

Vel's Talk

II Corinthians 6:16

**“Believers are spiritual houses in which the spirit
Of Christ dwells”**

Food Labels

Understanding the labels on food products can make us more informed of the nutritional contents of many of the foods that we place in our temples(bodies), especially with processed foods (which should be **avoided** as much as possible). If you buy a lot of **packaged, processed foods**, you should really be concerned about the multitude of food additives that are listed on the ingredient label. Manufacturers have the option of adding thousands of potential food additives to their products to prolong the shelf life, many of which cause food allergies and health problems. There are over 2000 different additives that are added to our food supply, of which 1500 of them are synthetic. Buyers **BEWARE** – an informed consumer is a wise consumer! Be aware of what you're purchasing before serving it to your family!!! Here are some common **food additives** that should best be avoided as much as possible:

- Labels that state **reduced** or **no sugar**
- **Hydrogenated Oils** – (Trans Fats)
- **BHT** and **BHA** – prevents food from becoming rancid by serving as antioxidants, but are classified as potential **carcinogens** (cancer agents)
- **Sodium Nitrite** – known **carcinogens** found in high quantities of processed and smoked meats; converted into unhealthy **nitrosamines**
- **Monosodium Glutamate (MSG)** – used mostly as a flavor enhancer in Chinese restaurants, soups, frozen dinners and snack foods (develops flushing, sweating and headaches
- **Food Coloring Agents** – have been shown to cause cancer in laboratory animals

Utilize some of the following suggestions when you are shopping for healthy ingredients:

- Read, Read, Read!!!!
- Search for **key words** such as low fat, low cholesterol and high in fiber
- Assess the nutritional facts regarding serving size and calories
- Size up the portions
- Count the calories – calories from fat %, foods with high fat content can pack on additional weight
- Assess the **unhealthy nutrients** – fat, cholesterol and sodium (salt); these items should be limited as they are known to contribute to heart disease/certain cancer
- Check the **lower part of the label** – the power nutrients, high in nutrient benefits, are generally in the lower part of the nutrient section (dietary fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, iron, calcium); if the % are low or zero, the product is likely to be low in nutritional value
- Look for **macronutrients** (carbohydrates, protein and fats) listed in grams because they provide our bodies with energy in the form of calories
- Look for the four types of fats that are listed on most labels – **saturated fats** are “**bad fats,**” associated with high cholesterol and heart disease, and commonly found in animal products or hydrogenated vegetable oils (palm kernel, coconut) – trans fats are “bad fats”

Keep in mind that ingredients are listed on food items in the order of how much they are used. The top three to five ingredients listed should be the focus. Watch for the use of the term “**natural.**” Companies will use words in creative ways like “**natural flavors.**” While the flavors may be considered natural, additives like **high-fructose corn syrup** are not and boost up the caloric and sugar content. Hydrogenated oils and high-fructose corn syrup must be avoided if you are watching calories.