Discuss how the information can be used when making choices. Students, in pairs, can exchange similar food packages and compare the nutrition information presented (e.g., two boxes of crackers).

Learning how to read food labels can help students make healthier food choices.

Distribute copies of the *A Look at Labels* activity sheet. After the students have completed it, take up the questions and discuss.

Section 4: Conclusion

Today we learned about reading food labels by analyzing food packages using the “Nutrition Information Panel” handout and completing the “A Look at Labels” activity sheet.

