How to Read a Food Label

1) Serving Size
The facts for the amount of food listed.

2) Calories
The amount of calories in a serving. If you normally eat more than the amount shown as a serving, you need to multiply the calories.

3) Total Fat
Look at the total fat in a serving. A "low-fat" food has 3 grams of fat or less per serving.

4) Sodium
Many people eat more sodium than they need in a day. Healthy adults should have 2,400-3,000 milligrams per day. If you have high blood pressure, you should probably have less.

5) Total Carbohydrate
Look at the grams of total carbohydrate, rather than the grams of sugar. If you look only at the sugar number, you may end up not eating foods such as fruits, dairy products, thinking they are too high in sugar. You may overeat foods such as cereals that have no sugar, but do contain a lot of carbohydrate content.

6) Percent Daily Values
Indicates how much of a specific nutrient a serving contains on a 2,000-calorie diet. A product is considered a good source of a particular nutrient if one serving provides 10 percent to 19 percent of the daily value. It is considered high in a given nutrient if it contains 20 percent or more of the daily value.

The content of this CareTip is for informational purposes only and is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.