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Carbohydrates and Diabetes



What is a carbohydrate?

Carbohydrates, fat and protein are nutrients found in food and beverages that provide your body with calories. Carbohydrates affect blood glucose the most, making them an important factor in the management of diabetes. All carbohydrates are broken down in the body to simple sugars (glucose, fructose and galactose).

Sugars and fiber are classes of carbohydrates.

Why do we need carbohydrates?

Carbohydrates are the number one energy source for the body. They fuel your brain, body and everyday activities.¹

First Four to Look for on Labels

- 1 Check the **Serving Size**
- 2 Look at **Calories**
- 3 Look for grams (g) of **Total Carbohydrate**¹
- 4 Check **Fiber**. **Fiber** is not digested in the body, so it does not affect blood glucose. When identifying the number of carbohydrates in a serving, fiber can be subtracted from Total Carbohydrates²

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 2/3 cup (55g)	
Servings Per Container About 8	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 230	Calories from Fat 72
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 8g	12%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	12%
Dietary Fiber 4g	16%
Sugars 1g	
Protein 3g	
Vitamin A	10%
Vitamin C	8%
Calcium	20%
Iron	45%
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily value may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	
	Calories: 2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g 80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg 2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g

Carbohydrates in one 2/3 cup serving:
37g - 4g = 33g or about 2 exchanges

Carbohydrates in food

Carbohydrates are found in dairy products, grains, fruits and vegetables. They are also present in greater amounts in starchy vegetables like beans, corn, peas, potatoes and squash.

Sweets have carbohydrates, too. These should be eaten occasionally and in small amounts within your carbohydrate and calorie goals. Here are servings of common foods that contain 15g carbohydrate, which equals one exchange.¹



1 slice bread



2/3 cup yogurt



1 small piece fruit



1/3 cup pasta or rice



2" brownie square



1 Tbsp. jam, maple syrup or sugar



1/2 cup starchy vegetable



¹ American Diabetes Association
² Joslin Diabetes Center