



Senior Nutrition Services Carbohydrate Counting Guide

What is carbohydrate counting?

The calories that you consume every day come from three sources, fat, protein, and carbohydrates. Carbohydrates can be either simple sugars like fruit and candy or starches like breads, pastas, and cereals. Simple sugars and starches have the biggest effect on blood sugar and are the main source of fuel for the brain and the cells of the human body. Remembering how much carbohydrate you consume will determine how low or high your blood sugar will be after a meal or snack.

Carbohydrate Containing Foods

Foods containing carbohydrates can be grouped into the following categories: breads, pastas, and cereals, vegetables, fruits, milk, yogurt, and sweets. Generally, 15 grams of carbohydrate is equal to one serving. For example: 30 grams of carbohydrate would be equal to 2 servings and 60 grams of carbohydrate is equal to 4 servings.

Starches: 1 serving=15 grams of carbohydrate

- ½ cup pasta cooked
- ½ cup cooked cereal
- 1 slice or 1 ounce of bread
- ½ cup cooked dry beans, lentils, peas, or corn
- 1 small potato

Fruits: 1 serving=15 grams of carbohydrate

- ½ cup or 4 ounces of juice
- 1 small apple, banana, or orange
- ½ cup of grapes
- 1 cup honeydew
- 1 avocado
- ¼ cup dried fruit

Vegetables: 1 serving=5 grams of carbohydrate

- 1 cup raw vegetables
- ½ cup chopped raw vegetables or cooked
- ¾ cup vegetable juice

Milk and Yogurt: 1 serving=12 grams of carbohydrate

- 1 cup or 8 ounces of milk or yogurt

Sweets

- The carbohydrate content in sweets varies on the amount of sugar used in the product. Refer to nutrition labels for serving sizes or talk with a registered dietitian if you are unsure.

The following organization contributed to this fact sheet:

- American Diabetes Association
<http://www.diabetes.org>