

help consumers see how a food fits into the total diet. It gives a rough idea of the nutrients one serving of food contributes to the amount

recommended for the whole day. For example, if a shopper chooses a food with a 25% DV for calcium, this means they still need to eat

or drink additional foods high in calcium to meet the other 75% of their daily need. The %DV is based on a sample daily diet of 2,000 calories. Calorie needs obviously vary from person to person. To help set nutrient goals and personalize DVs, shoppers need to consider how many calories they typically eat. Take an active athlete for example. They likely eat more than 2000 calories so their %DV is a bit more liberated than what appears on the label. An elderly woman however, may eat less than 2000 calories and needs to remember that the %DV over-estimates her needs.

• If I eat one food with a 30% DV for fat, does that mean I have met the recommended amount of dietary

fat?

No. Most people have probably heard of the dietary guidelines for "less than 30 percent of calories from fat." That guideline refers to the total diet over time and not individual food choices. Shoppers need to select foods based on a total package of nutrients, not just the %DV for fat. Remember, foods with high and low %DV for fat balance each other as part of a total diet that meets nutrition recommendations.

• How can I use the new food label to help improve my diet?

Use the food label to make sensible choices in selecting foods. Start with a quick scan of the front of the package. Check for claims such as "reduced-calorie," "low salt" or

"fat free." These claims indicate products that can help lower the intake of calories, sodium or fat. Limiting your choices to only foods with such claims, however, can lead to unnecessary restrictions in the diet. Keep an eye out for words such as "high" or "good source" to help locate foods with some needed nutrients like calcium, iron and dietary fiber.

Each year there are thousands of new products on the grocery store shelves. While the label doesn't tell whether or not it tastes good, it certainly can help shoppers decide if it has the "good-for-you" nutrients needed. The new labels do give consistent, reliable information on which to base a healthful decision.

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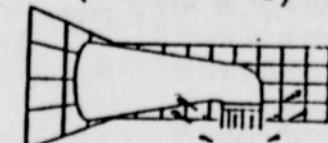
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