

Adventures in learning, created  
by Canadian dietitians



*Students explore how to identify and read nutrition information found on food labels.*

### **Learning Expectations:**

1. Understand that foods provide energy and nutrients.
2. Realize that different foods provide different nutrients.
3. Identify important information found on food labels.

**Subject Links:** Language, Math, Health, Physical Education, Art

### **Materials & Resources:**

- ☆ Food labels with Nutrition Facts tables (including a few examples from each of the four food groups in *Canada's Food Guide*)
- ☆ An assortment of measuring cups
- ☆ Coloured plasticine or modelling clay
- ☆ Gym equipment, such as basket balls, hula hoops and skipping ropes

### **Home Connection:**

At School: Review the fact that foods provide energy and nutrients to help us grow, learn and play. Distribute the food labels and point out the Nutrition Facts tables.

At Home: With the help of a family member, ask students to find and bring to school one or two empty food packages with a Nutrition Facts table.

### **Class Discussion:**

As a class, explore the information found on the food labels students brought from home, including the Nutrition Facts table and list of ingredients. Using the information provided in the teaching tip below to guide you, discuss:

- ☆ What is the same about all these food labels?
- ☆ How are the Nutrition Facts tables similar?
- ☆ Where is the ingredient list on the food label?
- ☆ Why is the list of ingredients important?

Look at the Nutrition Facts tables for two similar foods, like two yogurt cups.

- ☆ What are the serving amounts at the top of the Nutrition Facts table?
- ☆ Are these amounts the same?

### **Teaching Tip:**

The Nutrition Facts table can help you make informed food choices. The nutrition information in the Nutrition Facts table can be used to compare and choose between similar foods. The Nutrition Facts table appears in a standard format on most packaged foods. Calories and 13 core nutrients are always listed, including fat (saturated and trans fats), cholesterol, sodium, carbohydrate (fibre and sugars), protein, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium and iron. Other nutrients can also be listed. Some food products are not required to display a Nutrition Facts table, such as fresh fruits and vegetables; fresh cuts of meat, poultry and fish; and foods prepared fresh in

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store and sold in restaurants. These can be healthy choices as well.

The % Daily Value tells you if a food has a little or a lot of a nutrient. For example, a food that lists a 5% Daily Value for a particular nutrient would provide a little of the nutrient compared to a food that lists 75% of the Daily Value for that nutrient. In some cases, the % Daily Value is listed for the food in the package (e.g. cereal) as well as how it is eaten (e.g. with 1/2 cup 2% milk). Information in the Nutrition Facts table is based on a specific amount of food. The amount is listed right under the title 'Nutrition Facts'. It is important to compare that amount to the amount you eat.

All packaged foods must have a list of ingredients. The ingredients are listed by weight, from most to least. You can use this list if you want to avoid certain ingredients due to allergies, special diets or other reasons.

To learn more about nutrition labelling visit:  
[www.healthyeatingisinstore.ca](http://www.healthyeatingisinstore.ca) and  
[www.healthcanada.ca/nutritionlabelling](http://www.healthcanada.ca/nutritionlabelling)

## **Activities:**

1. Now that students have looked at food labels more closely, ask them to use a food label and copy the following information onto a sheet of paper. Before they begin this activity, display a template for them to follow with an example on it. You may want to copy a simple template for them to use. Ask students to list the:
  - ☆ Name of the food
  - ☆ Food group or food groups it belongs to
  - ☆ Amount of food shown at the top of the Nutrition Facts table
  - ☆ Three main ingredients (i.e. the first 3 in the ingredient list)
2. The *MISSION NUTRITION\** Team wants to know more about the amounts of foods in Nutrition Facts tables. Divide the class into small groups. Provide each group with a measuring cup. Assign each group a food and specific amount to model (based on the amounts found in your sample Nutrition Facts tables), such as 1 cup of cereal, 1/2 cup of peas, 3/4 cup of yogurt, or 1/2 cup of chick peas. Then give each student a small amount of plasticine corresponding to the colour of the food you assigned to their group. Have them model the amount of food.

