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February is Heart Health Month, a time to focus on the importance of cardiovascular health for ourselves, our loved ones, and those we care for. As an organization committed to improving child nutrition, we know that the foundation of a healthy heart begins with the choices we make every day. For children, this means fostering healthy eating habits,

encouraging physical activity, and creating environments where nutritious options are both accessible and appealing.

But as we work to support the health and well-being of children, let us not forget an essential truth: we can only give our best to others when we also take care of ourselves. As caregivers, parents, educators, and advocates, it is easy to put our needs on the back burner while prioritizing those we serve. However, investing in our own health is not a luxury – it's a necessity.

This February, I encourage each of you to take small but meaningful steps to prioritize your heart health. Whether it's taking a daily walk, preparing a heart-healthy meals, or simply pausing to breathe deeply during a busy day, these actions benefit not only you but also the children and families who rely on your strength and care.

Together, let's make Heart Health Month a reminder that caring for ourselves and caring for others go hand in hand. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to ensuring every child has the opportunity to grow, learn, and thrive – starting with a healthy heart.

Denise Mayer

Denise Meyer Executive Director

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## **February is Heart Health Month**

Here are some heart-healthy recipes to start kids off right!

## **One-Pot Tuna Casserole**

6 servings heart.org

## **Ingredients**

Non-stick cooking spray

1 medium onion, yellow or white

1 bell pepper, any color, chopped

2 stalks chopped celery

15 oz. canned, low-sodium

albacore tuna in water, drained,
lowest sodium available

OR

13 oz. low-sodium albacore tuna in water pouches, drained, lowest sodium available 2 tbsp. light mayonnaise 3 tbsp. fat-free, plain yogurt 1/2 tsp. black pepper

1/2 cup whole-grain cereal flakes (crushed, unsweetened)

#### Instructions

- Preheat oven to 350° F.
- Spray a medium oven-safe pan with cooking spray and heat over medium-high heat. Add chopped onion, bell pepper, and celery and cook until vegetables are soft, about 4 to 5 minutes. Stir occasionally.
- Turn off heat. Into the pan, add tuna, mayo, yogurt, pepper, and pepper flakes. Stir. Spread cereal on top of casserole and serve with green beans. Cook in oven until warm, about 20 minutes.
- Take out of oven. Serve with green beans.
  - Vegetable Meat/MeatAlternate

## **Sweet Potato Hash w/Eggs**

4 servings heart.org

## **Ingredients**

2 teaspoons canola or corn oil
1/2 medium onion, chopped
4 medium sweet potatoes, peeled,
cut into 1/2-inch cubes
1/2 medium green or red bell
pepper, chopped
2/3 cup fat-free, low-sodium
vegetable broth
2 teaspoons minced garlic
2 teaspoons smoked paprika
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme,
crumbled

1/2 teaspoon pepper (coarsely ground preferred)
1/8 teaspoon salt

4 large eggs

#### Instructions

- Heat the oil in the pressure cooker on sauté. Cook the onion for 3 minutes, or until soft, stirring frequently. Turn off the pressure cooker.
- Stir in the potatoes, bell peppers, broth, garlic, paprika, cumin, thyme, pepper, and salt. Secure the lid. Cook on high pressure for 3 minutes. Quickly release the pressure. Turn off the pressure cooker.
- Remove the lid of the pressure cooker. Crack one egg into a small bowl. Using the back of a spoon, make a small well in the potatoes, pushing the potatoes aside. Slip the egg into the well. Repeat with the remaining 3 eggs, making a separate well for each. Secure the lid with the pressure vent open. Cook on sauté for 2 minutes. If the eggs are not cooked to the desired consistency, re-cover

the pressure cooker. Let stand on keep warm for 2 minutes, or until the eggs are cooked to the desired consistency.

