



# Food labelling for healthy eating

Understanding the labels

# Healthy eating – getting the balance right

This Presenter will help you to explain to your patients how to use the GDA label which now appears on thousands of food products, and shows how they can use it to help them choose a healthier diet. It provides simple information on one side aimed at the patient, whilst allowing you to see more detailed information at the same time.

This first section aims to set out the principles of a healthy balanced diet to the patient and tries to reassure them that it is achievable by emphasising that having a healthy diet does not mean they have to stop eating all the foods they enjoy but is about eating a wide range of foods and can include treats.

## It also provides the government's eight tips for making healthier choices:

- ▶ Base your meals on starchy foods
- ▶ Eat plenty of fruit and veg throughout the day, at least five portions
- ▶ Eat at least two portions of fish per week, one of which should be oily
- ▶ Cut down on saturated fat and sugars
- ▶ Try to eat less salt
- ▶ Get active and try to be a healthy weight
- ▶ Drink plenty of water
- ▶ Don't skip breakfast



# What makes up a healthy diet

- ▶ A healthy diet is all about eating a wide range of foods and getting the balance right. It doesn't have to be a chore – and it is not about denying yourself foods that you love!
- ▶ There is no such thing as a good or bad food, only good or bad overall diets
- ▶ It's important to be a healthy weight, but having a healthy diet is more than just watching your calories. Here are eight tips for making healthier choices:

## UK government has eight tips for making healthier choices:

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## Notes for HCPs

# Guideline Daily Amounts explained

Guideline Daily Amounts (GDAs) were first developed in 1998 as a means of communicating the government's nutrient intake recommendations. They were developed in collaboration with government, consumer organisations and the food industry. GDAs have been developed for men and women, as well as boys and girls at different ages. They all assume a healthy weight, average activity levels and no special dietary requirements.

GDAs have featured on the back of food packets for a number of years, but were first used as the basis for a front of pack nutrition label in 2005.

**The GDA label now appears on a wide range of branded foods. It allows consumers to see at a glance the number of calories and grams of sugars, fat, saturates (saturated fat) and salt per portion of food, and expresses these quantities as a percentage of the Guideline Daily Amount.**

For simplification, the label uses 'adult' values, which are based on an adult female and assumes a 2000 kcal intake. The GDA values for sugars, fat, saturated fat and salt are all maximums.

### What it all means:

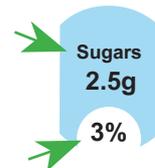
Each 30g serving contains



of an adult's guideline daily amount

This figure tells you how many calories/grams there are in one portion of your food

This is the percentage of your overall Guideline Daily Amount that you are about to eat



# Guideline Daily Amounts explained

- ▶ Guideline Daily Amounts (GDAs) are a guide to how much of energy and certain nutrients you should have in your diet
- ▶ The values for adults and children are given below. Although there are GDAs for men, women and children of different ages, to keep it simple these are the values you usually see

	Calories	Sugars	Fat	Saturates	Salt
Adults	2000	90g	70g	20g	6g
Children 5-10	1800	85g	70g	20g	4g

- ▶ Of course everyone is different and these values are based on an 'average' person, but they'll still give you a good idea of what's in the food you're buying and what you are eating
- ▶ And remember the GDA values for sugars, fat, saturated fat and salt are all maximum levels, not ideal amounts. You can eat less than the GDA and still have a healthy diet
- ▶ You will now see a GDA label which looks like this on the front of many food products.

## What it all means:

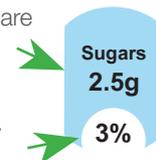
Each 30g serving contains



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This figure tells you how many calories/grams there are in one portion of your food

This is the percentage of your overall Guideline Daily Amount that you are about to eat



# Using GDAs to check, compare and choose

## The GDA label allows patients to:

- ▶ **Check** what their food contains – how many calories and how many grams of sugars, fat, saturates and salt plus how much of their GDA this contributes to
- ▶ **Compare** foods they buy with other similar foods
- ▶ **Choose** the foods that best suit their needs.

