

Name: _____

Date: _____

“Your Road to Health” Activity

5 Tips to Make Healthful Food Choices

When Choosing Foods That Come in Packages



Directions: This is a chance to practice your Nutrition Fact-finder skills at home. Follow the steps below.

Step 1: Review these “5 Tips to Make Healthful Food Choices”

1. DON'T BE FOOLED by the words and pictures on the front of a food package.

The front of the package is like an ad to convince you to buy the food product. Look instead for the Nutrition Facts label and ingredient list.

2. Check THE FIRST INGREDIENT on the list.

By law, ingredients appear in order based on their relative amounts in a food product. The **FIRST** ingredient is the one present in the greatest amount by weight. The **SECOND** ingredient is the one in the next-largest amount, and so on. Are the **FIRST** and **SECOND** ingredients good for you? If not, choose other foods that are better for your health.

3. Watch out for ingredients that don't belong.

- Too much salt (sodium) in foods that don't need to taste salty, such as cereals or desserts
- Sugar added to foods that don't need to be sweet, such as tomato sauce or salad dressing
- Sugar added to fruits, which are already naturally sweet!
- Sugar under several names (such as corn syrup, high fructose corn syrup, corn sweetener, corn sugar, confectioner's sugar, brown sugar, maple syrup, honey, molasses, sucrose, fructose, dextrose, or maltose)
- Trans fat (partially hydrogenated oil) that can raise cholesterol levels and promote heart disease
- Chemical names you can't pronounce (however, sometimes the chemical names of vitamins are listed as ingredients, and that's OK!)
- Artificial colors, dyes, or flavors

4. Choose foods with a SHORT INGREDIENT LIST!

Long lists may include things that your body doesn't need, such as artificial flavors and dyes, or preservatives. In general, foods with shorter lists tend to be more wholesome and have more natural ingredients. Fresh fruits and vegetables have the shortest list! They're natural foods packed with good nutrients, and they have just one ingredient! The package is just the skin or the peel.

5. Choose grain products with at least 2 grams of fiber per serving.

Products made from grains include breads, crackers, cereals, cereal bars, snack bars, corn chips, and cooked grains such as rice. Whole grain foods provide fiber, while refined grain foods provide little or no fiber. Fiber is good for your body. It helps move food through your digestive system and helps keep your stomach full. When you eat a meal that's high in fiber, you stay full longer.

Step 2: Practice your Nutrition Fact-Finder skills in your kitchen

Find 5 food products in your kitchen that come in boxes, bottles, jars, cartons, or cans. In the space below, write the brand name for each item, and what type of food product it is, (such as bread, cereal, beverage, cookies, etc.). Use the “5 Tips” to examine each item. Look at the ingredient list and Nutrition Facts label. Decide whether each item is a “Take It” (more healthful) choice or “Leave It” (less healthful) choice. Circle your choice and explain why.

Remember: “Take It” foods are good for your health, based on all 5 Tips. If a food doesn’t meet at least 1 of the 5 Tips, it’s a “Leave It” choice. It may be OK to eat once in awhile, but not on a regular basis. Instead, try to find more “Take It” choices in stores, vending machines, and the school cafeteria.

Food Product # 1

Brand Name _____

Type of product _____

“Take It” or “Leave It”?

Why? _____

Food Product # 2

Brand Name _____

Type of product _____

“Take It” or “Leave It”?

Why? _____

Food Product # 3

Brand Name _____

Type of product _____

“Take It” or “Leave It”?

Why? _____

Food Product # 4

Brand Name _____

Type of product _____

“Take It” or “Leave It”?

Why? _____

Food Product # 5

Brand Name _____

Type of product _____

“Take It” or “Leave It”?

Why? _____

Step 3: Think about your personal food choices

Describe how you can use these 5 tips to make more healthful food choices in the future.

Repeat this process on your own in a few weeks to see what progress you've made!

Remember These Tips

1. Don't be fooled by the words and pictures on the front of a food package. Look instead for Nutrition Facts and ingredient list.
2. Check the first ingredient on the list.
3. Watch out for ingredients that don't belong.
4. Choose foods with a short ingredient list!
5. Choose grain products with at least 2 grams of fiber per serving.

Nutrition Facts
Serving size 17 Crackers (30g)
Servings Per Container about 8

Amount Per Serving	
Calories	Calories from Fat 50
% Daily Value	
Total Fat 6 g	9%
Saturated Fat 1.5g	8%
Trans Fat 0g	
Polyunsaturated Fat 2.5g	
Monounsaturated Fat 2g	
Cholesterol 0 mg	0%
Sodium 300mg	13%
Total Carbohydrate 20g	7%
Dietary Fiber 1g	5%
Sugars 3g	
Protein 4g	

INGREDIENTS: ENRICHED FLOUR (WHEAT FLOUR, NIACIN, REDUCED IRON, THIAMIN MONONITRATE [VITAMIN B1], RIBOFLAVIN [VITAMIN B2], FOLIC ACID), PARTIALLY HYDROGENATED OIL, SUGAR, TOASTED WHOLE GRAIN WHEAT, DEGERMINATED YELLOW CORN FLOUR, HONEY, HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP, SALT, COCONUT OIL, WHEAT BRAN, STONE GROUND WHOLE WHEAT FLOUR, BARLEY, MALT EXTRACT, NATURAL FLAVOR, BAKING POWDER (BAKING SODA, SODIUM ACID PYROPHOSPHATE, MONOCALCIUM PHOSPHATE), MILLET, RICE, ONION, SPICES, SODIUM SULFITE, SOY LECITHIN.

Callouts: 1 points to the Nutrition Facts label; 2 points to the first ingredient (Enriched Flour); 3 points to the third ingredient (Partially Hydrogenated Oil); 4 points to the fourth ingredient (Sugar); 5 points to the Dietary Fiber amount (1g).