Meat/Meat Alternate Vegetable

## **Baked Chicken Strips**

6 servings heart.org

## Ingredients

1 lb boneless, skinless, visible fat removed chicken breasts cut into 1" strips (or chicken tenderloins) 1/3 cup whole-wheat flour 1/2 teaspoon black pepper 1/3 cup skim milk 2 tbsp low-fat, low-sodium, grated parmesan cheese 1/3 cup quick-cooking oats 1 teaspoon garlic or onion powder 1 pound fresh green beans (washed, stems discarded) 1/2 cup water 1 teaspoon minced garlic (from jar) 1/4 teaspoon black pepper

Instructions

### • Preheat oven to 375.

- Spray a baking sheet with cooking spray.
- On a plate or shallow dish, combine flour and pepper.
- Pour milk into a second shallow dish
- In another shallow dish, combine parmesan, oats, garlic/ onion powder and paprika/ parsley.
- One at a time, dip chicken strips into flour and turn to coat. Then dip in milk, and then oat mixture, turning until well coated.
- Place coated strips on to prepared baking sheet and lightly spray with cooking spray.
- Bake for 20 minutes until golden-brown and cooked through.
  - Meat/Meat Alternate

# Meals & Menus CACFP Requirements



	CACFP	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
BREAKFAST	1. GN/BP OR MT** 2. FT OR VG 3. MK	<ol> <li>Oatmeal</li> <li>Strawberries</li> <li>Milk</li> </ol>	<ol> <li>Yogurt</li> <li>Melon</li> <li>Milk</li> </ol>	<ol> <li>Eggs</li> <li>Hashbrowns</li> <li>Milk</li> </ol>	<ol> <li>WG Pancake</li> <li>Blueberries***</li> <li>Milk</li> </ol>	1. WG Toast w/ Nut Seed Butter 2. Banana 3. Milk
LUNCH/DINNER	1. MT 2. GN/BP 3. VG 4. FT OR VG 5. MK	<ol> <li>Breaded Shrimp</li> <li>Corn Tortilla</li> <li>Cole Slaw</li> <li>Applesauce</li> <li>Milk</li> </ol>	<ol> <li>Spaghetti Meat Sauce</li> <li>WG Pasta</li> <li>Tossed Salad w/ Dressing</li> <li>Peaches</li> <li>Milk</li> </ol>	<ol> <li>Honey Roasted Tofu</li> <li>Brown Rice</li> <li>Green Peas***</li> <li>Carrots</li> <li>Milk</li> </ol>	<ol> <li>Beef Patty</li> <li>WG Bun</li> <li>Sweet Potato Fries</li> <li>Green Beans</li> <li>Milk</li> </ol>	<ol> <li>Chicken Tenders</li> <li>WG Roll</li> <li>Corn***</li> <li>Pears</li> <li>Milk</li> </ol>
SNACKS*	1. MT 2. GN/BP 3. FT 4. VG 5. MK	<ol> <li>Hummus</li> <li>WG Pita Bread</li> <li>Grapes***</li> <li>Celery***</li> <li>Milk</li> </ol>	<ol> <li>String         Cheese***</li> <li>WG Crackers</li> <li>Kiwi</li> <li>Baby Carrots***</li> <li>Milk</li> </ol>	<ol> <li>Hard-Boiled Egg</li> <li>WG Crackers</li> <li>Raspberries***</li> <li>Cherry Tomatoes***</li> <li>Milk</li> </ol>	<ol> <li>Edamame***</li> <li>WG Pretzels</li> <li>Honeydew</li> <li>Sugar Snap Peas***</li> <li>Milk</li> </ol>	<ol> <li>Nut/Seed Butter</li> <li>WG Pita Bread</li> <li>Apple Slices</li> <li>Sliced Bell Peppers***</li> <li>Milk</li> </ol>
	(*) Choose to  FT: Fruit V  MK: Milk B	T may be substituted f reek. Choking hazard for chil				



#### **REMINDERS:**

December 2024 final claim due: February 24 (Mon.)

