



Dear Nikki

I am surprised to see pies with the Heart Foundation 'Tick'. Does 'Pick the Tick' really help me make better food choices?

Absolutely! The New Zealand pie is iconic and we consume about 60 million every year. Some manufacturers have altered their pies to make them healthier, earning themselves the 'Tick'. However, this does not mean you can eat a pie a day – they still contain more fat than most sandwiches. In general, food labels with 'Pick the Tick' have been approved because they have lower saturated and total fats, added sugar or sodium (salt) than comparable products. The 'Pick the Tick' programme aims to help consumers make healthier food choices by supplying good food information.

Dear Nikki

Some diets say only eat one egg a week, but others say one a day. I thought eggs were bad for cholesterol – who is right?

Cholesterol in food such as eggs won't necessarily raise your blood cholesterol levels – unless they're already above normal. An egg a day is OK for most people, but if your blood cholesterol levels are already raised, or you have diabetes or heart disease, it is important to reduce your egg intake to three a week.

The recommended daily intake (RDI) for cholesterol is less-than 300mg/day for healthy people and less-than 200mg a day for those with raised levels. One size-seven egg contains 182mg of cholesterol.



How to understand food labels



The fine print

When a nutrition claim is made on a label – the amount of energy, protein, fat, and carbohydrate as well as the amount of the nutrient claimed MUST be a listed ingredient.

Per 100g

The per 100g measurement is used on all food products, to help you compare the nutrient values of different foods.

Fat

If a food has less than 3.0g of fat per 100g, it is considered a low-fat food. 30-40 grams of fat a day is considered a low-fat diet, yet most New Zealand adults consume triple the recommended amount daily.

Sodium (Salt)

Less than 12mg of sodium per 100g of food, is considered a low-salt food. Only 0.1 tsp of salt is needed per day, yet we consume at least 2 tsp!

Energy

Describes what the energy value of the food is. The energy value is measured metrically in kilojoules (1 calorie = 4.18kj)

Fibre

A food that has 3.0g or more of fibre per 100g, is considered a good fibre source. 25-30g of fibre a day is needed for good bowel health, yet many Kiwi adults eat only ??? of this daily

Be careful of 'fat-free' labeling

When a label says 99 or 98 or 97 per cent fat free, it may still contain a lot of hidden energy in the form of sugar. If you want to lose some weight, you need to reduce the total energy consumed in your diet – NOT just the fat!