

Your Guide to Understanding Keto Groceries



BREAKING DOWN NUTRITION FACT PANELS



Servings

All food products should list a serving size as well as the number of servings per container. For example, if a protein bar weighs 50g it could be listed as 1 serving = 50g, 1 serving per container, or it could be listed as 1 serving = 25g, 2 servings per container. Sometimes companies will divide servings into smaller pieces so that at first glance it appears to contain fewer calories, especially sugar. Watch out for this!



Calories:

This is the total number of calories per serving. Please note that this number is often rounded. If you calculate the macronutrients yourself, you may find the total calorie count is slightly different from what is on the label. Sometimes, companies will only contribute net carbs to the total calorie count because some fibers will not count towards overall calories. This value can be calculated (the equation is shown below) since we know that fat has 9 calories per gram and protein and carbs contain 4 calories per gram.

$$\text{Calories} = (\text{Grams of Fat} \times 9) + (\text{Grams of Carbs} \times 4) + (\text{Grams of Protein} \times 4)$$



Fat:

This section denotes the total fat content per serving. It also includes the saturated fat and trans-fat contents. Try to completely avoid trans fats, which are processed, hydrogenated fats that are harmful to your health.



Sodium:

This value indicates the total amount of sodium in the product.



Cholesterol

This value indicates the total amount of cholesterol per serving. Don't let this number scare you, as cholesterol is not inherently bad. Your body needs cholesterol for hormone production and cell membrane structure.

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Carbohydrates

The total carbohydrates listed in this section includes fibers, sugars, and sugar alcohols. Underneath the total carbs section, you may find sections for dietary fiber, total sugars, total grams of added sugar, and in some cases sugar alcohols (e.g., erythritol) or substitutes (e.g., allulose). Net carbs can be calculated with the equation below; however, exercise caution around the fibers and sugar alcohols. Not all are digested the same and even though some ingredients, like maltitol or IMO's, are listed as a sugar alcohol or fiber respectively, they can not be entirely subtracted as they are partially digested. $\text{Net carbs} = \text{Total Carbs} - \text{Fiber} - \text{Sugar Alcohols/Substitutes}$



Protein

This section indicates the total amount of protein per serving. Some products like protein powders may also include an amino acid profile breakdown, indicating how much of each amino acid are in the product so that you know you are getting high-quality protein.



Vitamins & Minerals

You may notice this section only has a few vitamins or minerals. Nutrition labels typically have values related to the product. Most often, this includes calcium, magnesium, potassium, vitamin C, vitamin D, and/or iron. If you are on the ketogenic diet, the electrolytes, magnesium and potassium, are important to pay attention to.



% DV:

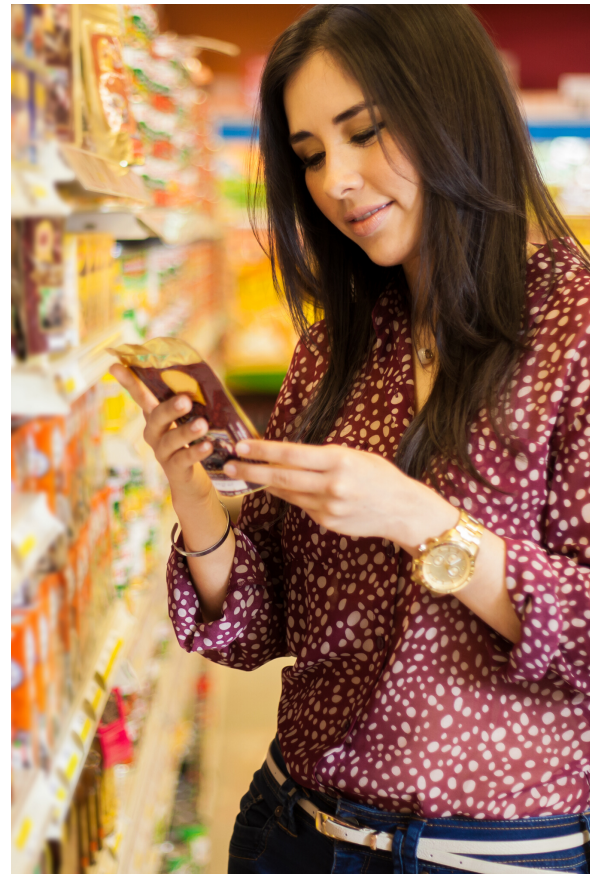
The percent of daily value section indicated what percentage of that specific macronutrient or vitamin/mineral is in the food item based on a 2,000-calorie diet. For example, if a product has 20g of protein, the recommended daily value is 50g, then the DV% will be listed as 40%.

