

Carbohydrates are the main source of fuel for your body.

Your body breaks down carbohydrate into sugar (glucose). This raises your blood sugar levels. Both carbohydrate type and amount matter in blood sugar management.

Carbohydrate counting is a tool that helps you figure out how much carbohydrate (carbs) you are eating. Counting how many carbs you are planning to eat can help you keep your blood sugar in range. A registered dietitian or certified diabetes educator can guide you along the way.



STEP 1

Make healthy food choices

- Follow the balanced plate method which suggests $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate be grains or starchy vegetables.
- Enjoy a variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains and protein foods at your meals to help meet your nutrient needs.
- Use added fats in small amounts.
- Listen to hunger and fullness cues to help manage portions.
- Choose low glycemic index carbohydrates more often.

STEP 2

Find the carbohydrate in your foods

- Carbohydrate is found in many foods including grains and starches, fruits, some vegetables, legumes, milk and milk alternatives, sweet foods and many prepared foods.
- Meat and alternatives, most vegetables and fats contain little carbohydrate. Include these with carbohydrate containing foods at meals and snacks.

STEP 3

Set carbohydrate goals

- A dietitian or certified diabetes educator can help you set a goal for grams of carbohydrate at each meal and snack.
- The amount may be the same day to day or may be flexible depending on your health goals and if you take insulin or other medications.
- Diabetes Canada's Clinical Practice Guidelines suggest carbohydrates make up 45 to 60% of your daily calorie intake, that is about 45-60 grams of carbohydrate at each meal or 15-30 grams at snacks for most people.
- Consistency with carbohydrate amounts from meal to meal is important. Aim to meet your target within 5 grams per meal or snack.

STEP 4

Determine carbohydrate content

- Write down what you eat and drink throughout the day.
- Be sure to note the portion sizes. You may need to use measuring cups and spoons to be accurate.
- Record the grams of carbohydrate and fibre in these foods and drinks.
- For carbohydrate content of foods, check food packages, food composition books, restaurant fact sheets, websites and the Canadian Nutrient File.

STEP 5

Monitor effect on blood sugar level

- Work with your health care team to figure out the best way to monitor your blood sugar and how to make changes to meet your blood sugar management targets.

Nutrition Facts

Per 90 g serving (2 slices)

Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 170	
Fat 2.7 g	4 %
Saturated 0.5 g + Trans 0 g	5 %
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 200 mg	8 %
Carbohydrate 36 g	13 %
Fibre 6 g	24 %
Sugars 3 g	
Protein 8 g	
Vitamin A 1 % Vitamin C 0 %	
Calcium 2 % Iron 16 %	

Finding carbohydrate values using the Nutrition Facts table

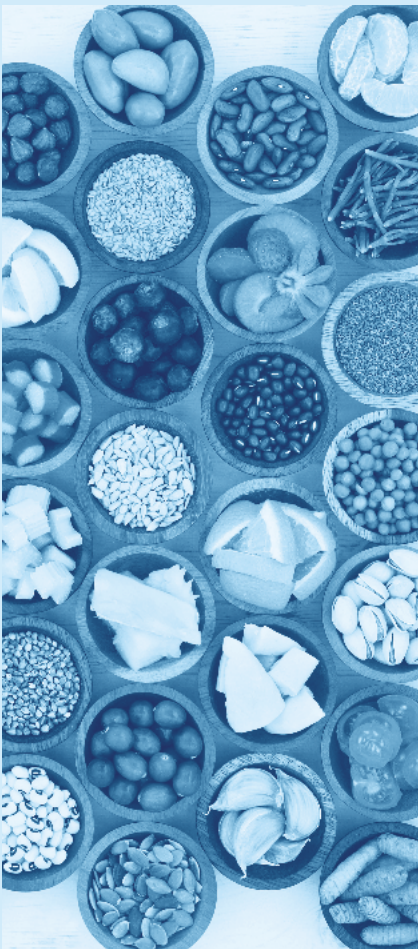
The amount of carbohydrate in a food is listed on the Nutrition Facts table.

Check the serving size: the amount listed is for the serving size given. Are you eating more, less, or the same amount? Adjust the carbohydrate amount based on the portion size you are eating.

Identify total carbohydrates: the total amount of carbohydrate in grams is listed first. This number includes starch, sugars and fibre. Starch is not listed separately. Sugars include both naturally occurring and added.

Subtract fibre: fibre does not raise blood sugar and should be subtracted from the total carbohydrate (i.e. 36 g carbohydrate – 6 g fibre = 30 g available carbohydrate).

Let's carb count! Sample carbohydrate counting:



Food	Portion size	Grams of carbohydrate
Example - dinner		
Roasted Chicken	3 oz. (90 g)	0
Quinoa or rice*	¾ cup (175 mL) cooked	30
Feta Cheese	2 Tbsp (30 mL)	0
Green Beans	½ cup (125 mL)	0
Carrots	½ cup (125 mL)	0
Apple*	1 medium	15
Milk*	1 cup (250 mL)	15
	TOTAL	60 grams
What did you eat and drink? (write it below)		
	TOTAL	

*Carbohydrate containing food

For additional nutrition and fitness information, visit diabetes.ca

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