- Please remember to submit enrollments/renewals in a timely manner.
- Please open any mail that comes from ACD. Also, please check your email and spam folders for news and information from us.
- Please remember to mark children out of school and to call in daycare closures.
- Send enrollments to: Michigan: mifrontdesk@acdkids.org | Fax: (517) 332-5543 Illinois: ilcustomerservice@acdkids.org | Fax: (708) 236-0872

# Understanding Nutrition Labels Do You Know How to Read Them?

Nutrition Facts labels are a great way to know what you are eating, but do we really take the time to read and understand the information they give us?

The following label-reading skills are intended to make it easier for you to use the Nutrition Facts labels to make quick, informed food decisions to help you choose a healthy diet.

This example to the right is from a package of frozen lasagna. The information in the main or top section (see #1-4) of the sample nutrition label can vary with each food and beverage product; it contains product-specific information (serving size, calories, and nutrient information). The bottom section contains a footnote that explains the % Daily Value and gives the number of calories used for general nutrition advice.



## **Serving Size**

When looking at the Nutrition Facts label, first take a look at the number of servings in the package (servings per container) and the serving size. The serving size reflects the amount that people typically eat or drink. It is not a recommendation of how much you should eat or drink.

#### **Calories**

Calories provide a measure of how much energy you get from a serving of this food. In the example, there are 280 calories in one serving of lasagna. What if you ate the entire package? Then, you would consume 4 servings, or 1,120 calories.

To achieve or maintain a healthy body weight, balance the number of calories you eat and drink with the number of calories your body uses. 2,000 calories a day is used as a general guide for nutrition advice.

#### **Nutrients**

Look at section 3 in the sample label. It shows you some key nutrients that impact your health. You can use the label to support your personal dietary needs – look for foods that contain more of the nutrients you want to get more of and less of the nutrients you may want to limit. Nutrients to get less of: saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars. Nutrients to get more of: dietary fiber, Vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium.

4 servings per cor	ntainer
Serving size	1 cup (227g)
Amount per serving Calories	280

Total Fat 9g	12%
Saturated Fat 4.5g	23%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 35mg	12%
Sodium 850mg	37%
Total Carbohydrate 34g	12%
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 6g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 15g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 320mg	25%
Iron 1.6mg	8%
Potassium 510mg	10%

### Percent of Daily Value (%DV)

The % Daily Value (%DV) is the percentage of the Daily Value for each nutrient in a serving of the food. The Daily Values are reference amounts (expressed in grams, milligrams, or micrograms) of nutrients to consume or not to exceed each day. The %DV shows how much a nutrient in a serving of a food contributes to a total daily diet. The %DV helps you determine if a serving of food is high or low in a nutrient. 5% DV or less of a nutrient per serving is considered low. 20% DV or more of a nutrient per serving is considered high.

## **Heart Healthy Habits**

February is American Heart Month, so what better time than now to focus on helping to protect children's hearts? Many people don't think heart health matters for children as it does for adults, but about 1 in 6 children have high blood pressure, a major risk factor for both heart disease and stroke later in life. (Mayo Clinic)

Fostering heart-healthy habits in children is one way you can help protect children's hearts. Here are some heart-healthy habits:

Move more: the heart is a muscle that needs physical activity to stay strong.

Age group	Daily movement goal	
Infant (0-1-year-old)	>30 minutes of physical activity and interactive play	
Children ages 1-5 years old	be physically active throughout the day	
Children ages 6-17 years old	60 minutes of moderate-vigorous physical activity most days	

**Get enough sleep:** inadequate sleep can increase a child's risk of developing high blood pressure or cardiovascular disease.

Sleep recommendations for children:

- 4-12 months: 12-16 hours including naps
- 1-2 years: 11-14 hours including naps
- 3-5 years: 10-13 hours including naps
- 6-12 years: 9-12 hours13-18 years: 8-10 hours

Make heart-healthy food choices: certain foods make the heart work harder.

- Less saturated fat: this fat can increase cholesterol and contribute to inflammation in the body.
- Less sodium: Too much sodium can lead to high blood pressure, also known as hypertension.
- Less added sugar: Eating too much added sugar can raise cholesterol levels and increase inflammation.

