

NOW WHAT: carb counting

When you are living with diabetes it is important to understand the effect that carbohydrates (carbs) have on your blood sugar levels.

FACTS FIRST: All carbohydrates you eat and drink turn into sugar which affect your body's blood sugar level. **WHAT ARE CARBS?** Carbs are sugars such as natural sugar found in fruit or processed sugars in drinks, sweets and packaged foods. Starches, a form of carbohydrates, include grains like oats, rice, sweet potatoes, potatoes, beans and legumes.

Portion Control

Consistency

Flexibility

ACT ON THE FACTS:

- Setting a maximum amount of carbs for each meal within your well-balanced meal plan and/or taking diabetes medication can keep your blood sugar from getting too high.
- If you use diabetes medication or insulin, it may be important to eat the same amount of food and carb at the same time each day. Doing this can keep your blood sugar from getting too high or low.
- If your insulin plan includes varying doses based on how many carbs you are eating, accurate carb counting can help you determine how much insulin to take.

STEPS TO ACTIVATE:

To carb count successfully you will need to identify carbohydrate counting resources.

1. Start by identifying what carbs are.
2. Review how to match your carb intake to your medication amount with your healthcare provider.
3. Monitor your blood sugar along with the amount and type of carb you are eating to learn how they impact your blood sugar.

Seek the support of professionals, either your diabetes healthcare team or one of the structured diabetes education courses available. You can learn about courses available in your area by visiting www.diabetesnowwhat.org and clicking on the manage diabetes tab.



Do you know which of your food and drink contain carbohydrates? Stop, think, and make a mental note of which food and drink will need to be counted.

For more information on how to manage your diabetes, visit:

DIABETESNOWWHAT.ORG

LABEL READING TIPS:

The Nutrition Facts panel on a label lists the grams of total carbohydrate in 1 standard serving. The label's standard serving may be larger or smaller than 1 carbohydrate serving.

To figure out how many carbohydrate servings are in the food:

- Look first at the label's standard serving size.
- Then check the grams of total carbohydrate. This is the amount of carbohydrate in 1 standard serving.
- *Note: You may ignore the grams of sugars on the Nutrition Facts panel because they are included in the grams of total carbohydrate.*

Learn how to read food labels

Here are tips for reading food labels:

Remember: Always compare the serving size to the actual portion.

1 Find the serving size.

2 Locate the total carbohydrate in one serving. (Sugars are included in this number, so you do not need to count them separately.)

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 15 crackers (30g)
Servings Per Container about 14

Calories 130

Total Fat 3g 5%

Saturated Fat 0g

Cholesterol 0mg 0%

Sodium 160mg 7%

Total Carbohydrate 22g 7%

Dietary Fiber 2g 8%

Sugars 3g

Protein 3g —

Vitamin A 0%

Vitamin C 0%

3 Compare the serving size listed to your actual portion.

4 Count the grams of carbohydrate or the number of carbohydrate choices. 1 carb choice is equal to 15 grams, but consult with a registered dietitian or your physician to establish your individual carb intake needs.

YOU'RE NOT ALONE!



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