

Carb Counting and Diabetes

What is carbohydrate counting?

Counting carbohydrate (carbs) in the food that you eat can help you manage your blood sugar. Foods that contain carbohydrate give you energy to work and play. Your body turns these carbs into glucose (sugar). Eating too many carbs may cause high blood sugar. Learning what foods contain carb and learning how to count those carbs can help you:

- Manage your blood sugar
- Be flexible in your choice of foods
- Eat more foods that you enjoy

Which foods contain carbohydrate?

- Grains (rice, pasta, barley etc.), breads, cereals and dried beans
- Starchy vegetables such as potato, corn and peas
- Fruits and fruit juices
- Milk and yogurt
- Candy, sweets, desserts, soda and fruit drinks (not diet soda and diet drinks)
- Non starchy vegetables contain small amounts of carb, but generally do not increase blood sugar.
- The only food groups that do not contain carbs are meat and meat substitutes, fats and oils, and calorie-free foods

What is a carb choice?

Each food listed below has about 15 grams of carbohydrate; each is “one” carb choice

Grains	Vegetables	Fruits & Juices	Milk & Yogurt	Sweets & Snacks
1 slice bread ¼ large bagel ½ cup rice or pasta 1 cup bean soup ½ cup cooked cereal 1 cup cold cereal 6 saltines crackers ½ English muffin	½ cup mashed or small baked or sweet potato ½ cup corn or peas ½ cup beans or lentils	½ banana small piece of fresh fruit 15 grapes 1 cup berries ½ cup canned fruit in juice ¼ cup dried fruit ½ cup 100% fruit juice	1 cup low fat or skim milk 1 cup soy milk 1 cup “light” yogurt	½ cup ice cream or frozen yogurt ¼ cup sherbet 2 Oreos 17 potato chips 15 wheat thins Small brownie 1 tablespoon honey or syrup or jam 3 cups popcorn (popped)

How do I read the nutrition facts label?

1. Find the serving size
2. Find the total carb in that serving
3. Compare the serving size to your portion
4. Remember that 15 grams of carb equals 1 carb choice
5. How many carbs do you have to eat?
6. You may need to reduce your portion!
7. Dietary fiber and sugar are part of the total carbohydrate

How many carbs can I have?

Most men → 4-5 carb choices at each meal
Most women → 3-4 carb choices at each meal

At snacks: 1-2 carb choices, only if hungry

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 Serving (139g)
Servings Per Container 4

Amount Per Serving

Calories 210 Calories from Fat 60

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 7g 11%

Saturated Fat 3g 15%

Cholesterol 115mg 38%

Sodium 620mg 26%

Total Carbohydrate 28g 9%

Dietary Fiber 3g 12%

Sugars 7g

Protein 7g

Vitamin A 8% • Vitamin C 15%

Calcium 10% • Iron 10%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

Breakfast: _____ Carb choices or ____ grams

Lunch: _____ Carb choices or ____ grams

Dinner: _____ Carb choices or ____ grams

Snack (optional): _____ Carb choices or ____ grams

A healthy-eating action plan:

- Eat meals and snacks at about the same time each day.
- Start counting carbs and aim for _____ choices per meal.
- Choose whole grains such as whole wheat bread, oatmeal, bran cereals and whole grain crackers. These carbs are healthier than white bread or foods made without whole grain ingredients.
- Eat low fat or lean meats and poultry.
- Eat less butter, stick margarine and baked pastries.
- Make most of your fat sources from vegetable oils and nuts.
- Eat more non-starchy vegetables.
- Drink 6- 8 cups of water every day

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