

The Value of the Ranking Function

When you “rank” foods based on their values for a particular nutrient, you are sorting them based on their values for a particular nutrient factor. As simple as this function sounds, most products lack this key feature.

Example

You might want to rank all the foods in a particular food category (say Yogurt) from low-to-high based on their values for some nutrient factor, say, Saturated Fat. The result should be a listing of all the yogurts, sorted from low-to-high based on their values for saturated fat. In this example, the yogurt with the lowest saturated fat value would be listed on the first row in the display (along with its nutrient information). The yogurt with the second lowest amount of saturated fat would be listed second, and so forth. The yogurt with the highest amount of saturated fat would be listed as the final entry. Also, you would want the Saturated Fat column to automatically move to the first column after the serving size information... this saves you from having to scroll over to the Saturated Fat column to view it.

In general, the ranking feature is not very useful unless you support a “spreadsheet view” (a tabular format with columns and rows) that display the sorted food items and their nutrient values. (If you have to look at the results one food item at a time, the process takes so long that you may forget why you sorted the list in the first place.)

A full-featured Ranking Function should let you:

- Conduct the ranking on a single food category (Beverages, Dairy, or Entrees).
- Conduct the ranking on single or on selected subcategories (Alcoholic Beverages, Juices, Cheese, Yogurt, and Chicken Entrees.)
- Conduct the ranking across the entire nutrient database.
- Conduct the ranking across several or all selected food categories (Beverages, Dairy, *and* Entrees).
- Conduct the ranking in either direction (from low-to-high or from high-to-low).
- Optionally set upper or lower limits on any nutrient value to limit the sort to the values in which you are actually interested.
- Select which database (or databases) to conduct the search across (USDA SR14, Canadian, brand name, etc.)

NutriBase also lets you conduct your rankings while restricting all hits to 100 gram values.

Another ranking feature called “ranking in the spreadsheet view,” is available only on software that supports the spreadsheet view with columns and rows (like NutriBase). Each column of nutrient data in a spreadsheet view has a “header” that identifies the nutrient values that are presented in that column.

Suppose you are viewing all your recipes in the spreadsheet view (assuming your software supports this feature). Each column header provides a small checkbox. When you click the checkbox once, it ranks all your recipes from high-to-low based on their values for the nutrients in that column. For instance, if you wanted to rank your recipes from high-to-low based on the amount of Fiber, Protein, Vitamin E, (or any other nutrient), just click the checkbox in the appropriate header. Then, to reverse the sort (to rank from low-to-high), just click the checkbox again. NutriBase supports ranking in the spreadsheet view for recipes, meals, and Personal Food Items (foods you have added to the database or that you use frequently).