



This is our weekly talk about how you can succeed with a kidney diet, brought to you by [RenalDietHQ.com](http://RenalDietHQ.com), a website whose mission is to be the most valued resource on kidney disease that people can use to improve their health.

Hello, welcome to the Renal Diet Headquarters podcast. This week we are on episode number 25. You can find all the links and other information at [www.renaldietHQ.com/025](http://www.renaldietHQ.com/025)

I am Mathea Ford, the CEO of Renal Diet Headquarters and I am here this week to talk to you on the best podcast about kidney disease. We bring you information every week. I have been doing it consistently since January this year, if you find value send me a note and let me know what other things you would like to hear about because I really enjoy getting your emails. Send those emails to [podcast@renaldiethq.com](mailto:podcast@renaldiethq.com)

If you listened last week, you know I was on vacation and I recorded a little early and it was a short podcast, but I did have a nice vacation and I want to continue this week talking about label reading and grocery shopping this month. This week specifically I want to talk about label reading. Lots of people really don't know how to read labels and what they mean. When you go in the grocery store you can be at a loss about what everything means, so this week we are going to talk about reading your food label.

But before I do all that, I want to announce that I am truly done with a 152 page [Caregiver Guide](#) in a three ring binder, and it will be in my office next week for me to ship out for those of you who have preordered. The month of June I am doing a special, it is \$67.00, so if you go over to the website and order it will show that it is on sale. Starting in July it will go up to \$97.00. There is your fair warning if you are interested. I will be adding on that page all the caregiver worksheets and everything that you get, some notes about them and some pictures, once I get the actual product in, so you can see what you are getting. I am so excited just to be able to say that I am finally done with it!! It was a lot of work and I hope you enjoy it.

Okay, so this week I want to talk about how reading nutrition labels can help you. It is really important that you know what the nutrition facts label means. I know they are talking about changing it, and when they do, I will talk about it again, but for right now, it is really important you understand what the current label is like.

The food label is standardized across all items and it is called the nutrition facts label. You find it on all packaged food and beverages. It serves as your guide for making choices. You can learn interesting and valuable information from the nutrition facts label.

First of all, on the top underneath the word nutrition facts, it says serving size. That shows how many servings are in the package and how much a serving is. So it may give it pieces or chips or cups or something like that. All of the nutrition information from that point on is based on one serving. So, if you have a coke and you are drinking the whole bottle and the bottle is 20 ounce bottle but the label says it is an 8 ounce serving and there are 2.5 serving per bottle, it is not 100 calories, it is 250 calories. So that is where people can get a little lost, because everything on there is equal to one serving and a lot of time the food contains more than one serving.

The next thing on the label a little further down is the number of calories per serving, then next to it show calories from fat in one serving. So you may get confused and think that if a product is fat free that means it is good for me. Well, no, because it does not mean it is calorie free and it probably has a lot of sugar added, so be careful with that. Make sure you are reading it.

The percent daily value section tells you how the nutrients in that serving of food contribute to your total intake for the day. So you use it to choose information about foods that are high in the nutrients you need to get more of and low in the nutrients you need to get less of.

Things like sodium. You want to get less sodium so you want that number on the percent daily value to be lower. Maybe your total fat should be lower; your total carbohydrate should be lower. An example of something that you might want to be higher is something like dietary fiber. You might want dietary fiber to be a higher percentage.

Eating too much fat, especially the saturated fat and the trans-fat can increase your risk of heart disease and you probably already have kidney disease so you are at a higher risk for heart disease anyway, so you do want to limit your intake of trans-fat for sure. There are a lot of differing opinions right now on how much fat to take in and what is actually causing problems, so just watch your fat intake and try not to overdo it. Most of us overdo it with fat and sugar regardless. Just be careful with that. A lot of us don't get enough of the dietary fiber or our vitamins and calcium.

Potassium and phosphorus are not listed on the label, although that is part of the new food label proposal, to add those to the label, at least potassium. That will be good for you with kidney disease.

Right now what you really need to focus on initially is the sodium level and protein levels to keep those to the right amounts that you need.

The three areas that you really need to focus on, on the label are, the nutrition serving size, the servings per container and your percent daily value. So checking out, like I said, on that bottle of soda where it says it is 100 calories and there are 2.5 servings per bottle, knowing that if you drink the whole bottle you just had 250 calories. All those nutrition and information below the serving size is for just one serving. So you need to multiply it, if you eat the whole container by the amount of servings.

