

IMPORTANT FOOD INFORMATION If you only had time to read one thing on a nutrition label, what should it be? The serving size. Sure, it's important to check out the grams of saturated and trans fats, cholesterol, sugar, sodium, and more. But one of the most commonly skimmed over items on a nutrition label is the servings per container. You may glance at the label and see 200 calories and eat the whole thing, but if you looked a little closer you may be shocked to find that your food item has 2.5 servings per container. That means your seemingly smart 200-calorie snack is now a 500-calorie meal! And it's not just the calories that more than double, it's everything else on the label. You could be eating 100% of your daily limit for saturated fat if you're not checking the serving size. Portion control is one of those things we all wish was programmed in our minds at birth. Unfortunately, years of bad eating habits have skewed our idea of what makes up a serving size. If you're not sure how much you should be eating, check the label. And if you have to count out each individual chip, do it. (*LifeScript*)

DEFINITIONS (you should know)

Cholesterol: Fat-like substance found in all parts of the body made by the liver. You also get it from foods such as eggs, meat and poultry. Fruits and vegetables contain no cholesterol.

HDL (high-density lipoprotein, "good cholesterol"): Protein that carries cholesterol to the liver so it can be excreted from the body.

LDL (low-density lipoprotein, "bad cholesterol"):

Protein that deposits cholesterol into the lining of an artery.

Plaque: A build-up of material, including cholesterol, in the inner lining of an artery wall. Plaque ruptures precede heart attacks.

Statin: Drug that inhibits cholesterol production in the liver.

LIFESTYLE BEATS DRUGS Taking prescription medications to help lower cholesterol and manage blood pressure can be on part of a comprehensive heart health regimen. However, a study in the Journal of the American Heart Association concludes that even the most powerful drugs should be supplemented with **healthy diet and lifestyle change**. According to researchers, even those patients who take prescription heart medications can further lower their risk of heart disease by 57% through positive lifestyle change. Researchers **recommended regular exercise**, drinking in moderation, avoiding tobacco products and cutting refined sugars and saturated fats. (*LifeScript*)