

# Carbohydrate Counting

## Why count carbohydrates?

- Carbohydrates or “carbs” are the sugars and starches in your foods which make your blood sugar go up.
- Carbohydrate counting is a way to plan your meals and snacks.
- Eating the right amount of carbohydrate, spread evenly over the day, will help you with your blood sugar levels.



## How much carbohydrate?

- The amount of carbohydrate you need will vary depending on how much food you need to maintain a healthy weight.
- Most people need between 10-20 carbohydrate choices per day.
- An active person may need more.
- You may want to try the following guidelines:

WOMEN	MEN
<b>45-60 grams per meal (3-4 carb choices)</b>	<b>60-75 grams per meal (4-5 carb choices)</b>
<b>15-30 grams per snack (1-2 carb choices)</b>	<b>15-30 grams per snack (1-2 carb choices)</b>

## Carb choices include:

- Grains and Starches
- Fruits and some vegetables
- Milk and Alternatives
- Added sugars

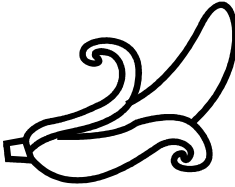


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## Where are the carbohydrates?

1. Use these food lists:

Each of the following is equivalent to **1 choice** or **15 grams of carbohydrate**

GRAINS and STARCHES	FRUITS	VEGETABLES
<p>1 slice of bread</p> <p>¼ large bagel</p> <p>½ pita bread</p> <p>6” tortilla or roti</p> <p>1/3 cup cooked rice</p> <p>½ cup cooked pasta or barley</p> <p>½ cup cooked cereal</p> <p>¾ cup dry cereal</p> <p>1 cup (250ml) soup</p> <p>½ small or ½ cup potato</p> <p>½ cup corn</p> <p>½ cup cooked beans, lentils, split peas</p>	<p>1 small (“fist-full”) fresh fruit (orange, apple, pear, peach)</p> <p>1 small or ½ large banana</p> <p>½ cup canned fruit</p> <p>1 cup berries or melon</p> <p>2 medium kiwis or plums</p> <p>4 apricots</p> <p>¼ cup dried fruit</p> <p>½ cup fruit juice</p> 	<p>½ cup canned peas or corn</p> <p>¾ cup fresh or frozen peas, parsnip</p> <p>1 cup squash or pumpkin</p> <p>¾ cup tomato sauce</p> <p>*** Most other vegetables are very low in carbohydrate and high in nutrients and fibre</p>
MILK and ALTERNATIVES	OTHER CHOICES	
<p>1 cup milk or buttermilk</p> <p>1 cup plain or diet yogurt (fruit yogurts –read label)</p> <p>1 cup plain soy milk (if sweetened read label)</p>	<p>1 Tbsp sugar, syrup, jam or honey</p> <p>½ cup regular soft drink</p> <p>4 arrowroot cookies</p> <p>2 cream filled cookies</p> <p>3 cups popcorn</p>	<p>Items such as coffee, tea, diet soft drinks, herbs spices, vinegar, mustard and other condiments contain very little carbohydrate.</p>

## 2. How to read a food label

- Find the **Serving Size**.  
(How does it compare to your portion?)
- Find the **Carbohydrate** in one serving.  
(Fibre and sugar are included in this number.)
- Subtract the **Fibre** from the total.  
(Fibre does not raise your blood sugar.)

In this example:

36 g - 6 g = **30 g** of available Carbohydrate

Nutrition Facts			
Per 90 g serving (2 slices)			
Amount		% Daily Value	
<b>Calories</b> 170			
<b>Fat</b> 2.7 g		<b>4 %</b>	
Saturated 0.5 g + Trans 0 g		<b>5 %</b>	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0 mg			
<b>Sodium</b> 200 mg		<b>8 %</b>	
<b>Carbohydrates</b> 36 g		<b>13 %</b>	
Fibre 6 g		<b>24 %</b>	
Sugars 3 g			
<b>Protein</b> 8 g			
Vitamin A	1 %	Vitamin C	0 %
Calcium	2 %	Iron	16 %

## What are my blood sugar goals?

BEFORE meals: **4-7 mmol**

2 hr AFTER meals: **Less than 10 mmol**

Ideally, your blood sugar should go up only 2-3 mmol after your meal.  
If your blood sugar is within these targets – Keep up the good work!



**Note:** If your sugars are going **too high** after meals consider the following:

- Ensure your meals are **balanced** by including some protein and fat
- Are you eating **too many carbohydrates**?
- Do I need to switch to foods with a **lower Glycemic index**?  
(course grain breads, porridge, All Bran, Bran Buds, pasta, converted rice, legumes)
- Talk with your doctor about changing medications

## Menu Ideas:

### Menu #1 Breakfast

Food Item	# Carb Choices	Grams of Carb
Hot cereal 1 c/250ml	2	30
Milk 1% 1 c/250ml	1	15
Raisins ¼ c/60ml	1	15
Tea or coffee, black	0	0
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>60g</b>

### Menu #2 Sandwich Lunch

Food Item	# Carb Choices	Grams of Carb
Bread, Whole Grain, 2 slices	2	30
Sliced Turkey 2 oz/60 g	0	0
Margarine 1 tsp/5 ml	0	0
Carrot Sticks ½ c/125 ml	0	0
Grapes, green ½ c/125 ml	1	15
Milk, 1% 1 c/250 ml	1	15
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>60g</b>

### Menu #3 Spaghetti Dinner

Food Item	# Carb Choices	Grams of Carb
Spaghetti 1½ c/375 ml	3	45
Tomato Sauce ¾ c/185 ml	1	15
Lean Meatballs 2½ oz/75 g	0	0
Mixed green salad 1 c/250 ml	0	0
Oil and vinegar Salad Dressing 1 tbsp/15 ml	0	0
Blueberries 1 c/250 ml	1	15
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>75g</b>

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