**Decrease stress:** while small amounts of stress are normal, chronic stress can be detrimental to heart health. Daily movement, proper sleep and heathy eating all help to decrease stress. Other ways to decrease stress include spending time outdoors, reading and other quiet, calm activities.

Learning these heart-healthy habits at a young age can help children maintain them throughout their lives.





## **Cornbread Taco Muffins**

This recipe transforms tacos into a muffin for less mess! Featuring a whole grain cornbread and the familiar flavors of tacos, 2 muffins provide 2 oz grain, 1/2 oz meat/meat alternate.

Yield: 24 muffins

#### Ingredients:

2 tsp olive oil

8 oz lean ground beef

1 tablespoon low-sodium taco seasoning

1.5 lbs whole grain cornbread mix 3 eggs

2/3 cup 2% milk

1/2 cup low-fat sour cream

1/2 cup reduced-fat Mexican blend shredded cheese

### Instructions:

- 1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
- Cook the ground beef in oil until fully cooked (155°F) and drain.
- 3. Stir in 1/2 cup of water and taco seasoning to the cooked beef and simmer for 3-5 minutes, then remove from heat to let the beef cool for 5-10 minutes.
- 4. In a large mixing bowl, mix the corn muffin mix, eggs, milk, sour cream and cheese.
- 5. Fold in the cooled taco meat to the cornbread batter.
- 6. Pour into lined muffin tins about 2/3 full. Cook for 15-20 minutes. Let cool before serving.

**Nutrition Information**: (serving size 2 muffins): 340 calories, 12 grams fat, 44 grams carbohydrate, 2 grams fiber, 12 grams protein.

**Safety notes:** Keep children away from the stovetop and hot oven.

Optional: Stir in some salsa to the cornbread batter if desired.

O Grain O Meat/Meat
Alternate

■ Images: Allison Stock







## BUY GENERIC OR STORE BRAND

Buying generic or store brand products is generally a good way to save money on groceries and other consumer goods. Generic products often have the same quality as name brands but are significantly cheaper due to lower marketing and packaging costs. Here are a few reasons to consider generic and store brand products.

## Cost savings

The primary benefit of buying generic is the significant price reduction compared to name brands, sometimes reaching to 30 percent or more.

## Similar quality

Many generic products are manufactured on the same production lines as name brands, meaning the quality can be very similar, if not identical.

#### Taste test first!

Before fully committing to generic options, it's a good idea to try a small amount of the generic product and compare it to the name brand. You want to make sure you are satisfied with the taste and quality.

### Consider the product

While many staple items like pasta, cereal, and cleaning supplies can be safely purchased as generic, some products like specialty foods or electronics may be worth buying as name brands to ensure quality.

■ Source: consumerreports.org

# What Does Added Sugars Mean?

## What are Added Sugars and How are they Different from Total Sugars?

**Total Sugars** on the Nutrition Facts label includes sugars naturally present in many nutritious foods and beverages, such as sugar in milk and fruit as well as any added sugars that may be present in the product. No Daily Reference Value has been established for total sugars because no recommendation has been made for the total amount to eat in a day.

Added Sugars on the Nutrition Facts label include sugars that are added during the processing of foods (such as sucrose or dextrose), foods packaged as sweeteners (such as table sugar), sugars from syrups and honey, and sugars from concentrated fruit or vegetable juices. Diets high in calories from added sugars can make it difficult to meet daily recommended levels of important nutrients while staying within calorie limits.

**Note:** Having the word "includes" before Added Sugars on the label indicates that Added Sugars are included in the number of grams of Total Sugars in the product.

For example, a container of yogurt with added sweeteners, might

list 15 Total Sugars on the Nutrition Facts label. This means that the product has 7 grams of Added Sugars

Total Sugars 15g
Includes 7g Added Sugars 14%

and 8 grams of naturally occurring sugars – for a total of 15 grams of sugar.

