CHECK THE LABELS

Healthy 4U
Cheesy Quiche

Now even CHEESIER!

Food labels can help you to make healthier choices – if you really know what they’re saying.
WHAT DO LABELS TELL YOU?

The big name and picture on the front of the pack are there to persuade you to choose this product. But they don't tell the whole story. You'll learn much more by reading the labels.

"Use By" dates are seen on foods that go off quickly, such as chilled meat, dairy products and ready meals. If shops sell food past this date, it's an offence. Don't buy it - it might make you ill. If you see foods on sale past their USE BY date, tell Trading Standards (see last page).

"Best before" dates. There may be no immediate risk of food poisoning, but after this date the food will be going stale or losing flavour. It is not illegal to sell food after this date unless its quality is unacceptable, or it's unfit to eat.

When you go shopping try to make sure that chilled and frozen food stays cold during the journey home. For instance, use a coolbag or ice pack.

Chopped and shaped chicken with added water in a crisp breadcrumb coating with a delicious garlic flavoured butter filling.

**Ingredients**

- Chicken 36%
- butter 14%
- water
- vegetable oil
- breadcrumbs (wheatflour, salt, vegetable oil)
- wheatflour, chicken skin, skimmed milk, stabilisers sodium di, tri and polyphosphates, salt, pea fibre, garlic extract, onion powder, herbs, spice extracts, dextrose, yeast extract.

**Allergy Advice**

Contains wheat, gluten, milk, yeast.

**Food allergy** or **intolerance** can cause serious problems. New rules require that the main allergens are listed on the label, including nuts and shellfish. If you have to shop for allergy-free foods, clear labelling can make life easier, but you may have to check each ingredient.
This is the food’s **legal name** – a clear description required by law. It’s often in small print on the back or side, so it’s not always easy to spot. From the front of the pack you may not realise that the chicken is “chopped and shaped”.

The largest **ingredients** by weight are listed first. On this label the largest ingredient is chicken. Water, chicken skin and skimmed milk are cheap ingredients added to increase the weight; stabilisers and salt keep water in.

**Nutrition information** tells you how healthy a food is. To see if the amounts of sugar, fat and salt listed per 100g are a lot or a little, look at the chart on the other side of this leaflet. You will see that just one of these Kievs contains around half the fat, and most of the salt you should eat in a day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutrition Information</th>
<th>Per Kiev (145g)</th>
<th>Per 100g (3½ oz)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>1917kJ 462kcal</td>
<td>1322kJ 319kcal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein</td>
<td>10.1g 7.0g</td>
<td>12.0g 9.9g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbohydrate</td>
<td>17.4g 12.0g</td>
<td>12.0g 9.9g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of which sugars</td>
<td>2.8g 1.9g</td>
<td>2.8g 1.9g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat</td>
<td>39.1g 27.0g</td>
<td>27.0g 20.7g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of which saturates</td>
<td>21.9g 15.1g</td>
<td>15.1g 11.4g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fibre</td>
<td>1.7g 1.2g</td>
<td>1.7g 1.2g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>5.5g 3.7g</td>
<td>3.7g 2.6g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of which sodium</td>
<td>2.2g 1.5g</td>
<td>2.2g 1.5g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**But beware!**
Some labels only show energy, protein, carbohydrate and fat. This may hide how much sugar, saturated fat and salt is in the food.

**CLAIMS**

Be careful when a food claims to be “healthy” or “good for you”. Although the product may be low in one nutrient, such as fat, it may be high in another, such as sugar. So it might still not be very healthy, and could be high in calories.

The claim **“Nutritious”** can mean anything – it could be trying to make the best of a high sugar food.

**“Natural”, “traditional”, “fresh”, “pure”** may suggest better quality or more healthy food, but it is not always true. Check out the ingredients list and compare with other brands.

**“Light”** may suggest less fat, but it might actually be describing the texture, such as a mousse. “Light” flaky puff pastry may still contain 40% fat.

**“Low”** means:
- less than 3g Fat in 100g
- less than 5g of Sugar in 100g or 2.5g in 100ml
- less than 0.3g of Salt in 100g

See “What’s low? What’s high?” overleaf
“Reduced” means at least 30% less (or 25% less for salt) than the regular product, but it could still be a lot.

“Flavoured” means the product is flavoured with the actual ingredient, whereas the description “flavour” indicates it is artificial.

Misleading pictures on a label are illegal. A picture of strawberries on an artificially flavoured milkshake that contains no strawberries is misleading.

Claims about an ingredient should mean that it really has been used. But check the ingredients list – there may not be as much of it as you think. It might only be a flavouring.

Has the weight been made up using cheaper ingredients such as water, oils/fats or sugar, or additives? For example, some sausages only contain 30% meat, and a Fruit Juice “Drink” might show fruit on the label but only contain 5% fruit.

Some foods aimed at children have been found with even more fat, sugar or salt than adult versions. So check the labels and compare.

“With added vitamins” While vitamin (or calcium) claims are generally true, they may be found on foods that are high in sugar or salt.

“Ideal for lunch boxes” Does this mean a healthy food, or just a small pack size?

Drinks Watch the sugar content of fizzy drinks and squashes – they often contain a lot. 35g sugar in a serving is like eating a small pack of sweets.

Children who have lots of sugary drinks are more likely to suffer from tooth decay and become overweight.

“Energy” and “sports” drinks usually have even more sugar, which means even more calories. Why undo all the good work of exercise? Drink water instead!

“Big Deals” “3 for the price of 2”, “50% extra free!” “meal deal”. Are they really good value or do they just persuade you to eat MORE?