Changes Proposed for Nutrition Labels

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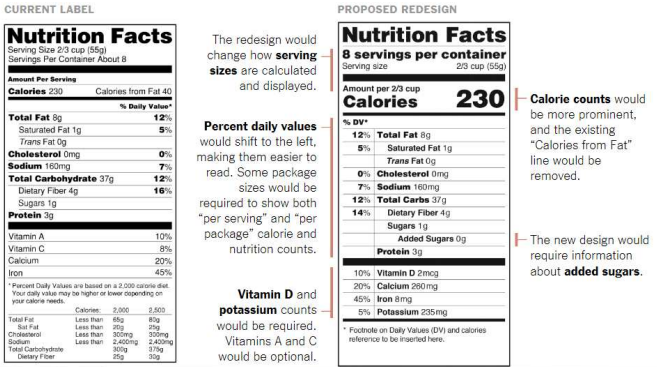

Nutrition labels may soon be getting a makeover that would make choosing healthier options for you and your family a lot easier.

Anna Long is like most mothers, busy. She's trying to juggle her two kids while putting yummy and healthy food on the table.

"It's very important to feed my family on good food," she told NewsChannel 7.

She admits, however, it's not always easy. When we asked her if she reads nutrition labels on the backs of foods she told us she tries, but doesn't always. Long says it's not that she doesn't care. What it really comes down to is time and not having the time to decipher what all the information on the nutrition label means.

That's why First Lady Michelle Obama and the FDA are proposing changes that would make reading the label easier and more informative.

The first thing you'll notice looking at the new label is the calorie count. The calorie count stands out with a bigger, boulder and dare we say shame inducing font.

The next thing you'll notice is the serving size. The FDA wants to change the serving size to more accurately reflect what we actually eat and drink. Serving sizes for items like soda and ice cream will likely be going up as a result.

Another big change, the labels will indicate how much sugar is added to a product.

Teresa Murphy is a registered dietitian at Marshfield clinic. She says right now it's hard to know what is naturally occurring sugar and what is added by the manufacturer.

"Yogurt has a lot of natural sugar in it, the lactose, but then when you're buying yogurt with the fruit on the bottom or high-fructose corn syrup added to them we know that there is added sugar, but how much is really the natural sugar versus the added sugar. "

The new labels will also display the amount of Vitamin D and potassium a product contains.

"It's been found that most American's don't consume or get enough Vitamin D as well as Potassium," Murphy explained. "Potassium is helpful to decrease blood pressure. Vitamin D is to help maintain bone health."

Shoppers, like Long, seem happy about the proposed changes.

Long says, "It would make things a lot easier to pick things out and know what I'm feeding my family."

If the proposal becomes law manufacturers will have two years to make the changes to their labels, but they may pose challenges to some local businesses.

Kim Lempke owns Kim's BS Sauce in Wausau. he tells NewsChannel 7 two out of every ten customers check the label on his product and one out of ten make a decision about whether or not to buy it based on the label. He says because of FDA regulations, he's not yet required to put a nutrition label on his barbeque sauce, but once he hits 100,000 bottles sold it's going to cost him a pretty penny.

"Probably after the breakdown and everything, [it will cost] in between $500 and $700 per recipe," he said. "So a product like mine, which we have five different flavors, that would be a substantial cost to the business."

While the health craze may cost Lempke, business is booming at Downtown Grocery in Wausau where label reading has always been the name of the game.

"What we like to do here is emphasize fresh and whole," co-manager **Megan Curtes Korpela** said. "Ideally it would be finding foods that have not been highly processed." Curtes Korpela says no matter the product the most important things to look at on the food label are calories, fats and sugars.

http://www.wsaw.com/home/headlines/Changes-Proposed-for-Nutrition-Labels-247667151.html