

# WHY CARB COUNTING IS IMPORTANT



Personal solutions for everyday life.

Counting the amount of carbs (short for carbohydrates) you eat in a meal is an important way to help manage your blood sugar levels.

As you know, foods that contain carbs raise your blood sugar. Setting a goal for how many carbs you eat can help keep your levels closer to your target range.

And if you take mealtime insulin, you need to know the amount of carbs you eat and how active you will be in order to take the right dose.

## How many carbs in this?

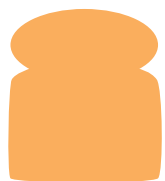
### Nutrition labels

If you're able to refer to the nutrition label, you just need to look at the serving size and the total carbohydrate. If you eat one serving of the food, then you're getting the total grams of carbs listed under "total carbohydrate." If you eat more than that, you will need to multiply the total carbs listed for one serving by the number of servings that you eat.

You can also get nutrition information on websites of food manufacturers and restaurants. Many restaurants also have nutrition information available that you can review before you order.

### Estimating carbs

If you don't have a label, then you will have to estimate how many carbs you're eating. Here are some examples. There are about 15 grams of carbs in each of the following:



Breads and grains -  
1 slice of bread



Starchy vegetables -  
1/2 cup of mashed potato

Cereals -  
3/4 cup unsweetened cold cereal



Snacks -  
2 small cookies



Fruit -  
1 small apple or orange



Milk -  
1 cup fat-free or low-fat milk

For more information on carb amounts, see Choose Your Foods: Exchange Lists for Diabetes, available at [eatright.org](http://eatright.org).

## It's ok to eat carbs

Carbs are an important part of a healthy meal plan. Watching portion sizes and getting most of your carbs from fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat milk, and yogurt is important. It's just a question of how many carbs you'll need to balance your insulin and activity level. Talking with your doctor or a registered dietitian can help.

## Fiber is your friend

If a food label says something contains 5 g of fiber or more, you can subtract half the grams of fiber from the grams of total carbs. Use that new number as the food's total carb count.

A similar rule applies for sugar alcohols. If a food contains sugar alcohols, subtract half the grams of sugar alcohols from the grams of total carbs. Use that new number as the food's total carb count.

## Your next step

Try counting the carbs in your next meal. Then see how that number of carbs affects your blood sugar level.

Learn more about carbs and diabetes at [www.LillyDiabetes.com](http://www.LillyDiabetes.com) today.