



Reading a Nutrition Label as a Diabetic

Reading a nutrition label can be daunting for anyone, but it is essential for those with diabetes. Accurately understanding the information on a nutrition label can make the difference between maintaining healthy blood glucose (sugar) levels and causing a spike in the wrong direction. Below are some tips for people with diabetes to remember when deciphering a nutrition label.

1. **Look for low-sugar options:** Check for added sugars on the Nutrition Facts label. Ideally, the maximum amount of added sugars a person should have daily is six teaspoons (24 grams) for women and nine teaspoons (36 grams) for men.
2. **Watch out for trans-fats:** Trans-fats can raise LDL ("bad") cholesterol levels and increase your risk of type 2 diabetes. Avoid foods that list "hydrogenated" or "partially-hydrogenated" oil on the ingredients list, which indicates trans-fats in the food.
3. **Check the serving size:** Remember that the numbers on the nutrition facts label reflect information for a single serving, so you should double them if you eat two servings.
4. **Look for foods rich in fiber:** Aim for foods that list 2-4 grams of dietary fiber per serving. Dietary fiber helps keep a balanced blood sugar level, an important ingredient for anyone with diabetes.
5. **Watch sodium intake:** Keep sodium levels below 2,300mg daily. High sodium intake will cause your body to retain water, leading to high blood pressure and putting additional strain on your heart.
6. **Calculate net carbs:** You can calculate the net carbohydrates in whole foods by subtracting the grams of fiber and sugar alcohol from the total carbs. For example, if there are 20 total carbohydrates, 5 grams of fiber, and 3 grams of sugar alcohol, the total net carbs would be 12.
7. **Remember the 4-9-4 rule:** When calculating total calories, multiply grams of carbohydrates by 4, grams of fat by 9, and grams of protein by 4. So, higher fat content in a meal equals higher calories.

It is important to remember that a nutrition label is only part of the puzzle and should not be used in isolation to make decisions about your health. Also, always consult your medical provider before drastically changing your diet.

For Additional Information about Diabetes, Visit:

<https://diabetes.org>

<https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/search/search-results?q=diabetes>

*This flyer is informational and not considered to be medical advice. Please consult your healthcare provider for information related specifically to your condition.