

Tips for Carbohydrate Label Reading

Tip # 1: Focus on the "Nutrition Facts" label

The information on the "Nutrition Facts" label is regulated and more reliable than other statements on food packages. The serving size of a food item is listed directly below the "Nutrition Facts" label. The serving size may or may not be the usual serving size that your child typically eats.

Tip # 2: Look at "Total Carbohydrate" not Sugars

"Total Carbohydrate" on the Nutrition Facts label will tell you the amount of carbohydrate in one serving of the food. Sugars, dietary fiber, other carbohydrates, and sugar alcohols are types of carbohydrate and are included in the "Total Carbohydrate" grams. You do not need to count sugars separately.



Tip # 3: Carbohydrate Label Claims

The terms "Low Carb Food", "Net Carbs", "Net Effect of Carbs", "Low Impact Carbs", or "Impact Carbs" are not approved label claims and are not a good way to choose foods for people with diabetes.

It is true, dietary fiber and sugar alcohols (i.e. maltitol, sorbitol, xylitol, lactitol) are not completely digested. When you eat foods that contain **large** amounts of these ingredients your blood sugar level may rise less than with other carbohydrates. You can use the steps to the right to count these carbohydrates.

HERSHEY'S® Sugar Free Chocolate Candy				
Nutrition Facts	Amount/serving		Amount/serving	
	Serving Size (5 pieces) Calories: 170	Total Fat: 13g	Saturated Fat: 8g	Carbohydrates: 24g
	Cholesterol: 10mg	Sodium: 10mg	Sugars: 0g	Lactitol: 21g
	Protein: 1g			
Total Carb (24g) – Half of Sugar Alcohol (Lactitol) (10.5g) = Carb (13.5g) to count				

Sugar Alcohol: If a food contains ≥ 5 grams sugar alcohols, $\frac{1}{2}$ the grams can be subtracted from the "Total Carbohydrate" value.



Orville Redenbacher's® Smart Pop® Kettle Korn				
Nutrition Facts	Amount/serving		Amount/serving	
	Serving Size (7 c. popped) Calories: 120	Total Fat: 3g	Saturated Fat: 0g	Carbohydrates: 27g
	Cholesterol: 0mg	Sodium: 360mg	Sugars: 0g	
	Protein: 4g			
Total Carb (27g) – Dietary Fiber (3g) = Carb (24g) to count				

Dietary Fiber: If a food contains ≥ 5 grams of dietary fiber, $\frac{1}{2}$ the grams of dietary fiber can be subtracted from the "Total Carbohydrate" value.

Tip # 4: Calories Still Count

Even if a food is "low" in carbohydrate it may not be low in calories or a healthy food. Use common sense to meet your carbohydrate goals and do not lose track of the bigger picture. Take steps to build good eating habits and keep active. Use special foods if, and when, they help you meet your diabetes goals.

