



Diabetes Education

The numbers on the **NUTRITION FACTS** label will mean something different depending on what your needs are.

For example, if your concern is general health or weight loss, looking at the calories and fats would be important.



What Is A Portion?

At the top of the Nutrition Facts label is the serving size (*section A*). The numbers below that (*sections B-E*) apply to the nutrition content of the one portion listed.

In this example, it is 1 cup. Below this is the “Servings Per Container” that describes the number of the portions listed in 1 container or package.

In this example, there are 16 - 1 cup portions in this container. A 1 cup measurement is approximately an 8 ounce cup.

Reading Labels

Counting Carbohydrates:

When first diagnosed with diabetes it is **IMPORTANT** to become familiar with the amount of carbohydrate in the foods you eat. Most adults need between 30 to 60 grams of carbohydrates at each meal. Most of those carbohydrates come from complex carbohydrates in the grains and starch food groups such as bread, potatoes, cereals and rice. The other food groups where carbohydrates count are fruit and certain dairy such as milk and yogurt. It is important to note that the “total carbohydrate” includes the dietary fiber, sugars and any sugar alcohols listed below. In other words, the fiber, sugars, etc. are not counted separately.

nutrition label

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (240 gms)	
Servings Per Container About 16	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 240	Calories from Fat 54
% Daily Value	
Total Fat 6g	0%
Saturated Fat 1g	0%
Polyunsaturated Fat 2g	
Monounsaturated Fat 3g	
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol < 5mg	0%
Sodium 125mg	5%
Total Carbohydrate 25g	4%
Dietary Fiber 9g	40%
Sugars 2g	
Sugar alcohol 4g	0%
Protein 8g	
Vitamin A 10% Vitamin C 4%	
Calcium 30% Iron 5%	

A
B
C
D
E

In this example (*section D*), a 1 cup serving of cereal contains 25 grams of carbohydrate. You would add this number to any other carbohydrates you might have at that same meal. So if you also have 1 cup of milk, this contains 12 grams of carbohydrate. Your total at that meal so far is 37 grams of carbohydrate. Add to this 1 small 6 inch banana, that has 15 grams of carbohydrate.

Your total at this meal is:
25+12+15 = 52 grams of carbohydrate.

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Reading Labels

Remember:

You can use the **Nutrition Facts** label not only to help limit those nutrients you want to cut back on but also to increase those nutrients you need to consume in greater amounts.

Know Your ABC's of Diabetes:

(Reach Your GOALS)

A ✓ EVERY 3-6 MONTHS

- **A1c:** Below 7%

B ✓ EVERY VISIT

- **Blood Pressure:** Below 130/80mmHg

C ✓ ONCE A YEAR

- **Cholesterol:**
LDL: Below 100mg/dL
HDL: Above 40mg/dL for Men & Above 50mg/dL for Women

C **Blood Glucose Targets:**

- Fasting, 90-130mg/dL
- 2 Hours after eating, Less Than 180mg/dL

Are Sugar Alcohols Alcohol?

Sugar alcohols are a group of natural and manufactured sugars that affect the blood sugar but are less pronounced than regular sugar. They are also calorie-free and are neither alcohol nor sugar. Common sugar alcohols include xylitol, sorbitol, mannitol, lactitol, erythritol, isomalt and hydrogenated starch hydrolysates.

In this example the cereal contains 4 grams of sugar alcohol. Individuals with diabetes may be instructed by the CDE to adjust for consumption of sugar alcohol when the amount in a serving of food is significant.

Are Calories and Fat Important?

Whether your goal is to lose or maintain your weight, it is important to watch your fat intake because it is higher in calories than carbohydrate. As a result fat calories can pile up more quickly than carbohydrate. The calories and calories from fat give you the amount of energy in that one serving of food (section B). A food is considered low fat if the calories from fat are one third or less of the total calories. In this example, one serving contains 6 grams of fat or 54 fat calories. Because 54 calories is 1/3 the total calories this food is considered low fat. It is also important to note that this cereal also contains healthy fats – monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats that help with low cholesterol levels.

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Protein 8g	
Vitamin A 10% Vitamin C 4%	
Calcium 30% Iron 5%	

A
B
C
D
E

Being familiar with these numbers on the **NUTRITION FACTS** label is just another way of empowering individuals with diabetes to help maintain blood glucose within the recommended range, and to maintain a healthy lifestyle.



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