



# nutrinews

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**A:**

Cheese is a concentrated dairy food, made from milk, which includes an aging process. The Food & Drug Administration defines cheese by moisture and milkfat content. Cheddar, for example, is allowed a maximum moisture content of 39% and must contain at least 50% milkfat. Cream cheese can have a maximum moisture content of 55% and must have at least 33% milkfat.

Pasteurized processed cheeses are made from shredded cheese and other ingredients that are blended and molded into forms. The final product generally has higher moisture content and lower milkfat content than regular cheese itself. Here are some definitions:

- *Pasteurized process cheese food* is a variation of process cheese that may have dry milk, whey solids, or anhydrous milkfat added, which reduces the amount of cheese in the finished product. It must contain at least 51% of the cheese ingredient by weight, have a moisture content less than 44%, and have at least 23% milkfat.
- *Pasteurized process cheese spread* is a variation on cheese food

that may contain a sweetener and a stabilizing agent, such as the polysaccharide xanthan gum or the Irish moss colloid carrageenan, to prevent separation of the ingredients. The cheese must be spreadable at 70° F, contain 44 to 60% moisture, and have at least 20% milkfat.

- *Pasteurized process cheese product* is process cheese that doesn't meet the moisture and/or milkfat standards above.
- *Imitation cheese* is made from vegetable oil. It is less expensive, but also has less flavor and doesn't melt well.

Although regular cheeses and process cheese products are high in fat, saturated fat, sodium and phosphorus, they are good sources of protein and calcium. One ounce of regular cheese contains, on average, 100 calories, 8 grams of fat, 7 grams of protein, and varying amounts of calcium (50-250 mg), sodium (75-400 mg) and phosphorus (50-200 mg). Reduced-fat, no-fat, and low sodium products are also available for less calories and fat, or sodium per ounce.

Use the table (and read labels) to choose your cheese.

**Q:** What is processed cheese food? Is it, and other cheese, good for you?

1 ounce (except as noted)	Calories	Fat (g)	Protein (g)	Calcium (mg)	Sodium (mg)	Phosphorus (mg)
Cheddar, Provolone, Jack, Colby	110	9	7	210	150-250	135
Swiss	107	8	8	272	74	172
Feta	75	6	4	140	316	96
String and Part Skim Mozzarella	80	6	7	150 / 200	240 / 150	100 / 150
Parmesan (4 tsp grated)	30	2	3	90	125	54
American Process cheese food	105	9	6	175	400	211
Processed American cheese spread	80	6	5	160	380	200
Cream Cheese (2 Tbl)	101	10	2	23	86	30

Got a question? email:  
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