The other thing that a lot of people don't realize is that they can actually cut those servings in half. If you really want a cookie, and the serving for a cookie is two cookies, you don't have to eat a whole cookie; you don't even have to eat half of a cookie. But if a serving size is two cookies and you eat half, and then you get to divide everything by half so that is helpful too. So just be careful and check the serving size. It is very often that it is misleading and that is one of the things they are trying to fix with the new food label. It is easy to get confused because the serving size is not necessarily what we actually eat, a small bag of chips might have two servings in it.

Look at your percent daily value as well. So the three things are serving size, servings per bag and percent daily value. It is a general guide to help you understand the nutrients in on serving, and it is related to a normal healthy person and their percent needed. The sodium for example is for 2400 mg. If you have kidney disease you should only be getting around 1500 mg, but honestly, it is really hard when buying prepackaged foods, to get low. Keep looking, find and compare, and see which one has the lowest percentage of that daily value.

If it has 5% of the daily value or less, then it is considered low in that nutrient, if it has 20% or more of the daily value, it is considered high in that nutrient. So those can be both good or bad, fiber can be good to be high in that nutrient.

Using a percent daily value, you can compare foods and understand how to balance things out for the day. If you ate something that was kind of high in sodium at one meal then you can try to eat a lower sodium item at the next meal using that percent daily value.

Then there is a section on the bottom that says nutrients, and nutrient is an ingredient in a food that provides you with nourishment. So nutrients are essential for life and you should try to get more of your vitamin A, vitamin C, dietary fiber and maybe calcium,

depending on your overall condition. You should also try to get less of the sodium, cholesterol and the trans-fats, so be care watching those items.

The nutrition facts label is designed to help you look at your overall health and make some good decisions but the label is a tool that is available to you on every packaged product. If you don't see the full label there is always a way to get to see the full label either online or writing to the company.

Let's talk about some of those specific nutrients.

For example, nutrients to get less of or more of, you want to look at something like heart disease, which is one of the biggest killers of people in the U.S. You can look at the facts label and compare foods, and you know that you need to have lower total fat, lower saturated fat, lower trans-fat, lower cholesterol and lower sodium for that diet. You would be able to look at a label and compare it to another and know that one is better than the other to eat for your condition.

Talking about salt. Salt and sodium people usually say kind of interchangeably. Salt is listed as sodium on the nutrient facts label. We have to get some salt in the day, because it does come out of our pores and urine, but most people eat too much. I mean we only need like 500 mg per day and most people eat about 3000 to 4000. You may not even know it because you are probably used to the taste of salt. So when you add more salt to food you are just adding more sodium. Sodium has been linked to high blood pressure so that is why we tell you to eat lower sodium diet, so you can reduce your risk of heart disease and lower your blood pressure. Blood pressure normally rises with age, so lowering your sodium intake is more important every year.

Read those labels to see the sodium amounts in the foods. Choose foods that are 5% or less of your daily value, which is considered low in sodium. Now if anything 20% or higher, which I know canned soups are, those are high in sodium. So if you are comparing two foods, compare the amount of sodium that is important for you overall in your health.

Another nutrient I want to talk about is fiber. Fiber is something that is not digested. So it remains in your digestive track, it is not absorbed, and it becomes the bulk of you waste product. So it helps you keep your digestive system moving and that can be very important as you get older, because with the more pills you take or the less activity you have it can become more difficulty to not get constipated. Fiber is a nutrient that you should get more of unless you are restricted from some of your whole grain products. So you want to try to get more fiber because it will help you to lower your cholesterol, lower your fat and just fill full longer. If you are in stage 4 kidney disease, you probably are going to eat just plain white bread, so don't worry about your fiber, but do try to eat lower saturated fat and eat a variety of vegetables and fruits and that will help you get

more fiber. That will help to get things moving along. There are a couple different kinds of fiber.

One type is called insoluble and it is mostly found in the whole grain products. Basically it just stays in your digestive system and kind of moves its way through and helps move everything else along with it.

Soluble fiber is found in beans, peas, vegetables, oat bran, and stuff like that. It slows down the digestion of carbohydrates and can stabilize blood pressure if you have diabetes. Basically it holds on to the cholesterol and it doesn't digest because you don't absorb it, in water it will dissolve 'in a way' and absorb the cholesterol, so it helps to reduce the amount of cholesterol your body absorbs.