Note that these amounts may differ from the serving sizes in *Canada's Food Guide*

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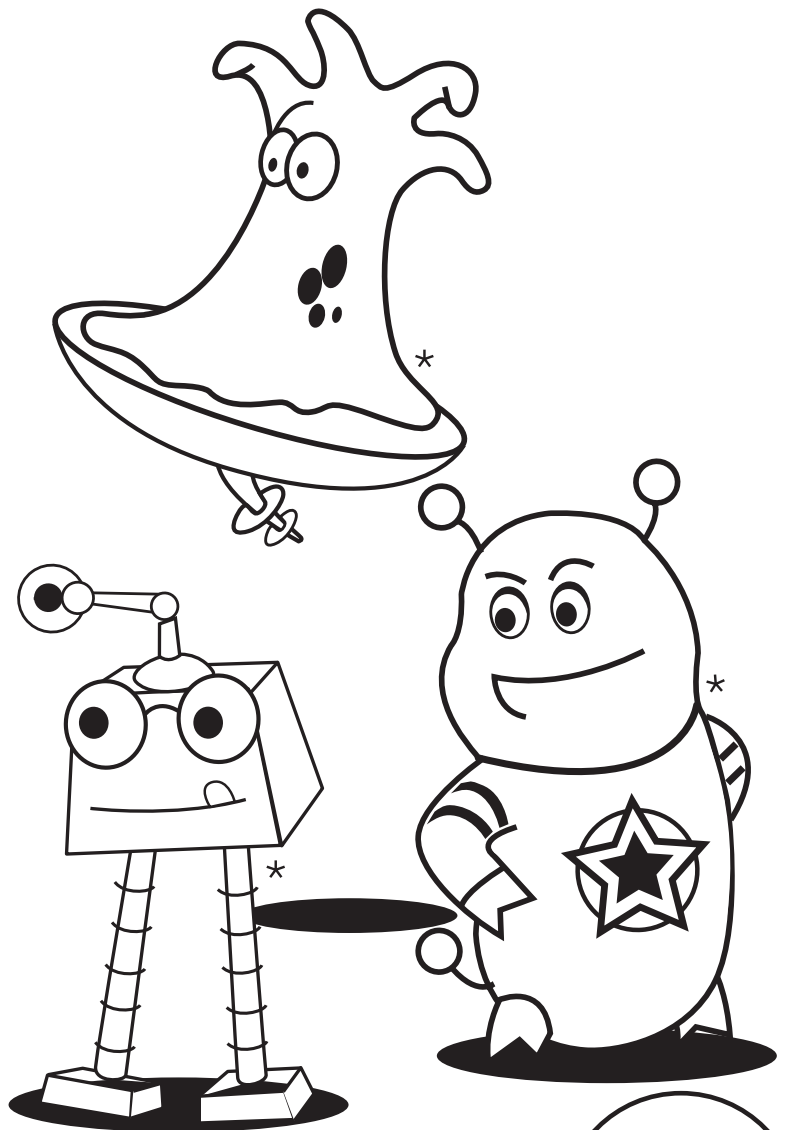
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### **Student Mission 5: Comparing Nutrition Facts**

The *MISSION NUTRITION\** Team wants to make healthy food choices. Have students complete the *Comparing Nutrition Facts* activity sheet.

### **Active Learning: Nutrition Facts Fitness Fun**

Divide the class into 3 groups – *Captain Kip\** team, *Glubber\** team, and *Handy-Bot\** team. Set up three parallel relay race style fitness courses, one for each team. Provide students with instructions for the activities they should do at each area of the fitness course, based on the Nutrition Facts table from a food label. For example: 5 grams of fat – bounce a basket ball 5 times, 12 grams of carbohydrate – skip rope 12 times, 9 grams of protein – hop into 9 hoops arranged on the floor, etc. Have students in each group take turns doing the course then tagging the next team member to go.



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