

Carbohydrate Counting

Your body turns carbohydrate into glucose. Glucose is your body's main source of energy.

What is a carbohydrate?

Carbohydrate (carb) is a nutrient found in food. Carbs are made up of starches, sugars and fiber. They are necessary for your brain and body to function at their best.

It is important to eat a variety of foods with carbs. Work with your dietitian to develop a healthy eating plan that fits your lifestyle.

<i>Carbohydrates</i>	<i>Foods with little carbohydrate</i>
Grains <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bread • cereal • rice • pasta Starchy vegetables <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • peas • potatoes • corn • winter squash • dried beans, lentils Fruit Milk and yogurt Sweets and desserts	Proteins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meats • chicken and turkey • fish • eggs • cheese Non-starchy vegetables Fats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • butter, margarine • oils • salad dressings • mayonnaise • nuts, peanut butter Black coffee and tea

How much carbohydrate should I eat?

Foods with carbs make your blood glucose (sugar) levels go up. But, carbs are important for energy and a healthy diet, so don't skip them! Along with protein and fat, they are needed at every meal. Just watch your portion sizes and spread your food choices throughout the day. This will help to keep your blood glucose stable.

Counting carbs at meals helps you eat the right amount. You can count in grams (found on a food label) or carb choices. Your dietitian can show you how to count and help you decide how many carbs are right for you. As a general rule:

- Women can have 45 to 60 grams carbohydrate (3 to 4 carb choices) per meal.
- Men can have 60 to 75 grams carbohydrate (4 to 5 carb choices) per meal.
- For snacks, all adults can have 15 to 30 grams carbohydrate (1 to 2 carb choices).

One carb choice is a serving of food equal to 15 grams of carbohydrate (see next page for serving sizes).

Remember: In addition to counting carbs, it is important to eat a variety of whole, fresh foods for good nutrition. Choose whole grains, fruits and vegetables, unsaturated fats, lean proteins and low-fat dairy foods.

Carbohydrates

Each serving of starch, fruit, milk or sweets equals 1 carb choice.

Starches

Starches can be full of healthy vitamins, minerals and fiber: in particular, whole grains or starchy vegetables.

- One bread slice or small roll (whole wheat, rye, pumpernickel or white)
- One 6-inch tortilla, *chapati*, *roti* or *injera* bread
- One waffle or pancake (size of a slice of bread)
- One 6-inch pita, rice or corn patty (baked)
- ¼ of a 10-inch *naan* bread
- ½ English muffin, hot dog or hamburger bun
- ¼ large bagel or ½ medium bagel
- ½ cup unsweetened cooked cereal or ¾ cup unsweetened dry cereal
- ½ cup cooked spelt or bulgur
- 4 to 6 crackers
- ½ cup cooked rice, pasta, couscous, barley, quinoa, millet, wheat or farro
- ½ cup starchy vegetables (peas, corn, sweet potato, white potato, yams)
- ½ cup cooked legumes (dried beans or lentils, including black beans, kidney, pinto and garbanzo beans)
- ½ cup plantain or yucca
- 1 cup winter squash (acorn, pumpkin, butternut)
- 31 (¾ ounce) pretzels sticks
- 18 (1 ounce) potato chips or tortilla chips
- 3 cups popped popcorn

Your carb choices

Breakfast:

Lunch:

Dinner:

Snacks:

Fruit

Fruits are full of healthy vitamins, minerals, cancer-fighting antioxidants and fiber.

- One small fresh fruit (the size of a tennis ball)
- One half grapefruit
- ½ cup fresh or frozen fruit
- 1 cup melon, berries or papaya
- ½ large banana
- ½ cup grapes
- ½ cup canned fruit (in light syrup or fruit juice)
- ½ cup apple or orange juice
- ½ cup grape, cranberry or prune juice
- 2 tablespoons raisins or Craisins
- ¼ cup dried fruits (prunes, apricots, figs)
- 1 large or 3 small dates

Milk

Milk and yogurt are great sources of calcium and vitamin D.

- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup plain yogurt or 6 ounces light yogurt
- 1 cup soy milk

Sweets and desserts

Sweets and desserts are high in sugar and calories with little nutrition. Choose these rarely.

- 2-inch square of cake or brownie
- 2 fortune cookies
- ½ cup ice cream or frozen yogurt
- ¼ cup sherbet or sorbet
- ⅓ cup rice pudding or *kheer*
- 1 tablespoon syrup, molasses, jam, jelly, sugar or honey
- 1 tablespoon sweet-and-sour sauce

Combination foods

These foods are often higher in fat, calories and salt. Choose these less often.

- 1 cup casserole or lasagna equals 2 carb choices
- 1 cup broth or cream soup equals 1 carb choice
- 1 cup bean soup equals 2 carb choices
- ¼ of a 12-inch thin-crust pizza equals 3 carb choices
- Burrito equals 3 carb choices
- Medium order of French fries equals 3 carb choices
- 6-inch sub sandwich equals 3 carb choices

- Soft-shell taco equals 1½ carb choices
- One small egg roll equals 1 carb choice
- One medium meat samosa or ½ vegetable samosa equals 1 carb choice

Foods with little carbohydrate

Non-starchy vegetables

Non-starchy vegetables have little carbohydrate and plenty of vitamins, minerals, cancer-fighting antioxidants and fiber. A serving is 1 cup for raw leafy greens or ½ cup for all other vegetables. Aim to eat 3 to 5 servings per day.

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| • Asparagus | • Jicama |
| • Amaranth or Chinese spinach | • Lettuce (all types) |
| • Beans (green or wax beans) | • Mushrooms |
| • Bean sprouts | • Okra |
| • Beets | • Onions |
| • Broccoli | • Parsnips |
| • Brussels sprouts | • Pea pods |
| • Cabbage (green, red, napa, bok choy, or Chinese) | • Peppers |
| • Carrots | • Radishes |
| • Cauliflower | • Rutabaga |
| • Celery | • Sauerkraut |
| • Cucumber | • Spinach |
| • Eggplant | • Summer squash (zucchini, summer, crookneck) |
| • Greens (collards, kale, mustard, turnip) | • Tomatoes (fresh and canned) |
| | • Tomato or vegetable juice |
| | • Turnips |

Proteins

Proteins have many nutrients, but may contain fat. Aim to eat 6 to 8 ounces of protein foods each day to prevent excess fat and calorie intake.

1 ounce equals any one of these:

- 1 slice of cheese
- 1 egg
- ½ cup tofu
- ½ cup cooked dried beans or edamame (soybeans)

2 ounces equals any one of the following:

- ½ cup low-fat cottage cheese
- ½ cup tuna (packed in water)

3 ounces cooked chicken, turkey, fish, lean beef, pork, lamb or wild game is about the size of a deck of cards.

Fats

Fats have twice as many calories per bite compared to carbohydrates and proteins. Choose heart healthy plant fats (unsaturated) most often. Aim to eat animal fats (saturated) less often. One serving of fat equals any one of the following:

Fats from plants (unsaturated)

- 1 teaspoon margarine, oil or mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon light margarine or light mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon nuts or seeds
- 1 tablespoons salad dressing

- 2 tablespoons light salad dressing
- 2 tablespoons avocado, mashed
- 2 teaspoons peanut butter or other nut butter
- 8 to 10 olives

Animal fats (saturated)

- 1 teaspoon butter
- 1 tablespoon cream cheese
- 1 tablespoon half-and-half
- 2 tablespoons sour cream or low-fat cream cheese

Free foods

Free foods have few calories and carbohydrates.

One serving of free foods equals:

- sugar-free, fat-free condiment (mustard, sugar-free jelly)
- 1 tablespoon of ketchup or BBQ sauce (a bigger serving will not be a free food)
- vinegar, lemon juice or lime juice
- dill pickles
- sugar-free Jell-O
- black coffee or tea, sugar-free soda pop, club soda or diet tonic water
- herbs and spices