

Moms more likely than dads to check for sugars on nutrition labels

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Mothers are more likely than fathers to read nutrition labels when considering food and drink purchases, according to the latest C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health.

Results from the poll showed that 40 percent of [mothers](#) say they read the nutrition labels either "very often" or "always." Just 35 percent of [fathers](#) say they read the labels "very often" or "always."

Sugars (total sugar and added sugar) topped the list of "very important" nutrients that parents consider overall.

But mothers are more likely than fathers to say total sugar, added sugar, protein and dietary fiber are "very important."

The "Nutrition Facts" labels are required for most foods sold in the United States. For the first time in two decades, in 2014 the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has proposed key changes to the labels to feature clearer [information](#) about calories, fat, and sugar.

"The hope is that changes in the labels can make them easier to read and understand, and that will help consumers make [healthier choices](#)," says Susan J. Woolford, M.D., M.P.H., a faculty collaborator in this month's poll.

"We decided to find out how mothers and fathers currently use the labels, and how they think about the information that's contained there."

In the poll, 1,481 parents were also asked about using the labels when comparing two similar foods or drinks to buy. Forty-six percent of mothers versus 33 percent of fathers said that information from the [nutrition label](#) "very often" or "always" influences their decisions. More fathers (16 percent) than mothers (10 percent) indicated they never read nutrition labels.

Woolford says she was surprised how many parents, particularly fathers, don't use the labels.

"We didn't ask specifically for the reasons why parents do not use [food labels](#) in this poll, so it's hard to pinpoint a cause with certainty. But it may be that parents find it difficult to make the connection between the information on the nutrition facts labels and what it means for their health and their child's health," says Woolford, who is medical director of the Pediatric Comprehensive Weight Management Center at C.S. Mott Children's Hospital and a member of the Institute for Healthcare Policy and Innovation.

"It's also possible that they have already made decisions about what they plan to purchase, and the nutrition information is not a factor they consider. Nonetheless, it is still important for fathers to make nutritious choices that safeguard their children's health," Woolford says.

"The results of this poll indicate an opportunity for further research into how we can improve the [nutrition facts labels](#) so they might be something that parents – both mothers and fathers –use and so that they provide information in a manner that promotes [healthy food choices](#)."

More information: Full report: [mottnpch.org/reports-surveys/n ... w-labels-differently](http://mottnpch.org/reports-surveys/n...w-labels-differently)

Provided by University of Michigan Health System

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