

Nutrition labels



Nutrition Label Various sources of information are available regarding the foods consumers purchase for their consumption. That include family knowledge, education, the media and advertising all that convey messages about different food characteristics. Another important step towards providing information about the food for a healthy living is the nutrition labeling. The information on those labels about the nutrition content and health benefits of food is very important. To help consumers further, recently the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Food and Drug Administration together brought two new tools which are " Make Your Calories Count," an interactive online learning program, and a new Nutrition Facts Label brochure . These tools will give power to consumers to have better knowledge about the food they consume and right choices of food products. They are also decided to help in partnership with food industry to advice and provide vital information so that the problems of obesity can be reduced to a great extent due to the misuse of food consumption by the people.

It is very important to count calories of foods that a person takes because the calories intake should be equal to calories expenditure to maintain his weight. Calories expenditure depends on the physical activity of a person. If the calories intake is more than the calories expended, the excess calories will be converted into fat and stored in ones body which causes body weight increase and gradually he may become obese which contribute to various serious degenerative disorders like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer etc. The tool " make your calories count," provides three information to help planning a healthy diet while managing the calories intake, Size up Your Servings and Calories; See Whats In It For You; and Judge If Its Right For You.

As per general guide introduced to calories, a single food item having 40 calories is considered as low-calorie, one with 100 calories as moderate-calorie and the food with 400 calories as high-calorie. It is a simple program that the people can understand and follow and choose their food products depending upon their calorie requirements for a healthy living.

Yet another information's introduced on the Nutrition Fact Label is the percent Daily Value (%DV) which is a quick guide to consumers. Any nutrient at 5%DV or less is considered as low for that specific nutrient and 20% or more considered as high for that particular nutrient. The % Daily Values recommendations are based on nutrients for a 2, 000 calorie daily diet or 2, 500 calories. The %DV helps to decide if a serving of food is high or low in a nutrient. For example consuming too much fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, or sodium may increase risk of chronic diseases, like heart disease, some cancers, or high blood pressure. On the other hand most people dont get enough dietary fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, and iron in their diets. In both these case Percent of Daily Values help to adjust nutrients required to maintain a healthy life style. Nutrition Fact Label facilitates the consumer to evaluate and compare the serving size, calories and nutrients on similar products to decide which product is the better option for them.

One has to agree that Nutrition Fact Labeling is an effective means of helping consumers to make more healthful food options. Since the people are not knowledgeable of the benefits and demerits of the food they consume it is necessary to create and awareness among them of the serious problems of under nutrition and over nourishment. The Nutrition Fact label makes it easy to decide the amounts of nutrients one is getting and to

compare one product to another. This helps to attempt for a diet that give emphasis to fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products. Choose foods that are low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt, and added sugar. It is necessary to include regular physical activity for the overall health and fitness which helps to control body weight by balancing the calories one consume from food with the calories expend each day. Hence one has to fully agree with the article published in Reuters Health information column by Megan Rauscher on Thursday, November 16, 2006.