

Label It Nutrition

middle school - adult

Activity Synopsis

Volunteers practice reading food labels and **Food Models** by ranking foods for a particular nutrient. In small groups, students then look through labels and **Food Models** to generate a list of foods that meet a particular criterion.

Activity Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Read a **Food Model**/Nutrition Facts label.
- Use the information on Nutrition Facts labels to compare the caloric or nutrient values of food.

Materials

- **Food Models**
- Food Packages with Nutrition Facts Label

Advance Preparation

- Collect an assortment of food packages.
- Select **Food Models** and food packages to use in step 3-4.



1% LOWFAT
CHOCOLATE MILK
1 cup

Teaching Plan

1. Explain with so much nutrition information available, it's often difficult to know what to eat. Point out that one reliable, easy-to-find source of nutrition information is in the refrigerator or cupboard - on the Nutrition Facts label.
2. Explain that the backs of the **Food Models** are similar to the Nutrition Facts panel on food labels. If necessary, provide instructions on how to read the Nutrition Facts on a food label or the **Food Models**. www.fsan.fda.gov provides this information, if needed.
3. Ask a volunteer to come to the front of the room. Display four or five **Food Models** and have the volunteer rank the foods from highest to lowest in calories or by a particular nutrient - without using the information on the back. For example, he/she might be asked to rank the following models by calories:
 - Frozen yogurt
 - Chocolate candy bar
 - Brownie
 - Apple pieSolicit feedback from the rest of the group on the ranking. Then have the volunteer read the values for the nutrient in question and determine if the ranking was accurate.
4. Ask for another volunteer. Have this person rank four foods (represented by a combination of **Food Models** and food packages) by a particular nutrient, such as fiber, protein or calcium.

Get the rest of the group actively involved in verbally giving feedback. Then have the volunteer read the values for that particular nutrient and, if necessary, revise the ranking.

5. Once the group seems to understand the ranking process, divide students into groups of two to three. Assign each group a different nutrient. Ask them to look through the **Food Models** and food packages and come up with a list of five foods high or low in their assigned nutrient. (You may want to give the groups a specific minimum/maximum percentage for their nutrient.)

When students have completed this task, have a representative from each group share their findings and/or their biggest surprise.

6. Wrap up the session by emphasizing how easy it is to use labels to compare foods and make informed choices.

Variations

Give students one of the following challenges. Using **Food Models** and labels, have them generate a list of:

- Five beverages that each provide 20 percent or more of the Daily Value for a nutrient.
- Five nutritious snacks to serve students.
- Five desserts for 100 calories or less.
- Five main courses that supply 15 grams of fat or less.



SOFT DRINK
12 fluid ounces