Label Logic:
Reading Food Labels

1. Start by looking at the **"Serving Size"** (**shown on the food label in blue**). Determine how large of a serving size applies to the label description—for example, ¾ cup, 10 chips, 1 cookie, 15 pieces. Next look at the "**Servings per Container**". For example "1 Serving Per Container" means the amounts listed on the food label apply to the whole container. For "2 Servings Per Container", you will need to multiply the amounts by 2 or only eat/drink half the container.

2. The next line tells you the number of calories in the listed serving size (**shown in red**). If the label lists that 1 serving equals 1 cup but you eat 2 cups, you've eaten twice as many calories. If you merely look at the number of calories in the product but you don't look at the serving size or consider how many servings you might eat, you could be fooling yourself as to the number of calories you're consuming.

3. The first set of nutrients (**shown in gold**) represent those **nutrients that you should limit** including total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol & sodium.

4. The next set of nutrients (**shown in green**) represent those **nutrients that you should get plenty of** including potassium, dietary fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium & iron.

5. The percent daily values (the purple right-hand column of the panel) are quick guides to determining whether a nutrient is high or low in a particular food. Use the **"5-20 guide"** below:

***20% or more is high*.** For **nutrients you need more of**, eat plenty of foods with 20% or more Daily Value: Fiber Vitamins A and C Calcium Potassium Iron For example, on the label in this handout of the nutrients you need more of, only calcium meets or exceeds the recommended amount (20% or more).	***5% or less is low*.** For **nutrients you need to limit**, eat plenty of foods with less than 5% of the Daily Value: Saturated fat Trans fat Cholesterol Sodium Sugar For example, on the label in this handout, all of the nutrients that you should limit exceed the recommended amount (higher than 5%).

6. The footnote section at the bottom (shown in orange) indicates that the **percent daily values (%DV)** shown on the right-hand side of the nutrient panel (shown here in purple) **are based on a 2,000 calorie diet**. Yours may be higher or lower depending on your caloric needs.

References:

1. How to Understand and Use the Nutrition Facts Label. Retrieved August 29, 2007 from www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/foodlab.html#twoparts.