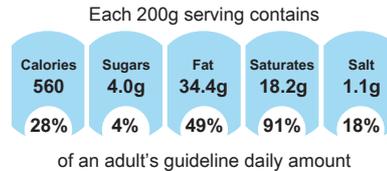
Encouraging patients to get into the habit of using the GDA label to check the content of foods on a regular basis will make them more conscious of what they are eating.

Suggest comparing similar foods, such as ready meals, to see how the nutrient content of similar products differs.

Encourage them to try to stay roughly within their GDA every day.

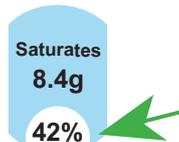
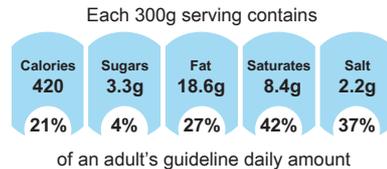
The two food labels shown can be used to illustrate the above points.

Steak and kidney pie



This figure tells you how many grams of saturated fat there are in one portion of your food

Beef casserole



This is the percentage of your overall Guideline Daily Amount that you are about to eat

# Check, compare, choose

- ▶ **Check** your food to find out what it contains
- ▶ **Compare** foods you buy with other similar foods
- ▶ **Choose** the foods that best suit your needs.

In the example below, there are two main meal options – if you are watching your saturates, you may want to choose the beef casserole in preference to the pie because it contains less than half the saturates per serving.

Steak and kidney pie

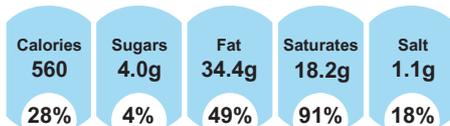


Saturates  
**18.2g**  
91%

This figure tells you how many grams of saturated fat there are in one portion of your food

This is the percentage of your overall Guideline Daily Amount that you are about to eat

Each 200g serving contains:



of an adult's guideline daily amount

Beef casserole



Saturates  
**8.4g**  
42%

Each 300g serving contains:



of an adult's guideline daily amount

# Using the GDA label: personalised action plan

## The GDA scheme helps patients to:

- ▶ Check, compare, choose and roughly count what's in their food.

## And it also allows them to:

- ▶ Keep an eye on portion sizes
- ▶ Focus on the nutrients that are important to them
- ▶ See how individual foods fit into a balanced diet.

## Next steps for the patient:

- ▶ What changes do they need to make?
- ▶ Which nutrient(s) do they need to focus on?
- ▶ How can they use the GDA labelling scheme to help make these changes.

*The example on the next page can help you show your patient how food labelling can help them.*

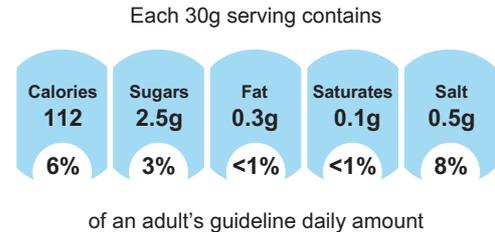
# Using the GDA label: personalised action plan

## The GDA labels:

- ▶ Allow you to check, compare, choose and roughly count what's in your meals
- ▶ Help you keep an eye on portion sizes
- ▶ Help you to focus on the nutrients that are important to you.

## Questions to consider:

- ▶ What changes do you need to make to your diet?
- ▶ Which nutrient(s) do you need to focus on?
- ▶ How will you use the GDA labelling scheme to help you balance your diet?



## Notes for HCPs

# Choosing the right option for you

The example labels show that it is not always straight forward to chose the right option. What can look like the same product actually has very different nutrition information. And healthy eating is not just about counting calories.

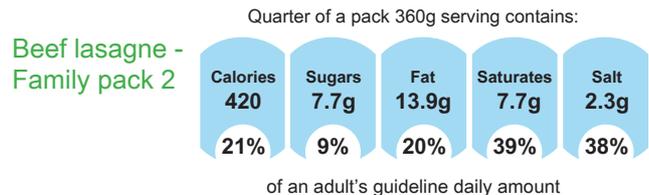
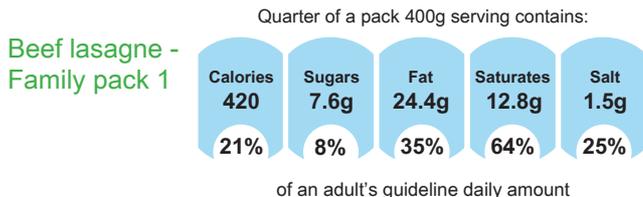
## Questions you might want your patient to consider

Is there a nutrient they should focus on, saturated fat or salt for example? Of course ideally they might want to cut down on both, but when they're choosing products that might not be possible and so this example can help you show them what's important for them and put it in the context of their overall diet and health needs.