### Why Are Added Sugars Listed on the Nutrition Facts Label?

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends limiting calories from added sugars to less than 10 percent of total calories per day. For example, if you consume a 2,000 calorie daily diet, that would be 200 calories or 50 grams of added sugars per day. Consuming too much added sugars can make it difficult to meet nutrient needs while staying within calorie limits. Added sugars are listed on the Nutrition Facts label so that you can make informed choices, based on your individual needs and preferences.

### Exception

Labels on packages and containers of single-ingredient sugars and syrups such as table sugar, maple syrup, or honey list the percent Daily Value for added sugars within the Nutrition Facts label, and the gram amount per serving and %DV may be included in a footnote. Single-ingredient sugars and syrups are labeled in this way so that it does not look like more sugars have been added to the product and to ensure that consumers have information about how a serving of these products contributes to the Daily Value for added sugars and to their total diet.

■ Source: fda.gov ■ Image: fda.gov



# I heard the breakfast cereal sugar limits are going to change this year, is this true?

Yes! Starting October 1, 2025, CACFP operators must offer breakfast cereals that contains no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. The easiest way to know if a cereal meets the sugar criteria is to feed kids cereals on any State agency's Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)-approved cereal list. These all meet the CACFP sugar limit.

Another way to determine sugar content is to use USDA's chart that shows common serving sizes of cereals and the maximum amount of added sugars they can contain. Find the chart in the CACFP training worksheet, "Choose Breakfast Cereals That Are Lower in Added Sugars in the Child and Adult Care Food Program" at fns.usda. gov/tn/meal-pattern-training-worksheets-cacfp.

It can be hard to calculate how much sugar is in an ounce of cereal. <u>That's why we've got a</u> great handout from USDA that can make it easy for you! Click here!

Post CACFP questions on facebook.com/acdkidsorg.
We'll answer questions monthly in "Potpourri."

## **Fingerprint Mushroom Valentines**

Cardboard
Paint (white, red, and pink)
Craft knife
Cutting mat
Scissors
Marker
Pencil

#### STEP 1

Use a pencil to draw a mushroom outline onto cardboard. If you want all your mushrooms to be the same shape and size, use the craft knife to cut out the first one and then use it as a template to trace as many other ones as you need.

### STEP 2

Apply a coat of white paint onto the stem and red or pink onto the mushroom cap. Let both dry completely, applying another coat if needed.

### STEP 3

Once the front is dried, apply a coat of white or pale pink paint to the back of the mushroom if you like. You can also leave this as-is if your cardboard is plain, or use glue to attach paper on instead.

#### STEP 4

On the back of the mushroom, write "There is so MUSHROOM in my heart for you!"

## STEP 5

And now the fun part! Squeeze some white paint onto a scrap of carboard and have the kids dip a finger into it. Do a few practice stamps on a scrap first to get the hang of how much paint you need. Then start making fingerprint dots all over the top of the toadstool! Let dry completely.









February is when we

**Pandas Love Pickles** by Liz Lynch (Author, Illustrator)



Love the Little Things: A Children's Book Encouraging Appreciation by Roxanne Barry (Author)



**Dragons Love Tacos**by Adam Rubin (Author),
Daniel Salmieri (Illustrator)

■ Books: amazon.com

## **National Burn Awareness Week**

February 2–8, 2025, is National Burn Awareness Week, a time set aside each year for organizations and educators to unite in sharing a common burn awareness and prevention message.

In the U.S., electrical burns and injuries from lightning result in thousands of admissions to specialized burn units annually. In addition, electrical fires in residences cause more than 45,000 fires annually. Remembering a few basic safety tips can help keep you and your children safe.

## In your home or center, with young children present:

- Place covers on all electrical outlets.
- Unplug all electrical items within a child's reach.
- Do not allow toys that must be plugged into an outlet.
- Teach children to never touch electrical outlets or play with electrical cords.

