

FOOD LABELS THE FACTS

In an effort to decode the jibberish on food labels, we got our mitts on dietitian Caitlin Reid's new book, *Health & The City*.

THE CLAIMS

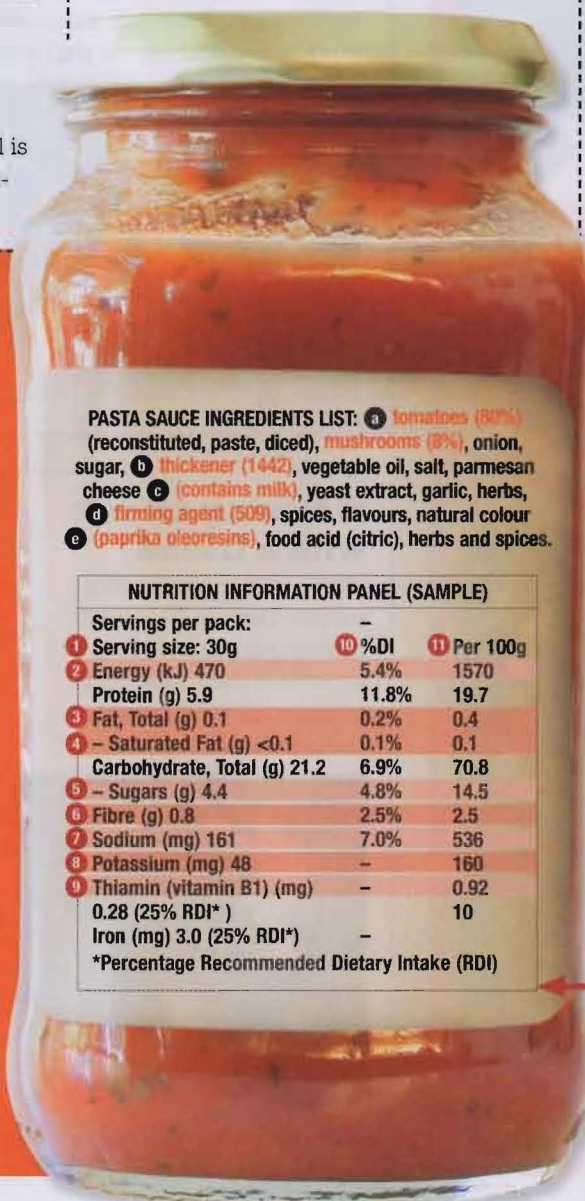
- **REDUCED FAT** = Contains a minimum of 25 per cent less fat than the regular variety. "Low-fat" foods are those which contain 3g or less of fat per 100g.
- **LIGHT** = May be light in colour, texture, flavour, or have less salt, sugar or fat.
- **BAKED, NOT FRIED** = Refers to the cooking process. Such foods may still be high in kilojoules.
- **CHOLESTEROL-FREE** = Cholesterol is only found in animal products, so plant-based foods contain no cholesterol.

- **SALT-REDUCED** = Must contain at least 25 per cent less salt than the regular variety.
- **LOW IN SALT** = Contains less than 120mg of sodium per 100g of the food.
- **HIGH-FIBRE** = Must contain at least 3g of fibre per serve of food.

HOW TO READ AN INGREDIENTS LIST

The ingredients list of the pasta sauce (right) shows what's in the product. The ingredients are listed according to proportion, with the highest one placed first.

- Any food included in the product name is known as the "characterising" ingredient – tomatoes and mushrooms in this case. Percentages must appear.
- Hydroxypropyl distarch phosphate is a food additive that thickens the pasta sauce and gives it a smooth texture.
- Milk is an allergen and, thus, must be declared on the pack.
- Calcium chloride (509) is a firming agent. It helps a product flow freely, stopping it from clumping together.
- Paprika Oleoresins is a natural colour that has been added. It can also appear as Natural Colour (160c).



PASTA SAUCE INGREDIENTS LIST: **a** tomatoes (80%) (reconstituted, paste, diced), **b** mushrooms (8%), onion, sugar, **b** thickener (1442), vegetable oil, salt, parmesan cheese **c** (contains milk), yeast extract, garlic, herbs, **d** firming agent (509), spices, flavours, natural colour **e** (paprika oleoresins), food acid (citric), herbs and spices.

NUTRITION INFORMATION PANEL (SAMPLE)

Serving size: 30g			
	10 %DI	11 Per 100g	
1 Energy (kJ)	470	5.4%	1570
2 Protein (g)	5.9	11.8%	19.7
3 Fat, Total (g)	0.1	0.2%	0.4
4 – Saturated Fat (g)	<0.1	0.1%	0.1
Carbohydrate, Total (g)	21.2	6.9%	70.8
5 – Sugars (g)	4.4	4.8%	14.5
6 Fibre (g)	0.8	2.5%	2.5
7 Sodium (mg)	161	7.0%	536
8 Potassium (mg)	48	–	160
9 Thiamin (vitamin B1) (mg)	0.28 (25% RDI*)	–	10
Iron (mg)	3.0 (25% RDI*)	–	–

*Percentage Recommended Dietary Intake (RDI)



Health & The City (Langueville Media, \$22.95) is available in leading bookshops and online at healthandthecity.com.au

DECIPHERING THE NUTRITION INFORMATION PANEL (NIP)

The nutrition information panel is found on the back or side of products, and is a standard format approved by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ).

- Compare the **per serve** column to your own serving size.
- Look at the **energy** content.
- Total fat** includes saturated fat, trans fat, monounsaturated fat and polyunsaturated fat.
- Go for products with minimal amounts of **saturated fat**.
- Sugars** are included in the total carbohydrate value.
- Choose products with at least 3g of **fibre** per serve.
- Opt for foods with the lowest amount of **sodium**.
- Potassium** does not have to be included on the NIP, but a lot of products include it anyway.
- Vitamins** and **minerals** only need to be included if there's a nutrition claim made about them.
- %DIs** are based on a set of acceptable daily intakes for a range of nutrients, using an average adult diet of 8,700kJ.
- Use the **per 100g** column to compare two different brands of the same product.