**BECOMING A SUPERMARKET DETECTIVE!**

1. **Figuring the percentage of fat in a product**
   During our time in the grocery store, we will use a “fat finder” which gives us the percentage of fat in a product. This is *not the same* as the % Daily Value which is listed on the right side of the label.

   To figure out the percentage of fat *without using a fat finder*, there are two methods:

   **Method A (the long method):**
   
   Look for total calories in a serving...........Example: 250 calories.
   Look for total fat in a serving............Example: 12 grams.

   There are 9 calories in a gram of fat (versus 4 calories/gram in protein or carbohydrate).

   Multiply 9 calories x grams of total fat...........Example: $9 \times 12 = 108$ calories from fat.

   To get the percentage of calories from fat, divide the total fat calories by the total calories ............. Example: $108 \div 250 = .432$ Then multiply $.432 \times 100 = 43.2\%$..............43% of the calories in this particular product come from fat.

   **Method B (the short method):**
   
   Look for calories per serving on the nutrition label.......Example: 250 calories.
   Look for calories from fat on the nutrition label..............Example: 110 calories.

   Divide calories from fat by calories per serving.............Example: $110 \div 250 = .44$ Then multiply by 100.............Example: $.44 \times 100 = 44\%$ of the fat calories in a serving of a product. So a little over 40% of the calories in a serving of this product come from fat.

2. **Kinds of Fat**
   In every product containing fat, there are three kinds of fat -- saturated, monounsaturated, and polyunsaturated. The goal is to select a food with less saturated fat, trans fat, and cholesterol, and more monounsaturated and/or polyunsaturated fat. Trans fat must be included under Total Fat.

   **Saturated Fat** is listed on every label, because it increases blood cholesterol, and, therefore, increases the risk of heart disease. Saturated fat is more effective at increasing blood cholesterol levels than cholesterol in foods. If you are eating 2000 calories a day, you should not have more than 20 grams of saturated fat.
Trans Fats act like saturated fat in the body. Therefore, trans fats increase your risk for heart disease. Trans fatty acids are formed when a polyunsaturated oil is hydrogenated to make the fat more solid at room temperature. It is used in products to extend the shelf life. Products with partially hydrogenated fats will contain trans fats.

Polyunsaturated Fats and Monounsaturated Fats are more healthy fats to have in your diet. Examples of fats high in monounsaturated fats are olive oil, canola oil, peanut oil, nuts, and avocado. Fats high in polyunsaturated fats include corn oil, soybean oil, and safflower oil. It is fine to keep both kinds of oils in your cupboard to use in making salad dressing and to use in cooking.

Omega Three Fatty Acids are highly polyunsaturated. Fish, especially fatty fish, such as albacore tuna, mackerel, and salmon contain DHA and EPA, kinds of omega three fatty acids. Another kind of omega three fatty acid is ALA found in flaxseeds, walnuts, canola oil, soybean products, and wheat germ. Only a small percentage of ALA is converted to DHA and EPA.

3. Sodium and Potassium

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines recommend no more than 2300 mg per day. If a person is over 51 years of age, African American, or has hypertension, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease has a history of heart disease, no more than 1500 mg is recommended. Processed foods are high in sodium. For some people, a high intake of sodium will increase blood pressure. Potassium is very helpful in lowering blood pressure.

4. Fiber

It is important to get enough fiber in our diet...........25 to 35 grams of fiber per day. Most Americans only get 13 grams of fiber in a day. Foods with fiber are whole grains, fruits and vegetables, and beans and legumes. Whole grains have more fiber and more nutrients than grains which have been refined. Half of the grains you eat should be whole grains. Foods with more fiber rather than less will make you feel fuller.

There are two major kinds of fiber. Many products contain both kinds but in varying proportions:

- **Soluble fiber** helps to lower blood cholesterol. Examples: oatmeal, beans and legumes, fruits and vegetables
- **Insoluble fiber** helps to prevent constipation. Examples: whole wheat products, wheat and corn bran, fruits and vegetables

5. Figuring the amount of sugar in a product

Under total carbohydrate, look for “Sugars”.........Example: 5 grams.
To figure out teaspoons of sugar in a serving, divide the number of grams of sugar in a serving by 4, because there are 4 grams of sugar in a teaspoon. Example: if there are 5 grams of sugar in a serving: Divide 5 by 4 grams in a teaspoon of sugar = 1 1/4 teaspoons of sugar in a serving of this product. If you had two servings of this product, you would have 1 1/4 teaspoons times 2 = 2 1/2 teaspoons of sugar.

To figure larger quantities of sugar, it is helpful to know that there are 3 teaspoons in a tablespoon, and 4 tablespoons in 1/4 cup, or 16 tablespoons in a cup.

6. Protein

An ounce of meat, fish, or poultry contains 6 to 7 grams of protein. Use this amount to reference how much protein is in a product. Protein increases the satiety of a meal or snack. A three ounce portion of meat is about the size of a deck of cards.

7. Vitamins and Minerals

Only Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Iron, and Calcium must be listed on the label, because these nutrients are most at risk in the population. When a product contains meaningful amounts of other vitamins and minerals, those will be listed on the label too.

8. % Daily Value

Look at the bottom of the label to the section on % Daily Value. When eating 2000 calories, there are suggested limits for the day for total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, and total carbohydrate, and a suggested amount for dietary fiber. When a percent is 20% or higher, it is a red flag for fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium.

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The Mediterranean Diet

There is no single cuisine that borders the Mediterranean Sea. The dishes of Greece, southern Italy, Spain, southern France, Tunisia, Lebanon, Egypt, and Morocco are all distinctive with no one eating pattern—yet each
emphasizes grain products especially whole grains, vegetables, beans and peas, nuts, and fruits; small amounts of meat, poultry, and full-fat dairy foods including yogurt and cheese; more fish; and (except in the Muslim areas) moderate amounts of wine. There is a dietary pattern of fresh, seasonal, less processed, and healthy foods dependent on the country of origin. In general, the total fat intake of the Mediterranean diet is not lower than that of the typical American diet—it just shifts to using more monounsaturated fat mostly from olive oil, and less saturated fat.

**The Mediterranean plan:**
Eat sparingly: meats and sweets
Small portions: poultry, eggs, and dairy (daily-weekly)
Twice weekly: fish and seafood
Daily: fruits, vegetables, grains (preferably whole), beans, seeds, nuts, legumes, herbs, spices, and olive oil
Alcohol: moderation

Studies show reduced risk factors for and incidence of cardiovascular disease, and a lower death rate.

With this eating plan in mind, what specifically do we want to look for on the nutrition label when we go into the supermarket to buy our groceries?
* Amount and kind of fat in a serving especially saturated fat and trans fat
* Looking at carbohydrate, how much fiber and sugar in a serving?
* Grams of protein in a serving?
* Milligrams of sodium with the goal of reducing sodium to below 2300 mg a day – the newest Dietary Guidelines recommend not eating more than 1500 mg a day.
* Good sources of calcium and potassium

**What did you learn from examining labels that will make you change what you are purchasing? Be specific about examples. Keep in mind the Mediterranean style of eating.**