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## Carbohydrate Counting for People with Diabetes

Foods with carbohydrates make your blood glucose level go up. Learning how to count carbohydrates can help you control your blood glucose levels. First, identify the foods you eat that contain carbohydrates. Then, using the Foods with Carbohydrates chart, determine about how much carbohydrates are in your meals and snacks. Make sure you are eating foods with fiber, protein, and healthy fat along with your carbohydrate foods.

### Foods with Carbohydrates

The following table shows carbohydrate foods that have about 15 grams of carbohydrate each. Using measuring cups, spoons, or a food scale when you first begin learning about carbohydrate counting can help you learn about the portion sizes you typically eat.

The following foods have 15 grams carbohydrate each:

<b>Grains</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 slice bread (1 ounce)</li> <li>1 small tortilla (6-inch size)</li> <li>¼ large bagel (1 ounce)</li> <li>1/3 cup pasta or rice (cooked)</li> <li>½ hamburger or hot dog bun (¾ ounce)</li> <li>½ cup cooked cereal</li> <li>½ to ¾ cup ready-to-eat cereal</li> <li>2 taco shells (5-inch size)</li> </ul>	<b>Fruit</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 small fresh fruit (¾ to 1 cup)</li> <li>½ medium banana</li> <li>17 small grapes (3 ounces)</li> <li>1 cup melon or berries</li> <li>½ cup canned or frozen fruit</li> <li>2 tablespoons dried fruit (blueberries, cherries, cranberries, raisins)</li> <li>½ cup unsweetened fruit juice</li> </ul>
<b>Starchy Vegetables</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>½ cup cooked beans, peas, corn, potatoes/sweet potatoes</li> <li>¼ large baked potato (3 ounces)</li> <li>1 cup acorn or butternut squash</li> </ul>	<b>Snack Foods</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 to 6 crackers</li> <li>8 potato chips or 13 tortilla chips (¾ ounce to 1 ounce)</li> <li>3 cups popped popcorn</li> </ul>
<b>Dairy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>¾ cup (6 ounces) nonfat plain yogurt, or yogurt with sugar-free sweetener</li> <li>1 cup milk</li> <li>1 cup plain rice, soy, coconut or flavored almond milk</li> </ul>	<b>Sweets and Desserts</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>½ cup ice cream or frozen yogurt</li> <li>1 tablespoon jam, jelly, pancake syrup, table sugar, or honey</li> <li>2 tablespoons light pancake syrup</li> <li>1 inch square of frosted cake or 2 inch square of unfrosted cake</li> <li>2 small cookies (2/3 ounce each) or ¼ large cookie</li> </ul>

Sometimes you'll have to estimate carbohydrate amounts if you don't know the exact recipe. One cup of mixed foods like soups can have 1 to 2 carbohydrate servings, while some casseroles might have 2 or more servings of carbohydrate.

Foods that have less than 20 calories in each serving can be counted as “free” foods. Count 1 cup raw vegetables, or ½ cup cooked non-starchy vegetables as “free” foods. If you eat 3 or more servings at one meal, then count them as 1 carbohydrate serving.

**Foods without Carbohydrates**

Not all foods contain carbohydrates. Meat, some dairy, fats, non-starchy vegetables, and many beverages don’t contain carbohydrate. So when you count carbohydrates, you can generally exclude chicken, pork, beef, fish, seafood, eggs, tofu, cheese, butter, sour cream, avocado, nuts, seeds, olives, mayonnaise, water, black coffee, unsweetened tea, and zero-calorie drinks. Vegetables with no or low carbohydrate include green beans, cauliflower, tomatoes, and onions.

**How much carbohydrate should I eat at each meal?**

Carbohydrate counting can help you plan your meals and manage your weight. Following are some starting points for carbohydrate intake at each meal. Work with your registered dietitian nutritionist to find the best range that works for your blood glucose and weight.

	To Lose Weight	To Maintain Weight
Women	2 – 3 carb servings	3 – 4 carb servings
Men	3 – 4 carb servings	4 – 5 carb servings

Checking your blood glucose after meals will help you know if you need to adjust the timing, type, or number of carbohydrate servings in your meal plan. Achieve and keep a healthy body weight by balancing your food intake and physical activity.

Notes