

Carbohydrate Counting Guide



What is a carbohydrate?

- Carbohydrates get broken down into sugar and are the main source of energy for our body.
- Foods rich in carbohydrates are grains, starchy vegetables, fruits, milk and yogurt.
- Sweeteners to limit are sugar, honey, agave nectar, brown sugar and corn syrup as they affect blood sugar.
- Foods to limit are sugar sweetened beverages, desserts and sweets.

Why are counting carbohydrates important?

- Controlling your portions of carbohydrate food for each meal can help you keep your sugar level under control.

Key Points:

- 1 carbohydrate choice = 15 g of carbohydrate
- On average you will need 2 to 4 servings of carbohydrates (30 to 60 g) per meal.
- Check your sugar level 2 hours after you start your meal; Goal is <180mg/dl.



Don't have measuring cups?

You can check portions using your hands:



Your palm is about
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup or 3-4 oz

**$\frac{1}{3}$ cup for rice, pasta,
plantain, cassava,
canned baked beans**



A clenched fist
is about 1 cup

**1 cup mixed vegetable
with corn or peas, berries,
melon, winter squash, milk**



The front of your fist
is about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup

**$\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked cereal, beans,
corn, ice-cream, fresh fruit,
potatoes, lentils, peas**

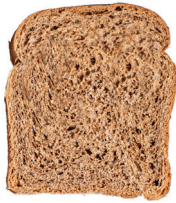


Your thumb is
about 2 tablespoons

**2 tbsp dried fruit
1 tbsp honey, syrup,
sugar, jelly**

Portion sizes of carbohydrate

Starches



1 Slice Bread



1 tortilla/chapati (6 in)



1/4 large bagel



2 taco shells (5 in)



1/2 hamburger/1/2 hotdog bun



1/3 Bolillo



3/4 cup plain cereal



1/2 cup cooked oatmeal, grits, cream of wheat



1/3 cup rice / pasta/ noodles



1oz dry lentils (70g) cooked



1/2 cup beans/peas



1/4 cup granola



1/2 cup mashed potatoes/ sweet potatoes/winter squash



1/2 piece cornbread (32g)



1/4 large baked potato (3 oz)
1/4 cup plantain



1/3 cup cooked cassava

Milk



1 cup milk 8oz



6 oz fruit yogurt/ fruit greek yogurt*

* Check Nutrition label for added sugars for flavored milk/yogurt

Portion sizes of carbohydrate

Fruit



1 small fruit or
½ large fruit



½ cup mixed fruit



2 tablespoons dried fruit



17 small grapes



½ cup mango



½ cup 100% fruit juice 4oz



1 cup berries/melon



2 small plums

Snacks



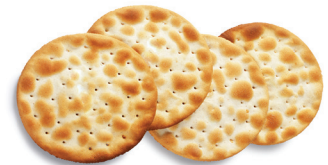
12 pieces of pretzels, chips



3 cups popcorn popped



3 graham cracker squares



6 crackers

Sweets and Desserts



2" square unfrosted cake/
brownie (30g)



1 small cookies



½ cup ice cream/frozen
yogurt (1 scoop)



1 tablespoon syrup, jam,
jelly, sugar, or honey, agave

Adapted from: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service. FoodData Central, 2019.
fdc.nal.usda.gov.