MONT BELVIEU FAMILY WELLNESS

Keto: Tracking Net Carbs

A practical label-reading guide written for our clinic. “Net carbs” is not a standardized Nutrition Facts value and does not precisely predict blood sugar, insulin response or ketosis.

Start with the label and serving size

On a U.S. Nutrition Facts label, total carbohydrate includes dietary fiber. A common starting estimate is: Estimated net carbs = total carbohydrate − dietary fiber

Example for one labeled serving: 15 g total carbohydrate − 8 g dietary fiber = 7 g estimated net carbs. Eating two servings gives 14 g estimated net carbs using this method.

Treat sweetener deductions cautiously

Do not automatically subtract every gram of sugar alcohol. Erythritol is commonly deducted in some tracking methods, while maltitol, sorbitol, xylitol and other sweeteners can be partly absorbed and have variable effects. Allulose is a rare sugar, not a sugar alcohol; some methods deduct it when its amount is documented.

If your chosen method permits a documented 2 g erythritol deduction, the example becomes 15 − 8 − 2 = 5 g per serving. If the sweetener or amount is unclear, keep it in your estimate. A deduction does not guarantee that a product will have no blood-sugar effect.

Avoid double-subtracting fiber

Labels outside the U.S. may list carbohydrate without fiber already included. Check the label convention before subtracting. Apps and product “net carb” claims also use different methods. Choose a consistent approach with your healthcare team.

Track the amount you actually eat

Measure portions and log the same serving unit used by the label or food database. For produce and other unlabeled foods, use a reliable nutrient database and match raw versus cooked preparation. Values vary by weight and food variety.

Use an app as a tool, not a guarantee

Apps such as Cronometer or Carb Manager may help organize a food log. Verify entries against the package label and review how the app handles fiber and sweeteners. These examples are not clinic endorsements.

Keep safety separate from carb arithmetic

A low net-carb total is not proof of nutritional adequacy or ketosis. Never use a net-carb estimate to adjust insulin or other medication without guidance from the prescribing clinician. General patient education only.