Carb counting is a meal-planning method in which you add up the grams of carbohydrate in your meals and snacks. Compared with protein and fat, carbs have the greatest effect on your blood glucose. By counting how many grams of carb you’ll be eating, you can more accurately dose mealtime insulin and keep your blood glucose stable. If you don’t use mealtime insulin, you might count carbs to track how your intake affects your glucose levels. Or you may choose to use a more basic form of carb tracking, such as the “plate method” (learn how to use it at right).

**BASIC:**

**THE PLATE METHOD**

**CARBOHYDRATE COUNTING**

Your go-to cheat sheet for all things diabetes

By Benjamin Page

Sources include: Christy L. Parkin, MSN, RN, CDE, a certified diabetes educator with Health Management Resources Inc. Diabetes Education and Consulting Services; Madelyn L. Wheeler, MS, RDN, FADA, FAND, CD, a registered dietitian nutritionist with Nutritional Computing Concepts; Alison Evert, MS, RD, CDE, manager of Nutrition and Diabetes Education Programs with the University of Washington School of Medicine

**FIND OUT MORE** about carb counting at diabetesforecast.org/carbcounting.

**FOODS WITH CARBOHYDRATE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAIRY</th>
<th>(milk, yogurt)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEGUMES</td>
<td>(beans)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRUIT</td>
<td>(fresh fruit, fruit juice, dried fruit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STARCHY VEGETABLES</td>
<td>(corn, potatoes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWEETS</td>
<td>(candy, cake, pastry, soda)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRAINS</td>
<td>(bread, cereal, pasta, rice)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Carb Counting Toolbox**

For accurate portion sizes, use:
- a small scale
- a measuring cup

**COMPARING CARBS**

Here’s what 15 grams of carb looks like:

Work with your dietitian or diabetes educator to determine how many grams of carb to have at each meal and snack. For instance, if you’re trying to stick to 45 grams of carb at lunchtime, try:

- **GRILLED CHICKEN ON A HAMBURGER BUN**
- **MIXED GREEN SALAD**
- **SMALL APPLE**

**ADVANCED:**

**INSULIN-TO-CARB RATIO**

This tells you how many grams of carb are covered by each unit of mealtime insulin. Your healthcare provider will help you determine your ratio and teach you how to use it.

**CARB-COUNTING METHODS**

1. **BASIC:** THE PLATE METHOD

2. **ADVANCED:** INSULIN-TO-CARB RATIO

**Nutrition Facts**

8 servings per container

Serving Size ¼ cup (55 g)

Amount per serving

Calories 230

% Daily Value

Total Fat 8 g 10%

Saturated Fat 1 g 5%

Trans Fat 0 g

Cholesterol 0 mg 0%

Sodium 160 mg 7%

Total Carbohydrate 37 g 13%

Dietary Fiber 4 g 14%

Total Sugars 12 g

Includes 10 g Added Sugars 20%

Protein 3 g

Vitamin D 2 mcg 10%

Calcium 260 mg 20%

Iron 8 mg 45%

Potassium 235 mg 6%

8 servings per container

Serving Size ⅔ cup (55 g)

Total Carbohydrate 37 g 13%

NONSTARCHY VEGETABLES
(broccoli, lettuce, asparagus)

WHOLE GRAINS
(brown rice, whole wheat)

PROTEIN
(fish, chicken)

LEGUMES
(beans)

STARCHY VEGETABLES
(corn, potatoes)

SWEETS
(candy, cake, pastry, soda)

Look for added sugars. Starting this year, certain food packages will begin listing sugars that are added, not naturally occurring.

Including Becca Koebrick/Becca Koebrick Design Studio (illustrations); Blooma/Creative Market (icons)