BREAKING DOWN INGREDIENTS

If labeled correctly, ingredients should be listed from highest quantity to lowest. For example, let's say that a product's ingredients are listed as follows: Almond flour, egg, and stevia. That means the food is mostly made of almond flour, and the ingredient at the lowest amount is stevia.



- Watch out for alternative names for sugar! Dextrose, fructose, high-fructose corn syrup, glucose, sucrose, honey, agave/agave nectar, whole cane sugar, brown sugar, and sugar cane are just a few examples of sugars
- When you see a product labeled as sugar-free, check the ingredient fact panel! Know that ingredients like maltitol, sorbitol, and maltodextrin are all partially digested, and not truly a net carb. Consuming these sweeteners can elevate your blood glucose levels and potentially kick you out of ketosis. Furthermore, these sweeteners can cause severe GI issues and have a laxative-like effect.
- Although meats are naturally carbohydrate free, many companies cure their meat in sugar. Always check the ingredients listed to make sure there are no hidden carbs.
- Always over-estimate caloric consumption rather than underestimate! Companies can round up to 20% on nutrition fact panels, so if you are stuck in a plateau or not seeing any weight loss, try paying closer attention to the true number of calories you are eating.



UNDERSTAND CERTIFICATION LABELS

MEAT AND DAIRY

Cage-Free

This term means animals do not live in cages. However, this does not designate how much space each animal is given. Even if these animals are not housed in cages, they could be kept in overcrowded areas with little to no room to move, limiting exercise and nutrition, and decreasing the overall quality.



Free Range

This designation means the animals do not live in cages and have access to the outdoors. There is technically no legal definition of this term and is not enforced by the USDA, meaning the animals could be living in an over-packed coup with the chance to go outside for 5 minutes every year and it could still be technically labeled as free-range. Again, these living conditions limit exercise and nutrition, decreasing the quality of the food product.

Grass Fed

This term is not well regulated, but it generally means at some point in the animal's life, it fed on primarily grass. A grass-fed animal could have consumed grass for the first half of its life and then transitioned to eating primarily grains. Studies suggest grass-fed meats have more micronutrients, omega 3s, and conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) than grain fed meats.

Grass Finished

Animals who consume only grass for the entirety of their life are considered grass finished. Research suggests grass finished meats are more micronutrient dense than both grass and grain-fed meat.



UNDERSTAND CERTIFICATION LABELS

Grain Fed

This term designates once animals are weaned from their mother, they are fed a grain-based diet, primarily consisting of corn and soy.



Pasture-Raised

This is considered the gold-standard because animals are guaranteed to have some section of land outdoors. Chickens, who are pasture-raised provide more nutrient-dense eggs since they are able to eat natural foods and have more exercise. Pasture-raised food products are considered superior to cage-free and free-range.

ORGANIC

USDA Organic

The USDA National Organic label is displayed on food products that contain at least 95% organic ingredients that contain none of the following: antibiotics, pesticides, growth hormones, manufactured/synthetic ingredients, or irradiation. These food products are grown on farm certified by the USDA.



UNDERSTAND CERTIFICATION LABELS

Made with Organic Ingredients

Food products that contain 70% or more organic ingredients but do not meet the criteria for USDA organic are labeled as made with organic ingredients.



Certified Naturally Grown

This certification label is extremely similar to USDA Organic, meeting the same standards, but products do not come from a farm certified by the USDA.

