

## UNDERSTANDING HOW DIFFERENT FOODS AND AMOUNTS AFFECT BLOOD SUGAR

Starches and sugars (carbohydrates) have more effect on blood sugar than protein or fat. Carbohydrates include foods such as bread, pasta, cereal, beans, milk, fruit and fruit juices, and sweets. Keeping track of the carbohydrate foods you eat is a key factor in controlling your blood sugar. Carbohydrates have the greatest impact on your blood sugar after meals, and your blood sugar level can go too high when you eat more carbohydrates than your body can use. By keeping track of the carbohydrates you eat and spreading them throughout the day, you can help control your blood sugar.

In order to count carbohydrates, it's helpful to have a meal plan and know the average carbohydrate values of various food groups.

Talk to your healthcare provider, dietitian or diabetes educator about how many carbohydrates you should have at each meal.

Most of the carbohydrates we eat come from three food groups: starch, fruit and milk. Vegetables also contain some carbohydrates, but foods in the meat and fat groups contain very little carbohydrates. The total amount of carbohydrates in a food affects blood sugar levels more than does the source of carbohydrates or whether the source is a starch or sugar.

This list shows the average amount of carbohydrates in each food group per serving:

Carbohydrate Grams			
Starch	15	Vegetable	5
Fruit	15	Meat	0
Milk	12	Fat	0

To make things easy, many people begin carbohydrate counting by rounding the carbohydrate values:

One serving of milk, starch, or fruit = 15 grams of carbohydrates or one carbohydrate serving.

Three servings of vegetable = 15 grams of carbohydrates. One or two servings of vegetables do not need to be counted (with the exception of starchy vegetables like corn, potatoes, squash). Each meal and snack will contain a total number of grams of carbohydrates.

Counting carbohydrates allows flexibility in your meal plan, but you can't abandon your meal plan and eat as many carbohydrates as you desire. Remember to consult your health care team before making any of the changes discussed here.

## THE BASIC FACTS ABOUT DIABETES

**Diabetes is:**

**Controllable** - Though there is no cure for diabetes, it can be managed by keeping blood sugar levels close to normal. This is done with proper meal planning, exercise and possibly medicines.

**Lifelong** - Your blood sugar levels should improve with treatment. However, this does not mean that your diabetes has gone away. It just means your blood sugars are in control.

**Self-managed** - Your healthcare team will advise and support you, but control depends on you. The choices you make help determine what your blood sugar level will be.

**Always changing** - It is common for your healthcare provider to change your medicine or treatment plan over time because your diabetes changes over time.