

# Words on Wellness

## Healthy Labels, Smarter Choices



Last year the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) updated what qualifies as “healthy” on food packages. Previously, the label was based mostly on single nutrients like fat or sodium. Now, it focuses more on the types of foods and how they fit into a healthy diet.

To be called “healthy,” a food must include a good amount of at least one food group—like fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy, or protein. It also must be low in saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars.

Some foods that didn’t qualify before—like nuts, seeds, olive oil, and fatty fish such as salmon—can now be labeled “healthy” because of their nutrients. But, foods like white bread and sugary cereals or sweetened yogurt no longer meet the new standards.

This update helps shoppers make healthier choices and encourages companies to improve their products. Clearer labels support better diets, which can help prevent chronic diseases like heart disease and diabetes.

Source: [FDA](https://www.fda.gov/), <https://www.fda.gov/>

## *Chili*

Serving Size: 1 cup | Serves: 6

### Ingredients:

- ½ pound lean ground meat (beef, pork, turkey)
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 can (15.5 ounces) kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 can (15 ounces) tomato sauce
- 1 can (14.5 ounces) diced tomatoes
- 1 can (4 ounces) diced green chiles
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder

### Directions:

1. Heat large pot over medium heat. Add ground beef and onion to the pot. Cook and stir until the temperature of the beef is 165 degrees F, about 5-7 minutes.
2. Add beans, tomato sauce, diced tomatoes, diced green chiles, chili powder, and garlic powder to the pot.
3. Cook and stir for 10 minutes.

### Tips:

- Serve with shredded cheese, crackers, sour cream, or plain yogurt.
- This recipe is higher in sodium. To reduce sodium, use low sodium or no sodium beans, tomato sauce, and diced tomatoes.
- This is a thick chili. To thin it out, stir in ½ cup to 1 cup of water during the final step.

### Nutrition information per serving:

200 calories, 4g total fat, 1.5g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 25mg cholesterol, 740mg sodium, 26g total carbohydrate, 8g fiber, 5g sugar, 16g protein. This recipe is courtesy of ISU Extension and Outreach’s Spend Smart. Eat Smart. website. For more information, recipes, and videos, visit [Spend Smart. Eat Smart.](https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu), [spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu](https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu).

## Fresh, Canned, or Frozen? All Are Healthy Choices!

When buying fruits and vegetables, fresh, canned, and frozen each offer nutritional benefits and can help you meet your daily goals. What matters most is eating a variety of fruits and vegetables every day—about 2 ½ cups of vegetables and 2 cups of fruit.

Here's a quick comparison to help you choose what works best for your lifestyle and budget:

Type	Pros	Cons
<b>Fresh</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No added sugar or salt</li><li>• Versatile for cooking</li><li>• Often preferred for taste and texture</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can lose nutrients over time</li><li>• More expensive, especially out of season</li></ul>
<b>Canned</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Packed at peak ripeness</li><li>• Budget-friendly</li><li>• Long shelf life</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• May contain added sugar or salt (check labels!)</li></ul>
<b>Frozen</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nutrients preserved during freezing</li><li>• Convenient and long-lasting</li><li>• Often pre-chopped</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Texture may change when cooked</li><li>• Some may include sauces or seasonings</li></ul>

The most important thing is to choose what works for you! Fresh, canned, and frozen fruits and vegetables all contribute to a healthy diet.

Sources: [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov), [go.iastate.edu/2POWWU](https://go.iastate.edu/2POWWU)  
[American Heart Association](https://www.heart.org), [go.iastate.edu/LDZPMB](https://go.iastate.edu/LDZPMB)

## Meditation as Self-Care

Did you know that meditation can help lower your stress levels? Even a few minutes can make a difference. Here are some tips on how to get into meditation:

- Breathe deeply. While taking deep breaths, fixate your mind on just your inhales and exhales. This can help ground you and calm you down physically and mentally.
- Repeat a mantra. Think of a positive phrase that is easy to remember and repeat. Some examples include “I am enough”, “I can do this”, “I can achieve my goals”, and “I am worthy of love”. You can mentally repeat these mantras while going on a walk, taking deep breaths, or while completing daily tasks.
- Focus on positive emotions and memories. Remember times you've felt happy, encouraged, or uplifted.

There are many ways to meditate – you just need to find out what works best for you! Here's to decreasing stress, bringing about a sense of peace, and uplifting yourself.

Sources: [Mayo Clinic](https://www.mayoclinic.org), [go.iastate.edu/QQHkmu](https://go.iastate.edu/QQHkmu)

Copyright © 2024 Iowa State University of Science and Technology, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. All rights reserved. This institution is an equal opportunity provider. For the full non-discrimination statement or accommodation inquiries, go to [www.extension.iastate.edu/legal](https://www.extension.iastate.edu/legal). PM 2099 January 2026

Here for you.  
Now.  
Always.

Iowa State University  
Extension and Outreach

### AnswerLine

Call 1-800-262-3804

[extension.iastate.edu/answerline](https://extension.iastate.edu/answerline)

### Spend Smart. Eat Smart.®

[spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu](https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu)

### Health and Human Sciences

[extension.iastate.edu/humansciences](https://extension.iastate.edu/humansciences)

*If you or someone you know is skipping meals, going hungry, or choosing between food and medicine, call 1-855-944-3663 to apply for assistance today.*

*Call Iowa 2-1-1 or Iowa Lifelong Links, 1-866-468-7887, for additional resources.*