## In your home or center, for everyone's safety:

- Use extreme caution when using electrical appliances near water.
- Do not overload electrical outlets.
- Replace electrical items that show signs of wear, such as frayed wires.
- Keep your clothes dryer free of lint accumulation to avoid it becoming a fire hazard.
- If you are in or standing in water, do not touch anything electrical.
- Do not use extension cords to plug in appliances.
- Plug items in appropriately (do not force a three-prong plug into a twoprong plug outlet).
- Use certified surge protectors and power strips.
- Keep clothes, curtains, and other flammable items away from heat sources.
- Use correct wattage light bulbs.

#### And outside, remember to:

- Come indoors and remain there during an electrical storm (one with lightning strikes).
- Never play near electrical wires.
- Stay away from areas marked DANGER: HIGH VOLTAGE.
- Never climb utility poles, transmission towers, etc.
- Do not climb trees that are near power lines.
- Do not throw anything at utility poles or wires.
- Only fly kites in dry weather and in open spaces. If your kite does get caught in an electrical wire, call the electric company for help.

## Contact a qualified electrician:

- If you have recurring instances of blown fuses or tripping circuit
- If you experience a tingling feeling when touching an electrical tool or appliance.
- If you have flickering lights.
- If there are sparks coming from an outlet.
- If wall outlets are cracked or broken.
- If your outlet switches are warm or discolored. If there is a burning or rubber-like smell coming from an appliance.









## February 2025

Submit quiz answers to your Field Monitor to receive FREE training credit.

Do not (e)mail quiz to the ACD office.

1. Electric problems	cause
fires annually.	

- a. 65,000
- b. 45,000
- c. 50,000
- d. 30,000

## 2. What is the sleep recommendation for children 1-2 years old including naps?

- a. 14-16 hours
- b. 10-14 hours
- c. 12-16 hours
- d. 8-10 hours

## 3. The serving size on a Nutrition Label tells you how much of an item you should eat.

- a. True
- b. False

## 4. Children ages 1-5 should be physically active throughout the day.

- a. True
- b. False
- **5.** \_\_\_ calories a day is used as a general guide for nutrition advice?
- a. 1800
- b. 1200
- c. 2200
- d. 2000

## 6. You should use extension cords to plug in appliances.

- a. True
- b. False

## 7. Saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars are nutrients you should have more of.

- a. True
- b. False

## 8. An electrician should be called when \_\_\_\_?

- a. You change a lightbulb
- b. An outlet is warm or discolored
- c. The power goes out
- d. You blow a fuse

## 9. Chronic stress can be detrimental to heart health.

- a. True
- b. False

## 10. Added sugars should be \_\_ percent of your total calories for the day?

- a. Less than 10
- b. Less than 15
- c. Less than 5
- d. Less than 12

## 11. When do the new breakfast cereal sugar limits go into effect?

- a. June 2025
- b. October 2025
- c. July 2025
- d. September 2025

## 12. It does not matter how many items are plugged into an outlet.

- a. True
- b. False

## 13. Total sugars on a Nutrition Label give the total amount of both natural and added sugar.

- a. True
- b. False

## 14. What percent of daily value (% DV) or more of a nutrient per serving is considered high?

- a. 40 percent
- b. 25 percent
- c. 15 percent
- d. 20 percent

## 15. Dietary fiber, Vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium are nutrients you should have more of.

- a. True
- b. False

Image: Adobe Stock Images



The Association for Child Development educates parents and caregivers about nutrition to promote the development of children and establish healthy eating habits to last a lifetime.



As a nonprofit, ACD has been operating for more than 45 years in Illinois and Michigan. A large part of our work involves serving more than 36,000 children through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) – a program ensuring children have access to nutritious meals.

Alongside this critical work, ACD looks to make a greater impact by expanding our mission to include a safety component focused on decreasing the risk of harm or injury in homes children are cared for through outreach, education and safety products.

Support ACD's efforts to prevent child injury.

Donate today at www.acdkids.org.