



The Nutrition Academy

Top 10 Tips for Reading Food Labels

I often get asked, "How do I know the right foods to buy? How can I sift through the clever marketing from food companies and what really is good for me?" Well, here are my top 10 tips on how to read a food label.

1. Your first step to reading a food label and choosing a healthy packaged food is to skip the nutrition panel and go straight to the ingredients list as it's the most important part of a label.
2. Beware of ticks of approval and 5 Star Ratings from 'Industry Bodies and Associations' as they are only given after the nutritional panel is examined (rather than the ingredients). Some of these authorities have another agenda, so beware.
3. If it says, low in sugar, low in fat, low in salt, then the food might have been modified.
4. When the food label states that the food is organic, ensure that there is a registered certifying label on the product as well.- Remember there is a 5% Ingredient non-organic loophole Read more about this [HERE](#)
5. If the ingredients list goes for many lines - step away from the package!!
6. If the ingredients list reads like a chemical laboratory - put the package back on the shelf, it is 'fake' food made in a laboratory as opposed to a 'real' food.
7. If the food has been fortified by vitamins and minerals, they will be from a chemical laboratory and not from a natural source. Also if the food is fortified it means that the initial nutrient levels are so low in the food that the food company needs to add vitamins and minerals to it. DOP!
8. If the ingredients list includes flavours, additives, preservatives, artificial sweeteners and numbers then you know that it is a 'chemically made food' and is not right for your body.
9. Genetically modified foods (GMO), such as soy, canola and corn are best avoided as you don't want to be part of an experiment, do you?
10. Avoid all vegetable oils including, when it says vegetable oil, sunflower, safflower, rice bran, soy, cotton seed, grape seed, canola

For more information on reading a food label and understanding the tricks of the food industry – read the [Lab To Table Book](#)