Would they eat the portion size shown or would they eat half a pack? Remember if they did want to do a like for like comparison then they can always turn the pack over and compare the products per 100g.

*What else would they eat with the lasagne? Garlic bread, salad, oven chips?*

*What effect do they think that would have?*



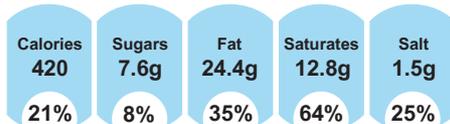
# Choosing the right option for you

## Which lasagne would you chose?

Beef lasagne - Family pack 1



Quarter of a pack 400g serving contains:



of an adult's guideline daily amount

Beef lasagne - Family pack 2



Quarter of a pack 360g serving contains:



of an adult's guideline daily amount

# Nutrition labelling and other information on pack

- ▶ Most foods will have a nutrition panel on the back of pack which is more detailed than the front of pack information
- ▶ The information is normally provided for eight nutrients in a table, and often a value for salt as well as sodium is given
- ▶ It will be given per 100g and usually also per portion
- ▶ Sometimes the GDAs will also be listed, as shown here, and sometimes the %GDA in a portion will be given.

## As well as nutrition information, the back of food packages often show:

- ▶ A full ingredients list – the further up the list, the greater the content of the ingredient
- ▶ Allergen information.

### Vegetable Chilli

#### Ingredients

Potato Wedges (30%) (Potato, Sunflower Oil, Dextrose), Water, Tomato, Onion (8%), Yellow Pepper (6%), Red Pepper (6%), Kidney Beans (5%) (Red Kidney Beans, Salt), Courgettes (4%), Sweetcorn (3%), Tomato Purée, Garlic Purée, Maize Starch, White Sugar, Red Chillies, Ground Chilli, Ground Cumin, Ground Coriander.

#### Allergy Advice:

Contains Garlic  
Made in a production area that uses Coconut and Sesame

#### Nutrition Information

(Typical values)	Per 100g as sold	Per meal as sold	GDA* Adults
Energy	257 kJ/61 kcal	1029 kJ/244 kcal	2000 kcal
Protein	1.8g	7.2g	45g
Carbohydrate	10.5g	42.0g	230g
of which Sugars	3.2g	13.0g	90g
Fat	1.3g	5.2g	70g
of which Saturates	0.6g	2.4g	20g
Fibre	2.4g	9.6g	24g
Sodium	0.1g	0.4g	2.4g
Salt	0.2g	0.9g	6g

• GDA requirements will vary dependent on age, gender, weight and activity level.

# Nutrition labelling and other information on pack

- ▶ The GDA label on the front of pack will help you to make a choice at a glance but you can find more information on the back of pack.

## where you usually have:

- ▶ A full ingredients list
- ▶ Nutrition information per 100g and per portion for a longer list of nutrients
- ▶ GDAs.

### Vegetable Chilli

#### Ingredients

Potato Wedges (30%) (Potato, Sunflower Oil, Dextrose), Water, Tomato, Onion (8%), Yellow Pepper (6%), Red Pepper (6%), Kidney Beans (5%) (Red Kidney Beans, Salt), Courgettes (4%), Sweetcorn (3%), Tomato Purée, Garlic Purée, Maize Starch, White Sugar, Red Chillies, Ground Chilli, Ground Cumin, Ground Coriander.

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of which Sugars	3.2g	13.0g	90g
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Fibre	2.4g	9.6g	24g
Sodium	0.1g	0.4g	2.4g
Salt	0.2g	0.9g	6g

• GDA requirements will vary dependent on age, gender, weight and activity level.



**Making a real difference**

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