

Carbohydrate Counting

Carb Counting is a flexible meal-planning tool (*not a diet*) that will help to understand how food choices change blood sugar levels.

When you eat carbohydrates, they are turned into glucose (sugar), which causes blood sugar levels to rise.

Eating some carbs throughout the day is important because they give energy and vital nutrients.

Deciding when and how much you eat should be based on lifestyle, medications, and meal-planning goals.

Accurate carb counting will help you figure out how much insulin to take.

Tips and Tricks

- Healthy balance is important for everyone, with or without diabetes!
- There are no foods that are off limits!
- No need to buy specially marketed foods such as “diabetic”, “sugar-free”, or “low carbohydrate” foods.
- **Be Aware:** *sugary drinks* may raise blood sugar very quickly and possibly too high. Don't drink regular soda, juice, Kool-Aid, regular pancake syrup.
- **Better options:** water, sugar-free drinks, diet soda, Crystal Light, La Croix, Sparkling Ice, sugar-free pancake syrup.
- For ease, and to limit extra insulin shots, eat carbs at mealtimes and choose low carb or free foods for snack times.

Carbohydrate Counting

The lists below are a basic idea of the carb count in common foods. Each portion is 1 carb choice = 15 grams of carbohydrate.

Breads, Grains and Cereals	Milk and Yogurt	Fruits	Vegetables and Beans	Sweets and Snack Foods
1 ounce bread product (1 slice bread, ¼ large bagel, 6" tortilla) ½ cup cooked rice or pasta 1 cup soup ¾ ounce unsweetened cold cereal (<i>serving sizes vary, check label</i>) ½ cup cooked cereal 3 cups air-popped popcorn	1 cup fat-free, low-fat, or whole milk 6 ounces low-fat or fat-free plain or Greek yogurt 6 ounces flavored yogurt made with low-cal sweetener (<i>these vary, check label</i>)	1 small piece fresh fruit ½ medium fruit (apple, banana) ½ cup canned fruit in own juice 1 cup honeydew or cantaloupe 1 ¼ cup watermelon ½ cup fruit juice 2 TBSP dried fruit 1 cup raspberries 1 ¼ cup strawberries 1 cup blackberries ¾ cup blueberries	½ cup potato, sweet potato, peas, corn ½ cup cooked beans, legumes (garbanzo, kidney, black beans) 1 cup winter squash ½ cup cooked cassava, yam, taro ½ plantain (green or yellow) 1 ½ cups cooked vegetables (small portions of nonstarchy vegetables are free)	¾ ounce snack food (pretzels, 4-6 crackers) 8 baked chips, potato, pita 13 regular chips, tortilla, potato 1 ounce sweet snack (2 small sandwich cookies, 5 vanilla wafers) 1 TBSP sugar or honey ½ cup regular ice cream

Low-Carb Ideas (<5g/serving)

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|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Sugar-free Jello | Smoked salmon |
| Sugar-free popsicle | Cheese/cottage cheese |
| Sugar-free gum | Nuts/nut butters |
| Raw vegetables with ranch or hummus | Sunflower seeds |
| Avocado | Hard-boiled egg |
| Tuna | Deviled egg |
| Celery with peanut butter | Tomatoes and cheese |
| Mini peppers with cream cheese | |
| Dill pickles | |
| Green or black olives | |
| Beef jerky | |
| Meat and cheese | |
| Edamame | |

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