Understanding how both the foods you eat and the amount you eat can affect your blood sugar is the first step toward making healthy food choices. Food is made up of carbohydrates, protein and fat, and all will have some effect on your blood sugar.

**CARBOHYDRATES OR “CARBS”**

- Carbs have the greatest impact on your blood sugar levels; eating more carbs than your body can use can cause your blood sugar level to go up.
- Keeping track of carbs you eat and spreading them throughout the day will help you control your blood sugar.
- Although carbs can greatly impact your blood sugar, many healthy foods have them and are important to include in your diet.
- Carbs can be found in starchy foods (e.g., bread, cereal, potatoes, corn, rice and pasta), as well as fruit, milk, yogurt and sweets.
- Vegetables also contain carbs, but in smaller amounts.
- Check with your doctor or dietitian to learn how your blood sugar is affected by carb intake.

**EXAMPLES OF FOODS WITH CARBOHYDRATES**

- **Starches:**
  - Bread
  - Crackers
  - Pasta and noodles
  - Cereal
  - Grains
  - Potatoes
  - Corn
  - Peas

- **Fruit:**
  - All fresh
  - All canned
  - All frozen
  - All dried

- **Dairy:**
  - Milk
  - Ice cream
  - Yogurt

- **Sweets:**
  - Candy
  - Cake
  - Cookies
  - Sherbet
  - Pie

- **Drinks:**
  - Fruit juice
  - Regular sodas
  - Smoothies

- **Condiments:**
  - Spaghetti sauce
  - Ketchup
  - Cream sauce
  - Barbecue sauce
  - Dressings

**PROTEIN**

- Protein usually has a small effect on your blood sugar levels.
- Your body needs protein to work properly.
- You can find protein mostly in animal products, nuts, some dairy products and beans.
- Non-dairy soy milk is a good source of protein, but may be impacted by additives such as sugar or flavorings.

**FAT**

- Foods with fat slow down how fast the stomach empties, which can make blood sugar a little lower shortly after meals, and a little higher later on.
- Choose healthier fats (e.g., olive oil, avocado, peanut butter, etc.) and limit high-fat foods to help reduce your risk of heart disease — a major threat for people with type 2 diabetes.
WATCH YOUR PORTION SIZE

Being aware of portion size is another important step in helping you to control your blood sugar levels. This is particularly important when it comes to foods that contain carbohydrates. Try measuring portions at home until you learn to estimate. You can also use the following tips to help you keep your portions in check.

USING YOUR HAND TO ESTIMATE PORTIONS:

1 cup = About the size of your fist
1/2 cup = About the size of your palm (not including your fingers)
1 tablespoon = About the size of your thumb

USE YOUR PLATE TO ESTIMATE THE RIGHT FOOD PORTIONS:

About one quarter of your plate should be filled with grains or starchy foods (carbohydrates) such as rice, pasta, potatoes, corn or peas.

Another quarter should be protein – foods like meat, fish, poultry or tofu.

Fill the last half of your plate with non-starchy vegetables like broccoli, carrots, cucumbers, salad, tomatoes or cauliflower.

Add a glass of non-fat milk and a small roll or piece of fruit and you are ready to eat.

To speak to one of our case managers, call 1-800-501-3439, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. TDD users call (716) 631-3108. Remember to also check with your doctor or dietitian to help you learn more about how the foods you eat, and the amount you consume, can affect your blood sugar.