

NACS | PHA Healthier Product Calculator FAQ

NACS and the Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA) have created a web-based nutrition resource to help convenience stores identify products as being healthier options and assist them in defining their better-for-you sets. The calculator will ask you a series of questions about the product based on the Nutrition Facts Label on the product.

This FAQ document is intended to help retailers navigate the calculator and provides additional information on how to read a product's Nutrition Facts Label and how the various food group categories are defined. If you have additional questions or feedback, contact a PHA nutritionist at PHACalculator@ahealthieramerica.org.

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Q: How do I read a food label?

[Click here](#) for more information on how to read and understand the information on a Nutrition Facts Label.

Q: How do I know if a product contains one or more ingredients?

- Look for the ingredients list on the product packaging, which is typically included on the back of the product, below or next to the Nutrition Facts Panel.
- Important to note, water, enzymes, probiotics and added vitamins and minerals don't count as ingredients.
- In the examples below, the ingredients list on the left has **one ingredient**: nonfat milk (potassium sorbate is a preservative, and the yogurt cultures are probiotics, neither of which qualify as distinct ingredients). The product on the right has **more than one ingredient**: corn, corn meal, sugar, oil, salt, sugar syrup, etc.

Example:

This product contains one ingredient

Ingredients: Cultured Pasteurized Grade A Nonfat Milk.
Contains 0.5% or less of:
Potassium Sorbate Added to Maintain Freshness, Yogurt Cultures (*L. bulgaricus*, *S. thermophilus*).

This product contains more than one ingredient

Ingredients: Whole Grain Corn, Corn Meal, Sugar, Canola Oil, Salt, Brown Sugar Syrup, Tricalcium Phosphate, Vegetable and Fruit Juice Color, Baking Soda, Citric Acid, Natural Flavor. Vitamin E (mixed tocopherols) Added to Preserve Freshness.
Vitamins and Minerals: Calcium Carbonate, Iron and Zinc (mineral nutrients), Vitamin C (sodium ascorbate), A B Vitamin (niacinamide), Vitamin B₆ (pyridoxine hydrochloride), Vitamin B₁ (thiamin mononitrate), Vitamin B₂ (riboflavin), Vitamin A (palmitate), A B Vitamin (folic acid), Vitamin B₁₂, Vitamin D₃.

Q: How do I determine whether the first ingredient of the product is a fruit, vegetable, dairy, protein or whole grain?

If the first ingredient is water, look at the second ingredient. Often, ingredients in the ingredients list of a product can read differently than what we're accustomed to seeing in our kitchen pantries. The lists below represent examples of ingredients you might find on a product's ingredient list, to help show in which food category they belong.

Protein:

Peas, beans and nuts fall into this food category.

- "Albacore tuna"
- "Buffalo"
- "Chia seeds" or "hydrated chia seeds"
- "Edamame"
- "Eggs" or "egg whites"
- "Garbanzo beans" or "chickpeas"
- "Grass-fed beef"
- "Lamb"
- "Top Round Beef"
- "Turkey"
- Any bean flour like "Chickpea flour" "lentil flour" or "whole pea flour"
- Nut butters like "peanut butter," "almond butter," etc.
- Nuts or seeds like "dry roasted nuts," "raw almonds," "sunflower seeds," "sunflower kernels" or "shelled pumpkin seeds"

Whole Grain:

This category is for whole grain foods, not all grains. [Click here](#) for more information on how to identify whole grain ingredients on an ingredients list. Other refined grain products that use, for example, rice flour or wheat flour (since these are not whole grains), belong in the "Other" category below. Also note: corn-based products like popcorn and corn tortillas are considered whole grains.

- "brown rice"
- "brown rice" (note: "brown rice syrup" is an added sugar, and is not considered a whole grain)
- "cornmeal"
- "ground corn"
- "oat flour"
- "oatmeal" (including rolled oats, old-fashioned oatmeal, sprouted oats, instant oatmeal)
- "oats"
- "popcorn"
- "quinoa"
- "stone ground whole wheat flour"
- "stoneground whole [grain]"
- "wheatberries"
- "white corn"
- "whole grain blend"
- "whole grain yellow corn flour"
- "whole wheat"

Dairy:

- "Cultured Pasteurized Grade A Nonfat Milk"
- "Low-moisture part-skim mozzarella cheese"
- "Nonfat yogurt"
- "Organic Cultured Pasteurized Nonfat Milk and Cream"
- "Ultra-filtered Skim Milk"

Fruit or Vegetable:

- any dried or dehydrated fruit or vegetable like “raisins,” “dehydrated potatoes,” “dried potatoes” or “freeze-dried apples”
- any fruit or vegetable juice like “apple juice” or “reconstituted clarified sweet potato juice” or “coconut water”
- any fruit or vegetable puree or concentrate like “pear puree concentrate” or “banana puree” or “pomegranate juice from concentrate” or “organic date paste”
- any whole fruit or vegetable like “green peas” or “peaches” or “yellow corn”
- See “white corn,” “cornmeal,” and “corn flour” in the Whole Grain category
- See “whole pea flour” in the Protein category

Other:

Any product with a first ingredient that isn't a fruit, vegetable, dairy, protein or whole grain as defined above is considered part of the “other” category.

- “agave”
- “almond milk”
- “brown rice syrup”
- “dark chocolate”
- “dried cane syrup”
- “enriched wheat flour”
- “isolate soy protein”
- “maple syrup”
- “milk protein isolate”
- “palm kernel oil”
- “rice flour” (not a whole grain)
- “sea salt”
- “soy crisp”
- “sugar”
- “whey protein isolate”
- Any added sugar such as “brown sugar,” “cane crystals,” “cane sugar,” “corn sweetener,” “corn syrup,” “corn syrup solids,” “crystal dextrose,” “evaporated cane juice,” “fructose sweetener,” “high-fructose corn syrup,” “honey,” “liquid fructose,” “malt syrup,” “maple syrup,” “molasses,” “pancake syrup,” “raw sugar,” “sugar,” “syrup,” and “white sugar”

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