

Carbohydrate Counting

Do you know what foods have the greatest impact on your blood sugars? If you answered CARBOHYDRATE FOODS... you are right! Carbohydrates are broken down into glucose and cause your blood glucose level to rise. For this reason, people with diabetes need to keep track of the “carbs” they eat in order to manage their blood sugars. This is referred to as “carb counting”. Examples of foods that contain carbohydrates include: breads, fruits, dairy, pasta, rice, & sweets. Carb counting is easy, it just takes some practice at first.

Follow these simple rules:

Rule 1: If a food has a label, use it. The **Nutrition Facts Label** (see reverse side) on a food package is the most reliable way to understand what you are eating.

1. Look at the **Serving Size**. The information listed on the label is based on this amount of the food.

2. Then look at the **Total Carbohydrate**. This total already includes dietary fiber, sugars, sugar alcohols and other carbohydrates.

- **Dietary Fiber:** Look for at least 3g
- **Total Sugars:** include both naturally occurring as well as added sugars (other carbohydrates). All of these can raise blood sugar quickly and should be limited as much as possible.
- **Sugar Alcohols:** eliminate or limit foods that contain this

**It is best to select those starches that are good sources of fiber and low in sugar*

Rule 2: Use **measuring tools**. Measuring food with cups, spoons, or food scales helps to determine the amount of servings & total carbohydrates.



Rule 3: If you are going out to eat or eating away from home it may be difficult to measure your food. This is where you would **estimate portion sizes**.



Rule 4: If you are going out to eat, most fast food and restaurant chains have menus online or in the store. If you know ahead of time where you will be going, be sure to look at the carbohydrate content and other nutrition information for better meal planning strategies. Similar foods may vary from place to place.

Food Labels are Important

1 Start here →

2 Check Calories

3 Limit these →

4 Increase these →

Nutrition Facts	
2 servings per container	
Serving size 1 1/2 cup (208g)	
Amount per serving	
Calories	240
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 4g	5%
Saturated Fat 1.5g	8%
<i>Trans Fat</i> 0g	
Cholesterol 5mg	2%
Sodium 430mg	19%
Total Carbohydrate 46g	17%
Dietary Fiber 7g	25%
Total Sugars 4g	
Includes 2g Added Sugars	4%
Protein 11g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 6mg	35%
Potassium 240mg	6%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

The first thing to look at is the **Serving Size**. The information printed on a label is based on that quantity of food. If you double the serving, you double all of the other information on the label.

Next, be aware of the **Calories**. Calories matter when considering weight management.

It is also important to look at **fat** and **sodium** content when trying to make healthier food choices. It is best to limit foods high in cholesterol, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. Try to consume less than 300 mg of cholesterol, 20 g of saturated fat, 0g trans fat, and 2300 mg of sodium per day to maintain good heart health.

Vitamins and **minerals** are healthy compounds that play an important role in many body processes. Getting adequate amounts are important. **Fiber** helps keep you feeling full after meal and has less of an effect on your blood sugar. Aim to get 20-30 g per day.