

*Students explore how to use food labels to make informed choices for healthy eating.*

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### **Learning Expectations:**

1. Research food labels as a tool to analyze food choices and personal eating habits.
2. Apply food label reading skills for making food choices.

**Subject Links:** Language, Health, Art

### **Materials & Resources:**

- ☆ Flipchart paper
- ☆ Markers
- ☆ Healthy Eating is in Store for You:  
[www.healthyeatingisinstore.ca](http://www.healthyeatingisinstore.ca), including 'Healthy Eating is in Store for You' Instructor's Guide Health Canada's 'Interactive Nutrition Label and Quiz' at:  
[www.healthcanada.ca/nutritionlabelling](http://www.healthcanada.ca/nutritionlabelling)
- ☆ *Canada's Food Guide*  
Visit [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide) or call  
1-800 O CANADA
- ☆ Poster size Bristol boards
- ☆ Art supplies for posters

### **Class Discussion:**

Have students bring in empty food packages with Nutrition Facts tables. Using these, discuss:  
Do you use Nutrition Facts tables to choose foods?

- ☆ What nutrients are listed in the Nutrition Facts tables? (List these using the flipchart and markers.)
- ☆ How can the Nutrition Facts help you make informed choices?
- ☆ List any nutrition claims, such as 'source of fibre' or 'trans fat free', found elsewhere on the package.
- ☆ What happens to the amount of nutrients you get from a particular food when you eat more or less than the amount listed at the top of the Nutrition Facts table? (See the Teaching Tip.)
- ☆ How can we use the Nutrition Facts to help us make nutritious choices and identify less healthy foods and beverages that are high in calories, fat, sugar or salt (sodium)?

### **Teaching Tip:**

The Nutrition Facts table can help you compare the nutritional content of foods to make informed choices for healthy eating. Calories and 13 core nutrients are always listed, including fat (saturated and trans fats), cholesterol, sodium, carbohydrate (fibre and sugars), protein, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium and iron. Other nutrients may also be listed. Information in the Nutrition Facts table is based on a specific amount of food. The amount is listed right under the title 'Nutrition Facts'. It is important to compare that amount to the amount you eat.

For example, if the Nutrition Facts table indicates that a specific amount (such as 45 grams) has 5 grams of fat and you eat twice as much

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MISSION PLANS FOR GRADES 6-8  
**MISSION 4**  
USING FOOD LABELS



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(90 grams), then you have actually consumed 10 grams of fat. The same is true for calories, protein, carbohydrate and all of the nutrients in the Nutrition Facts table. The % Daily Value tells you if a food has a little or a lot of a nutrient. For example, a food that lists a 5% Daily Value for a particular nutrient would provide a little of the nutrient compared to a food that lists 75% of the Daily Value for that nutrient. In some cases, the % Daily Value is listed for the food in the package (e.g. cereal) as well as how it is eaten (e.g. with 1/2 cup 2% milk).

Some food labels feature nutrient content claims, to highlight particular nutrition attributes such as “high in fibre” or “trans fat free”. Some feature health claims, like “A healthy diet rich in a variety of vegetables and fruit may help reduce the risk of some types of cancer.” Foods must meet specific criteria to make a claim.

Canada's Food Guide encourages Canadians to limit less healthy food choices and to make each Food Guide Serving count by enjoying a variety of nutritious foods from each of the four food groups. Compare the Nutrition Facts table on food labels to choose products that contain less fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sugar and sodium. See the Teachers Notes for more background information on how to make each Food Guide Serving count to help you lead the class discussion.

**Activities:**

1. Have students research how to use the Nutrition Facts table and other nutrition information on food labels. They can find information on the ‘Healthy Eating is in Store for You’ and Health Canada’s ‘Interactive Nutrition Label’ tool at the Web sites listed under Materials & Resources. Then ask students to take the ‘Interactive Nutrition Label Quiz’s at [www.healthcanada.ca/nutritionlabelling](http://www.healthcanada.ca/nutritionlabelling)
2. Divide the class into four teams and assign one team to cover each food group. Ask each team to develop a poster presentation and report to the class on the nutrient content of foods in their food group. Their posters should identify nutritious choices, key nutrients provided from that food group and ways to make their Food Guide Servings count as well as less healthy food and beverages that are high in calories, fat, sugar and sodium (salt). When the groups have all finished presenting, discuss what would happen if their food choices included a lot of less healthy food choices. What would happen to their consumption of calories, fat, sugars, fibre, vitamin C, vitamin A, iron and calcium? How would this impact their health?

(Note that some foods may belong to more than one food group. Remind students that foods that do not have a Nutrition Facts table, such as fresh vegetables and fruit, meat, poultry and fish can be healthy food choices also.)

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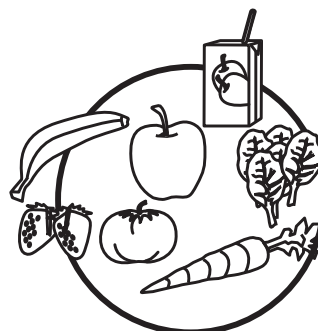
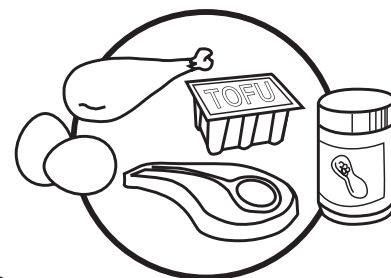
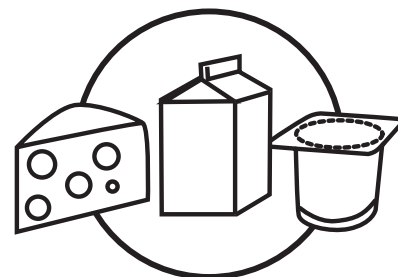
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**Home Connection:  
Our Family Food Choices**

At Home: Have students teach their family members about reading the nutrition information on food labels based on their learning and the information on the Family Activity Sheet: "Explore Food Labels... for Healthy Eating!" Together as a family, practice comparing the Nutrition Facts on similar foods available in their kitchen, or at the grocery store. Use the Nutrition Facts table to compare the nutrient content of two different foods, one that belongs to one of the four food groups, compared to one that does not. Then take The *MISSION NUTRITION*\* – "Nutrition Facts Challenge" on the family activity sheet.

**Assessment:**

The score and percentage provided at the end of the 'Interactive Nutrition Label Quiz' is a simple way to assess the learning in Activity 1. To assess Activity 2, use the information on key nutrients and their food sources in the *MISSION NUTRITION*\* Teacher Notes on Healthy Eating for Grades 6-8 and the "Virtual Grocery Tour" at [www.healthyeatingisinstore.ca](http://www.healthyeatingisinstore.ca)



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