



Carbohydrate Counting – A Guide for Diabetes

WHAT ARE CARBOHYDRATES?

Carbohydrates are the starches and sugars that are found in such foods as:

- grains, breads, cereals, dried beans
- rice and pasta
- vegetables
- fruits and fruit juices
- milk and yogurt
- sweets and desserts

Carbohydrates increase your blood glucose (sugar) more than protein or fat in food. They're also your body's main source of energy.

WHY COUNT CARBOHYDRATES?

Carbohydrate counting is a way to plan what you eat so you will eat similar amounts of carbohydrate at each meal and snack. This practice helps keep your blood sugar from getting too high or too low.

HOW DO I START COUNTING CARBOHYDRATES?

First you should work with your dietitian or diabetes educator to develop the right carb-counting plan for you. A typical plan may recommend:

- Women: 3–4 carb servings (45–60 grams) at each meal
- Men: 4–5 carb servings (60–75 grams) at each meal
- Everyone: 1–2 carb servings (15–30 grams) per snack

HOW CAN I CONTROL MY CARBOHYDRATE INTAKE?

The sure way to eat the right amount of carbohydrates is to practice portion control at every meal. Weighing and measuring foods at home helps you eyeball portions easily when you eat out.

HOW TO READ FOOD LABELS WHEN COUNTING CARBOHYDRATES

Bran Cereal	
Nutritional Facts	
Serving Size 1/2 cup (31g)	
Servings Per Container About 17	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	80
Calories from Fat	10
% Daily Value	
Total Fat 1g	2%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0g	0%
Sodium 80mg	3%
Potassium 350mg	10%
Total Carbohydrates 23g	8%
Dietary Fiber 10g	40%
Soluble Fiber 1g	
Sugars 6g	
Other Carbohydrate 7g	
Protein 4g	

- If you are eating a serving size different from the one on the label, be sure to adjust the carb count accordingly.
- **Total Carbohydrate** is the only **CARB** number you should count.
 - One carbohydrate serving = 15 grams of carbohydrate.
 - Divide the total grams of carbohydrate by 15 for the number of carbohydrate servings.
 - If eating more than one serving size, be sure to adjust carb count accordingly.
- These numbers explain what kind of carbohydrates you are getting, but should not be used in your count. Do not pay attention to net carbs or impact carbs – stick with **Total Carbohydrate**.

PORTION CONTROL

SERVING	EQUIVALENT
Fresh fruit or vegetables	1 cup
Canned fruit or cooked vegetables	1/2 cup
Starchy vegetables for dried beans	1/2 cup
Bread	1 slice
Dry cereal	3/4 cup

SERVING	EQUIVALENT
Cooked cereal	1/2 cup
Rice or pasta	1/3 cup
Dairy products	1 cup
Lean meats, chicken and fish	3 ounces
Oil, margarine or butter	1 teaspoon



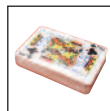
A 1 ounce serving of cheese is about the size of your thumb or a domino.



A 1/2 cup serving of canned fruit, vegetables or potatoes looks like half a tennis ball or the size of an ice cream scoop on a plate.



A 1 cup serving of milk, yogurt, or fresh greens is about the size of your fist.



3 ounces of meat, fish, or chicken is about the size of a deck of playing cards or the palm of your hand



1 teaspoon of oil is about the size of your thumb tip.