

Reading Sweet News On Nutrition Labels

(NAPSA)—While it might not be on any best-seller lists, a food label's "Nutrition Facts" can make for a great read.

Why You Should Read Food Labels

Reading food labels can tell you important information about what's in the product you're about to put in your mouth.

For example, on sugar-free food packages, you should look for such statements as "sugar free" or "reduced calorie" if improved health and weight control are of interest to you.

Where To Look On The Label

The Nutrition Facts Panel is generally found on the side or back of a food package. There, you can find out about calories and the total carbohydrate content of a serving, information that is of particular interest to people with diabetes.

Also, if a healthy smile is important to you, be sure to look for language such as "does not promote tooth decay" or "safe for teeth."

About Those Polyols

When looking at the sugar content of a food product, people who are trying to moderate their sugar intake can find a wide variety of alternative sweeteners that give them more dietary choices.

One option is polyols, also known as sugar alcohols (though they contain neither sugar nor alcohol). These carbohydrates provide the sweet tastes in many of your favorite foods, with fewer calories than sugar, which can help improve dental health by reducing risk of cavities.

Products in which polyols have replaced sugar may be labeled "sugar-free" or "no sugar added." Polyols to look for on ingredients lists include erythritol, isomalt,



Reading food labels to identify low- or no-sugar products empowers consumers to choose products that can help with maintaining better overall health.

lactitol, maltitol or maltitol syrups, mannitol, sorbitol, xylitol and polyglycitol (hydrogenated starch hydrolysates, or HSH).

Polyols have been used for years to replace sugars in a variety of products such as chewing gum, candies, ice cream, baked goods, frozen foods, yogurt, frosting, canned fruits, tabletop sweeteners and fruit spreads. The safety, variety and good flavor of polyols means that more sugar-free foods are available to people who want to cut their calories and reduce their risk of cavities.

Health Benefits

In addition to their good, clean taste, polyols provide important health benefits. Foods sweetened with polyols do not cause sudden increases in blood sugar levels, which is handy for people with diabetes.

To maintain good health, it is important to satisfy your body's basic nutritional needs. Without a balanced diet, your body cannot function efficiently. Be sure to choose a variety of foods in your diet, including fruits and vegetables.

Learn More

For more facts on polyols, visit www.polyol.org.