Non-GMO

This certification means that food items contain either no or “low-risk” genetically-modified ingredients. Ingredients such as citric acid, which is used as a preservative, is allowed in products even though it is technically genetically modified. This is a rather controversial certification label since there is little to no scientific evidence supporting the idea that genetically modified foods are a health risk.



UNDERSTAND CERTIFICATION LABELS

Hormone-Free/ RBGH-Free

Animals are often treated with hormones to increase their size or food production. Recombinant bovine growth hormone (RBGH) is a hormone given to cows to increase milk production. Other animals, like chickens, may be treated with steroid hormones such as estrogen, progesterone, or testosterone to increase growth. There is concern that animals treated with these hormones have higher levels of steroid hormones that can be absorbed by humans after consumption. While the research on this topic is limited, some evidence does suggest milk from RBGH treated cows contain more hormones than non-treated cows.



Raised without Antibiotics

Animals treated with steroid hormones are more likely to develop infections than other animals. Because of this, hormone-treated animals are often also given antibiotics to prevent infection. Again, the research is limited, but some studies suggest human consumption of meat treated with antibiotics can increase resistance to certain strains of bacteria.



UNDERSTAND CERTIFICATION LABELS

Natural / All-Natural

Natural products are regulated by the USDA to contain no artificial ingredients or preservatives. However, growth hormones and antibiotics are not restricted by this label. The all-natural label does not have standards set by the USDA, but is considered the same as natural.



SOCIAL CONCERNS

Fairtrade

This certification label signifies that the product was farmed by workers who were paid a fair wage, with safe working conditions where they had the ability to join a union, and child or forced labor was not allowed. Furthermore, products must have been farmed in a manner that was beneficial for the development of that area (including economic, environmental, and social development).

Animal Welfare Approved

The Certified Animal Welfare / Animal Welfare Approved logo is certified by the AWA (A Greener World) and indicates that a meat product was sourced from animals that were raised outdoors for their entire life, on an independent and sustainable farm, and where animal welfare was held to high standards during production, transportation, and slaughtering.



UNDERSTAND CERTIFICATION LABELS

American Humane Certified

The American Human Certified program is an independent, third-party certification that certifies the animals were raised in humane conditions. This certification has been the topic of much controversy because it does not have standards to outdoor access, overcrowding, painful euthanasia, or many other harmful practices. This certification simply means that animals are able to sit, stand, turn, and move their limbs.



NUTRITION

Keto Certified

This certification label was created by the Paleo Foundation and requires products to contain 10g or less net carbs, or 6g or less net carbs. This certification allows the use of honey, cane sugar, date sugar, coconut sugar, fruit juice, inulin, and sugar alcohols (except maltitol). Furthermore, this certification only looks at an ingredient panel and conducts no testing on products.

Ketogenic Certified

The Ketogenic Certified, Ketogenic Certified N.A.S. (No Artificial Sweeteners), and Ketogenic Friendly labels were created by Ketogenic.com as a way to help consumers trust products they are consuming. Since blood testing is the gold standard for determine whether a product is truly ketogenic or not, all products undergo both a thorough ingredient panel review and blood testing. The Ketogenic Certified program prohibits use of high GI sugars and sugar alcohols that will spike glucose and kick an individual out of ketosis.

UNDERSTAND CERTIFICATION LABELS

Ketogenic Certified

There are different standards to be met for each certification label. Ketogenic Friendly indicates a product is certified to only elevate blood glucose and ketone levels within a range acceptable for moderate use on a ketogenic diet. The Ketogenic Certified label indicates a product is certified to only elevate blood glucose and ketone levels within a range acceptable for frequent use on a ketogenic diet. Ketogenic Certified N.A.S. products are held to the same standard as Ketogenic Certified but are also independently tested to ensure no artificial sweeteners are used.



Sugar-Free

There is no standard certification for "sugar-free". While sugar-free products may not contain sucrose or cane sugar, many still contain high GI sweeteners such as sorbitol, maltitol, and maltodextrin. Practice caution around foods labeled as sugar-free! Some good, low-GI sweeteners to opt for include allulose, erythritol, stevia, and monk fruit.

