

# Counting Carbohydrates

- *Counting carbohydrates correctly will help you better control your blood sugar*
- *In general, you want 45-60% of your daily calories to come from carbohydrates – this equals about 150-250 grams per day or **50-80 grams per meal***
- *You can find out how many carbohydrates are in what you are eating by reading nutrition labels, using online resources ([www.calorieking.com](http://www.calorieking.com)), or asking restaurants/cafeterias for their nutrition facts*

## FOODS THAT CONTAIN CARBOHYDRATES

The following servings contain about **15 grams of carbohydrates**:

### Dairy

- 1 cup milk (cow's, soy, buttermilk)
- 2/3 cup plain yogurt
- 2/3 cup aspartame sweetened yogurt

### Starches (measured after cooking)

- 1 slice bread
- 1/4 large bagel
- 1/2 hamburger bun, hot dog bun, pita bread, English muffin
- 1/3 cup rice, pasta, millet, couscous
- 1/2 cup beans (pinto, kidney, garbanzo, lentils)
- 1/2 cup starchy vegetables (potato, corn, peas, sweet potato, yam)
- 1/2 cup oatmeal, grits
- 1 small tortilla (flour or corn, 6 inch size)
- 6 Saltine crackers
- 3 graham cracker squares

3 cups popcorn

### Fruits

- 1 small apple, orange, peach, pear or nectarine (1/2 if large)
- 1 small banana (1/2 an average banana)
- 1/2 grapefruit
- 1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce
- 3/4 cup fresh pineapple chunks, blueberries or blackberries
- 17 grapes
- 3 prunes
- 1 1/4 cups strawberries or watermelon
- 1 cup cantaloupe, honeydew melon or papaya
- 1 large kiwi
- 2 tablespoons raisins
- 1/2 cup orange, apple or grapefruit juice

### Non-Starchy Vegetables

The following contain about **5 grams of carbohydrate** per **1/2 cup cooked** or **1 cup raw**: artichokes, asparagus, green beans, beets, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, eggplant, greens, leeks, okra, onion, pea pods, peppers, spinach, summer squash, tomato, tomato sauce, turnips, and zucchini

## Meats, Proteins and Fats

The following contain **little or no carbohydrates**: meat, chicken, fish, tuna, cheese, cottage cheese, cream cheese, tofu, eggs, nuts, margarine, butter, oil, mayonnaise, avocado, seeds, olives, and sour cream. When carbohydrates are eaten with meats, proteins or fats, digestion of the carbohydrates is delayed. This causes a more steady release of sugar into the blood and can prevent unnecessary spikes in your blood sugar. An example of this would be eating Saltine crackers on their own versus having them with sugar-free peanut butter. The peanut butter would slow the digestion of the carbohydrates in the crackers.

## “Free” Foods

The following contain an **insignificant amount** of carbohydrates: diet soda/Snapple, Crystal Light, mineral water, coffee, tea, lettuce, broth, salsa, garlic, lemon, lime, spices, ginger, sugar-free Jello, and non-stick cooking spray

## READING A NUTRITION LABEL

1. Compare your portion to the serving size listed. For this food, there are 13 grams of carbohydrate per serving (1/2 cup)
2. Adjust for fiber and sugar alcohols (see below) to get the total number of carbohydrates in one serving
3. Multiply the number of servings that you are eating by that total number of carbohydrates
4. Divide your total carbohydrates by your carbohydrate ratio for that meal to determine the amount of insulin you need

## FIBER

On nutrition labels, fiber is included in the total number of carbohydrates, however, your body does not digest it. For this reason, **it does not affect your blood sugar** and you should subtract the total grams of fiber from the total grams of carbohydrates.

*Sample calculation: Total Carbohydrate (g) – Dietary fiber (g) = # of Carbohydrates to be covered by insulin*

## SUGAR ALCOHOLS

On nutrition labels, sugar alcohols may be included in the total number of carbohydrates, however, your body does not digest them completely. For this reason, they have **less of an effect on your blood sugar** and you should subtract half the grams of sugar alcohols from the total grams of carbohydrates.

*Sample calculation: Total Carbohydrate (g) – ½ Sugar Alcohol (g) = # of Carbohydrates to be covered by insulin*

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1/2 Cup (64g)	
Servings Per Container 4	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 80	Calories from Fat 25
% Daily Values*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 2.5g	<b>4%</b>
Saturated Fat 1.5g	<b>8%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 45mg	<b>15%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 110mg	<b>5%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 13g	<b>4%</b>
Dietary Fiber 2g	<b>8%</b>
Sugars 6g	
Sugar Alcohol 5g	
<b>Protein</b> 5g	<b>10%</b>
Vitamin A 2%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 10%	Iron 2%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.	