



Diabetes Education

People with diabetes may eat small amounts of food that contain carbohydrates. Carbohydrates are found in breads and starches, dairy products, fruits, vegetables and sweets. These foods become **BLOOD SUGAR** or **GLUCOSE** in your body after you eat.

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Why Carbohydrate Counting:

Counting the amount of carbohydrates you eat helps keep your blood sugar in a **HEALTHY** range.

Carbohydrate Counting is preferred by many people with diabetes because it can allow greater freedom of food choice than the dietary exchange system. As the name suggests, carbohydrate counting (also called carb counting or carb gram counting) involves computing the number of carbohydrate grams in a given meal or snack. **TOTAL** carbs are tallied up on a running basis to ensure that the total doesn't exceed a predetermined dietary goal for the meal and/or day.

Basic Carbohydrate Counting

Suggested Daily Calorie Intake:

How many servings are right for you? Compare your prescribed calories to the number of servings for each food group. **ONE** serving of a carbohydrate food equals 12-15 grams of carbohydrates.

Suggested Daily Calorie Intake	Lower (About 1,600)	Moderate (About 2,200)	High (About 2,800)
Grain Group Servings	6	9	11
Vegetable Group Servings	3	4	5
Fruit Group Servings	2	3	4
Milk Group Servings	2-3	2-3	2-3
Meat Group Servings	5	6	7



Carbohydrate Counting is preferred by many people with diabetes

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Did You Know?

1. One serving of a carbohydrate food contains 12 to 15 grams of carbohydrate. Most adults need between **30 to 60 grams** of carbohydrate at every meal. A carbohydrate food may be a bread or starch, fruit or dairy such as milk and yogurt.

(Serving sizes for each of these food groups are listed in the following pages.)

2. Vegetables contain only **5 grams** of carbohydrate per serving. **DO NOT** count vegetables as carbohydrates unless you have more than 2 servings per meal.

3. Meat, poultry, meat substitutes and fats **DO NOT** count as carbohydrates.

Basic Carbohydrate Counting

Carbohydrate Servings:

The following foods are equal to **ONE** serving of Carbohydrate or **15 grams** of Carbohydrate:

✓ Starches:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1 slice of regular bread | 1 small baked potato (3 ounces) |
| 1 small dinner roll | ½ pita |
| ½ English muffin | 8 animal crackers |
| ½ Lender's size bagel | 6 saltines |
| 1 square waffle | 3 graham cracker squares |
| ½ hot dog or burger roll | 3 cups of popcorn |
| 1-6" tortilla shell | |
| ¾ cup of unsweetened dry cereal | |
| ½ cup of sweetened or bran cereal | |
| ⅓ cup of cooked pasta | |
| ⅓ cup of cooked rice | |
| ¾ ounce of pretzel (small handful) | |
| ½ cup of corn, peas, or mashed potatoes | |
| ½ cup of cooked lentils, chickpeas, dried beans | |
| 1-½ cups of puffed cereal, ½ cup of hot cereal (oatmeal, farina, grits) | |



✓ Fruit and Juice:

- 1 piece of small size fresh fruit
- ½ piece of large size fresh fruit
- 1 cup of cut up melon
- ½ cup of fruit canned in fruit juice or water
- ½ cup of unsweetened or natural applesauce
- ½ cup of unsweetened, natural fruit juice
- 12 large or 17 small grapes or cherries
- 2 Tbsp. raisins
- ½ medium banana



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Diabetes Education

Basic Carbohydrate Counting

Carbohydrate Counting for Recipes:

How do you count carbohydrates in recipes or prepared foods? In this situation, it may be easiest to look at the carbohydrate counts for individual ingredients that make up a particular food.

FOR EXAMPLE, if you are eating a sandwich, you will need to count the carbohydrates for the bread (both slices) and for each item that contains carbohydrates including condiments such as catsup.

At first, you will probably want to measure the portions of everything that you put on your sandwich so you will know how the amounts you are using measure up to a true serving size.

Carbohydrate Servings (cont.):

✓ Milk:

1 cup of milk

½ cup pudding sweetened with aspartame or a nonnutritive sweetener

1 cup of nonfat or low fat fruit flavored yogurt sweetened with aspartame or a nonnutritive sweetener



✓ Protein (Non-Carbohydrate):

Fish:

- **DO NOT** eat king mackerel, shark, swordfish, or tilefish
- Limit canned tuna to less than 12 oz./week



Lean cuts of turkey, chicken, pork, beef
Reduced fat cheese, cottage cheese
Eggs, tofu or peanut butter

✓ Vegetables (Non-Carbohydrate), 3 or more servings/day:

Artichokes
Carrots
Peppers
Cauliflower
Leafy greens

Asparagus
Cucumber
Onions
Cabbage
Zucchini

Broccoli
Green beans
Tomatoes
Mushrooms



**Remember Potatoes,
Peas, Corn, Lentils,
Legumes etc. are
STARCHES.**

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Mom Calls It Roughage:

Dietary fiber is a type of carbohydrate that **HELPS** improve blood glucose levels and weight control. Most American adults need **25 Grams** daily of dietary fiber.

FIBER is found in fruits, vegetables, whole grains such as oats, rye and bran, and beans and legumes. Fiber is useful in keeping the stomach and intestines healthy. It also gives a meal “bulk” that can lead to an early feeling of fullness.

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Basic Carbohydrate Counting

Carbohydrate Servings (cont.):

✓ **Fats** (*Non-carbohydrate*):

- 1 teaspoon margarine, soft tub or squeeze
- 1 teaspoon butter
- 1 teaspoon mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon oil
- 1 tablespoon salad dressing
- 2 tablespoons reduced-fat salad dressing
- 2 tablespoons cream cheese
- 2 tablespoons sour cream



✓ **On Occasion** (*When under good blood glucose control*):

- ½ cup of low fat or fat free ice cream or frozen yogurt
- 2 small cookies or 5 vanilla wafers
- 5 social tea biscuits or 35 goldfish crackers
- Unsweetened iced tea
- Sugar free Jell-O

Diet Soda, light lemonade, or flavored water sweetened with Aspartame or Splenda

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (240 gms)	
Servings Per Container About 16	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 240	Calories from Fat 54
	% Daily Value
Total Fat 6g	0%
Saturated Fat 1g	0%
Polyunsaturated Fat 2g	
Monounsaturated Fat 3g	
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol < 5mg	0%
Sodium 125mg	5%
Total Carbohydrate 25g	4%
Dietary Fiber 9g	40%
Sugars 2g	
Sugar alcohol 4g	0%
Protein 8g	
Vitamin A 10% Vitamin C 4%	
Calcium 30% Iron 5%	

← **Nutrition Label**

In this example, a serving of this cereal contains **9 Grams** of dietary fiber that is more than a third of the total carbohydrate. Usually calories from dietary fibers are not counted calories because most dietary fiber is not absorbed in the stomach.

If you are taking insulin, the CDE may instruct you to adjust your carbohydrate count when a large amount of dietary fiber is eaten at a meal.