

Carbohydrate Counting

Why are carbohydrates important to my diabetes control?

Carbohydrates (carbs) are an important part of a healthy eating plan and affect your blood glucose levels more than any other food. Carbohydrates are found in the starch, fruit and milk groups described by the Food Guide Pyramid.

Your blood glucose can be affected by:

- Eating too much carbohydrate at any one time, overloading your insulin supply and causing high blood glucose levels.
- Eating too little carbohydrate, causing your blood glucose levels to go to low and making you feel hungry between meals

Example:

A spaghetti dinner with breadsticks is very high in carbs. A dinner of chicken, rice and green beans is much lower. For the spaghetti meal you would need to take or make more insulin. The chicken dinner would need less insulin.

How will I know how much carbohydrate is in a food?

A carbohydrate choice is a serving of food (starch, fruit or milk) that contains 15 grams of carbohydrate. Look at the food label and measure what you will be eating. Look for the total carbohydrate numbers and divide by 15 to calculate the carbohydrate serving size.

How much carbohydrate should I eat at each meal?

For most people, a healthy food plan includes 3-4 carbohydrate choices at each meal and 1-2 carbohydrate choices at planned snack times. Discuss with your doctor, dietitian or diabetes educator to learn what will work best for you.

Check your blood glucose 1-2 hours after eating. Keep a record of foods eaten and blood glucose readings before and after meals to learn how food affects your blood glucose.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size ½ cup (114g)	
Servings Per Container 4	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 90	Calories from Fat 30
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 3g	5%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 300mg	13%
Total Carbohydrate 13g	4%
Dietary Fiber 3g	12%
Sugars 3g	
Protein 3g	
Vitamin A 80%	• Vitamin C 60%
Calcium 4%	• Iron 4%
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:	
	Calories: 2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g 80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg 2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g
Calories per gram:	
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4	