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Commentary

Note on Sections of Food Labelling and their Significance

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DESCRIPTION

Food labelling is a key aspect of the food industry that plays a crucial role in informing consumers about the food they are buying and consuming. Food labels provide essential information about the nutritional value, ingredients, and allergens in food products. However, food labels can be confusing and difficult to understand, leading to consumer confusion and misinformation. In this article, we will demystify food labelling, explain the different components of food labels, and provide tips on how to read and interpret food labels.

Nutrition facts

The Nutrition Facts section of a food label provides information on the amount of nutrients in a single serving of the food product. This section usually includes information on calories, total fat, saturated fat, Trans fat, cholesterol, sodium, total carbohydrates, dietary fiber, sugars, and protein. These nutrients are listed in grams or milligrams, and the percentage of Daily Value (DV) is provided for each nutrient.

The DV is the recommended daily amount of each nutrient that a person should consume based on a 2,000 calorie diet. For example, if a food product has 10% DV of total fat, it means that one serving of that food provides 10% of the recommended daily intake of total fat for a person on a 2,000 calorie diet.

Ingredients list

The Ingredients List section of a food label provides information on the ingredients used in the food product. Ingredients are listed in descending order by weight, with the ingredient that weighs the most listed first and the ingredient that weighs the least listed last.

This section is particularly important for people with food allergies or intolerances as it allows them to identify potential allergens in the food product. The Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA) require that the eight major food allergens (milk, eggs, fish, shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, and soybeans) be identified on food labels.

Serving size

Consumers should be aware that the recommended serving size may not necessarily be the same as the amount they typically consume. For example, a serving size of potato chips may be listed as 1 ounce (about 15 chips), but a person may consume two or three times that amount in a single sitting.

Calories and macronutrients

Calories and macronutrients (fat, carbohydrates, and protein) are key components of the Nutrition Facts section of a food label. Calories provide information on the amount of energy provided by a single serving of the food product. Macronutrients provide information on the types and amounts of nutrients provided by the food product.

Fat is another macronutrient listed on food labels, and it is important to pay attention to the types and amounts of fat in a food product. Total fat provides information on the amount of fat in a single serving, while saturated and Tran's fats provide information on the types of fat in the food product.

Carbohydrates provide information on the amount of carbohydrates in a single serving, and the DV for carbohydrates is based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Carbohydrates are an important source of energy for the body, but consuming too many carbohydrates can lead to weight gain.

The American Heart Association recommends that women limit their intake of added sugars to no more than 6 teaspoons per day, and men limit their intake of added sugars to no more than 9 teaspoons per day.

Tips for reading and interpreting food labels

Pay attention to serving size: The serving size listed on the label may not be the same as the amount you typically consume, so it is important to adjust the nutritional information based on the actual amount consumed.

Limit added sugars and saturated fats: Consuming too much added sugars and saturated fats can increase the risk of chronic

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diseases such as obesity and heart disease. Look for food products that are low in added sugars and saturated fats.

Be aware of marketing claims: Food companies often use marketing claims to make their products appear healthier than they actually are. Be skeptical of claims such as "all natural" or "low fat" and always check the nutritional information on the label.

Compare products: Comparing the nutritional information of different products can help you make healthier choices. Look for products that are lower in calories, saturated fats, added sugars, and sodium.

Don't rely solely on food labels: While food labels can provide important information about the nutritional content of a food product, they do not tell the whole story. It is also important to consider factors such as portion size, frequency of consumption, and overall dietary patterns when making food choices.

CONCLUSION

Food labels are an important tool for making informed decisions about the foods we eat. By understanding how to read and interpret food labels, we can make healthier choices and improve our overall health and wellbeing.

By using these tips and making informed choices about the foods we eat, we can improve our overall health and reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as obesity, heart disease, and diabetes.