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April, 2004

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Net Carbs? What Does That Mean?
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In today's world of nutritional education through news blips, it is certainly easy to understand why people feel like they're in a nutritional whirlwind. Many diets give conflicting instructions. In an effort to cash in on the latest fad, one new term you might see on food labels is NET CARBS. The net carbohydrate content is designed to reflect the amount of carbohydrates a product contains that will cause blood sugar levels to rise. Preventing rising insulin is a key concern for low-carbohydrate diets such as Atkins and South Beach. Although the Atkins Diet is now promoting leaner, less saturated fatty food, one thing is certain - they are still anti-carbohydrate.

Although the **net carb label is not officially approved**, you will find it on many products that contain sugar alcohols and insoluble fiber. Because fiber is not digested, products that contain more than 5 grams of fiber are allowed to subtract the fiber from the total carbohydrate listed on the label.

This is not true for sugar alcohols (sorbitol and manitol). Approximately half the sugar alcohols are digested, and therefore must be counted. They still have calories that cannot be ignored. **A good rule of thumb to get an idea of how many net carbohydrates are in the product is to look at the total grams of carbohydrates on the nutritional label, and then subtract only the dietary fiber.** Only what is in the Nutrition Facts and Ingredient List sections of the label can be trusted. Remember - always look on the back of the box, not the front, for the valid nutritional information.