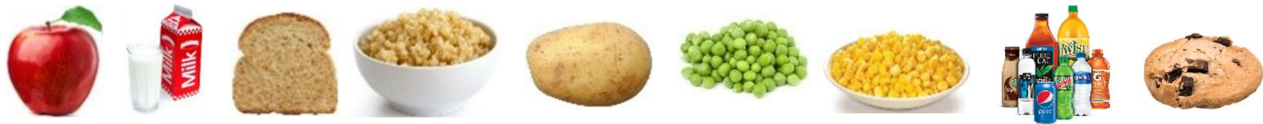


Carbohydrate Counting

Counting carbs can help keep your blood sugar steady. It may take a little practice, but you do not have to do it alone.

What is a carbohydrate and what is a serving of carbohydrates?

Carbohydrates, or “carbs,” are foods like fruit, milk, bread, cereal, oatmeal, potatoes, peas, corn, sugary drinks, and sweets. A serving means a set amount of food, and each carb food has its own serving size.



1 Serving = 15 grams of carbohydrates

Common serving sizes:

- English muffin – 1/2
- taco shell – 2 shells
- yogurt, milk – 1 cup
- pudding – 1/2 cup
- rice, beans, pasta – 1/3 cup bagel
- hamburger bun, pita – 1/2
- grapefruit, mango, orange - 1/2
- corn, potato, yam – 1/2 cup
- jelly or jam – 1 tablespoon
- apple, banana, pear – 1/2
- graham cracker (square) – 3
- ice cream – 1/2 cup

How do you count carbohydrates?

Checking food labels for carbohydrates can help you pick foods that support steady blood sugar. When you look at a label, focus on the “total carbohydrate” line. This number shows how many carbs are in one serving of that food. Start simple, try looking at one or two labels when you shop. Over time, this can help you feel more confident in your choices.

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size	2/3 cup (100g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	230
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 8g	10%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	14%
Dietary Fiber 4g	
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	20%
Protein 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 235mg	6%

Start with your nutrition label! Here are the key parts to look at:

Start with the nutrition label:

1. Find the **serving size** so you know how much food the label is for.
2. Look at **total carbohydrate**. This includes sugar and fiber.
3. Compare the serving size to how much you will eat.
4. Count the **grams of carbohydrate** or use carb choices if you know them.

In this example:

- A serving of cereal (about 2/3 cup) has about **2–3 carb choices**
- Eating a little more means **more carbs**
- Eating a little less means **fewer carbs**
- Look at the portion and take it one step at a time

How much carbohydrate should I have each day?

How many carbs you need can be different for each person. It may depend on your body, how active you are, and what type of diabetes you have. A dietitian can help you find the right amount for you. You don't have to figure it out on your own—ask for help when you need it.

- Carb needs are different for each person
- Some people may aim for about 2–4 carb choices per meal
- Your needs may be higher or lower
- Start with small steps and adjust over time

For people who take insulin, there is a method called an **insulin-to-carb ratio**. This means matching how much insulin you take to the amount of carbs you eat. This is a more advanced way of counting carbs. A trained provider, called a **Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist (CDCES)**, can help you learn how to do this step by step.

Menu

- Breakfast:** 2 slices of whole grain bread (**2 carb choices**) with peanut butter, 1 egg, 1 cup mixed berries (**1 carb choice**)
- 2-3 ounces ground turkey, ½ cup corn (**1 carb choice**), ½ cup black beans (**1 carb choice**), 1 whole grain tortilla (**1 carb choice**), 1 cup lettuce with bell peppers, onions and cucumber
- Dinner:** 3 oz. baked fish, 2/3 cup brown rice (**1 carb choice**), or quinoa (**1 carb choice**), 1 cup mixed vegetables (broccoli, carrots, cauliflower), ½ medium apple (**1 carb choice**)
- Snack:** 1 tablespoon peanut butter and 5 unsalted saltine crackers (**1 carb choice**)



What kind of carbohydrate choices are the best for CKD?

For kidney health, try to choose carbs that are less processed and have more fiber. Good options include:

- Try to choose carbs that are **less processed**
- Pick foods with more **fiber** when you can
- These choices can help your **kidneys**
- Start small—choose what feels **easy for you**

Are whole grains OK if I have CKD?

Yes! Whole grains can be a healthy choice because they have **fiber, vitamins, and minerals**. These can help keep your **blood sugar and cholesterol** steady, which can support your **kidney health**. Try adding whole grains when it feels easy for you.



For general nutrition coaching, education, and referral support only; not for nutrition diagnosis or individualized therapeutic nutrition planning.