When you are reading your food labels, fiber is one you will want to get more of, so you are going to try to find foods that have 20% of the daily value or more. Choose the ones that are higher in fiber if you can. Now if you are on a potassium and phosphorus restriction, you probably need to eat lower fiber, so that is one of those areas that you have to know what your expectation from your doctor is.

Let's talk about fat! Total fat. Dietary fat is a nutrient, it is something that we need to have, unfortunately most of us have too much of it, myself included. It holds on to nutrients and it holds on to healthy vitamins and minerals, and it provides a lot of energy to our body that we don't use because we may or may not exercise. Eating too much fat can lead to a wide range of health challenges. Total amount and type of fat can contribute to and increase the risk of heart disease, high cholesterol, cancers, obesity, type 2 diabetes, all those things, you may already have some of those things. You just need to watch your total fat.

Now there are different types of dietary fat. Some have some health benefits but others don't. So let's talk about the good fats. Good fats are those fats that are monounsaturated and polyunsaturated. Those are healthy even if eaten in moderation; in fact small amounts can even help you lower your cholesterol levels. Those are found in olive oil, canola oil, peanut oil and soft margarines.

Undesirable fats or 'bad fats' are saturated and trans-fat. Those can raise your cholesterol levels and they can contribute to heart disease. Typically they are solid at room temperature and they are found in meat, poultry, fish, butter, ice cream and hard margarines. Meat, the skin of the meat and fish supply protein, B vitamins and Iron, so you just want to make sure you are choosing the lean milks and meats. Remove the skin and that will help. Dry beans are a good source of protein and they are not fat so you can use those as well.

Trans-fat is one of the newest additions to the nutrition facts label and when the manufacturer takes and whips air into the oil it hydrogenates it, that is the technical term, basically it makes it like Crisco or shortening, and it works really good in pastries and keeps them good for a long time, keeps a good consistency, but it is really bad for your body. So you should really not eat any trans-fat at all. Try to eat 0 grams of trans-fat per day. That is just a given that you need to watch out for.

Okay, last nutrient I want to talk about is cholesterol. I think it is important to your heart. Cholesterol is only obtained from animal products. It is not obtained from plant products. Your body makes cholesterol as well, basically your body takes the cholesterol from the animal products that you eat and digests them and turns them around and makes them into your own body's cholesterol. Cholesterol builds up in your arteries, that is exactly what atherosclerosis is. It is not the saturated fat, what happens is the saturated fat increases the cholesterol and the cholesterol builds up in your arteries.

So, there are two kinds of cholesterol in your body, there are high density lipoprotein, the HDL and that is good cholesterol. I think of them like garbage trucks and they bring the cholesterol from the body and it helps to prevent build up. Most doctors want you to get a higher level of HDL and then a lower level of LDL, that is the bad cholesterol, that is the stuff that takes it out into the blood stream and what blocks your arteries. So cholesterol is a product or nutrient to get less of. You really want to try to eat less saturated fat because it raises the LDL levels in your body more than anything that you can eat.

So when you are looking at labels, just to recap for you, I want you to remember to look at the serving size, and understand how much it contains. Look at the amounts per serving and understand that if you eat the whole container that you have to multiply the whole nutrition facts label by the amount of servings listed on the top. Just think about how you can look at some labels, what I would like you to do is look and see if you can find labels with potassium listed on them, right now it is optional but some companies do add it. Please go ahead and look for potassium on the food labels.

Send me any questions you have about food labels, I am excited to hear them. My email is [podcast@renaldiethq.com](mailto:podcast@renaldiethq.com) and the thing I am going to leave you with today since you listened all the way to the end is to let you know that my big excitement is that I am quitting my regular full time job because I want to be able to do Renal Diet Headquarters full time and I am very excited about that. My last day at my full time job will be a week from Friday, June 20<sup>th</sup> and that is a big step for me because I am a little nervous but I hope that that means I will be able to get products out to you quicker and I will be able to spend more time answering your questions and talking to my customers

on the phone when you sign up for the membership I usually call you and talk to you, I can't wait to do more of that.

Thank you for listening and have a great week and remember you can find all the information at <http://www.renaldietHQ.com/025> have a good week. Thanks!

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