

Learning the language of labels – what you don't know may kill you!

Be careful about reading health books. You may die of a misprint.

Mark Twain

Article by Annette Reeder, BS Nutrition

RDA, RDI, AI, UL, DV, ODI – the Language of Labels

These letters are the language of food and supplements: your understanding does matter.

Who dreams of working for minimum wage? In Virginia today minimum wage is \$7.25 per hour. Although for some that is ok, most of us dream of having an optimal career income that brings stability to our life – extra money, a dependable car, enjoyable vacations, a comfortable home, etc. Even the most frugal economist cannot reach all goals on minimum wage.

The same is true of our food and supplements. Running, playing, hiking, no illness or disease – this all needs optimal nutrition. Living on minimum nutrition is like trying to hike barefooted – ouch!

To understand what is minimum and what is optimal we need to learn the language of labels. Labels are to our health just as education is to our career.

Labels began with the discovery of nutrients over 500 years ago. Sailors were coming down with scurvy and dying from the lack of vitamin C in their diet while at sea. This was discovered when they fed the sailors limes on their journey and prevented the illness. Hence the term *Limeys*

The discovery of individual nutrients changed everything. Scientists determine which nutrients we need more and which ones we need less. Over the years this became the new theme in labeling known as RDA – Recommended Daily Allowances.

Label Language

RDA – The baseline for RDA is what would 50% of healthy Americans eating a 2000 calorie diet rich with fruits and vegetables and who have **no** health problems need to not get certain diseases. Equivalent to earning a minimum wage with your health.

AI – Adequate Intakes – these recommendations are based on the latest preselected research. It is an *estimate* of the amount of a nutrient that groups of similar individuals should consume to maintain good health. If you consume the amount suggested by the AI, you will likely exceed the RDAs. Equivalent to earning above minimum wage.

DV – Daily value is the term used on supplements. The DV is similar to the AI and RDA but not always the same. As an example; It is used to represent how much vitamin C is in the supplement compared to eating an orange with Vitamin C. As long as you are over 4 years of age then everyone – yes all ages - has the same DV%.

UL – Tolerable Upper Intake Level – Because scientist believe consuming too much of some nutrients can lead to harmful side effects the Food and Nutrition Board has developed the tolerable upper intake levels. This (UL) refers to the highest amount of a nutrient that is likely to cause harm if consumed daily at high levels. Not all nutrients have an established UL value.

ODI – Optimal Daily Intakes – this is designed by Nutritionists and medical professionals. This amount is determined based on your current health and desired health – or optimal. ODI are equivalent to earning a CEO income – working for future retirement and investing in your health for healthier today's and tomorrow's.

Why does RDA, DV and ODI matter and how does it apply to me?

Each week I get emails about the percentages of nutrients found on labels of supplements. For example a bottle of B Complex states it has 1350% of certain B vitamins. That seems outrageous to many people. And yes I agree that percentage does *seem* extraordinarily high. But let's put it in perspective. Remember the minimum wage mentioned at the beginning of this article. The percentage of B Vitamins listed on this bottle is above the RDA (minimum wage) but yet below the UL. So science has determined this product is safe and nutritionists have determined it to be in the optimal range.

Eating food and taking supplements that meet the RDA will only give you minimum wage for your health. Eating foods and taking supplements in higher amounts will help your body be prepared for life's uncertainties. Can you control everything you eat, breathe or drink? No. So why not be prepared and invest in your health?

Steps for you to take:

- Remember RDA – RDI – DRI are only to keep you in a group of average Americans.
- Determine your ODI: This is best accomplished by working with skilled professional nutritionists. On our [website](#) is the [Wellness Profile](#). We have a team of professionals ready to work with you.
- Eat foods according to the Three Principles discussed in the [Treasures of Healthy Living Bible Study](#)
- Never waste a day, always work to improve your health. Eat like you are the CEO of your body.

Beloved I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health just as your soul prospers. 3 John 2