

Carbohydrates play a key role in managing diabetes. When you eat carbohydrates they are broken down into glucose. Glucose will provide the body with energy and provide important nutrients for good health.

WHAT ARE CARBOHYDRATES?

The following foods are carbohydrates. All of them will release glucose into your blood.



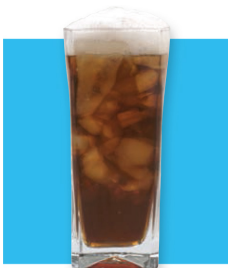
Starchy Carbohydrates

- Bread/Rolls
- Potatoes/chips
- Pasta
- Rice
- Noodles
- Crackers
- Breakfast Cereal
- Oats



Sugary Carbohydrates

- Sugar
- Sweets/Chocolate
- Biscuits
- Cakes
- Puddings
- Sugary Drinks
- Jam/Marmalade/Honey



Foods with Natural Sugars

- Fruit
- Fruit juice
- Milk
- Yogurt



DO I NEED TO REDUCE MY CARBOHYDRATES?

You do not need to avoid carbohydrates. Remember your body needs some glucose for energy as it is the body's fuel and the brain cannot function without a steady supply of glucose.

The most important factor in blood glucose control is the amount of carbohydrate that you eat.

You may need to reduce the quantity of carbohydrate foods you eat as this will reduce the amount of glucose in your blood. To help you control your diabetes you should be more carbohydrate aware.

The information on the following page should help you should help you understand where carbohydrates come from in your diet. This will help you decide if you need to manage the amount the amount of carbohydrate that you eat.

STARCHY CARBOHYDRATES

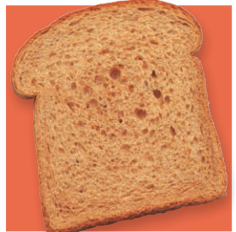
When you eat a starchy carbohydrate food it will break down and release glucose into your blood.

Eating too much starchy carbohydrate may result in too much glucose going into your blood. You do not have to avoid starchy carbohydrates but you may need to adjust your portion sizes.



The following information provides examples on how to modify your intake of starchy carbohydrates.

- Fill up with lots of vegetables or salad at your main meal or vegetable based soup at lunch. If you need to reduce your potato, rice or pasta portion at your main meals fill up with vegetables or salad
- Have fruit, a yoghurt or one plain biscuit between meals if you require a snack
- Try not to have additional bread or chips with meals if there is already a starchy carbohydrate as part of the meal
- If you need to have a supper, keep to a small portion



Try to opt for high fibre/wholegrain foods where possible.

For example granary bread rather than white bread, porridge rather than cornflakes and new potatoes with skin rather than mash.

Eating more high fibre foods may also benefit your digestive system and lower cholesterol levels.

If you are happy you are having the correct amount of carbohydrate in your diet changing the type to a slower release (low glycaemic index) version may have some extra benefits in helping to control your blood glucose levels.

Choosing higher fibre options will release glucose into your blood more evenly, help prevent peaks and falls in your blood glucose level and make you feel fuller for longer. Examples include granary bread, rather than white bread, or porridge instead of cornflakes.

SUGARY CARBOHYDRATES

When you eat a sugary carbohydrate food it will breakdown and release glucose into your blood.

You do not need to follow a sugar free diet if you have diabetes. The recommendations for people with diabetes are the same as for the general population. Your diet should be low in sugar but does not need to be sugar free.

Some sugary foods also tend to be high in fat and calories. If you are trying to lose weight these foods should be eaten less often.

The table below provides examples on how to reduce your intake of sugary carbohydrates.

Choose Less Often	Lower sugar options
Sugar, glucose, glucose syrup, dextrose, sucrose, icing sugar, light or half spoon.	Artificial sweeteners for example Canderel, Sweetex, Hermesetas, Splenda
Sweets, chocolate, toffee, fudge, tablet, mints, marzipan, jelly and boiled sweets	Sugar free chewing gum
Full sugar squash and fizzy drinks, for example Ribena, Lucozade, cola, milkshakes and energy drinks. Hot chocolate and malted drinks such as Ovaltine and Horlicks.	Diet, sugar free, no added sugar or low calorie squash and fizzy drinks e.g. Ribena light, Diet Coke, Irn Bru Xtra, Pepsi Max. Low calorie hot chocolate or malted drinks e.g. Options hot chocolate or Ovaltine light.
Chocolate biscuits, cream filled biscuits, shortbread, cakes,	Plain biscuit such as rich tea, plain digestive/oat biscuit, oat cakes, crispbread, rye crackers, small crumpet/pancake or small slice of malted fruit loaf
Tinned fruit in syrup	Fresh or stewed fruit with sweetener, or tinned fruit in natural juices or water
Sugar/honey/chocolate coated cereals such as Frosties, Crunchy Nut, Sugar Puffs, Coco Pops, muesli/granola/ cereal bars with added sugar.	High fibre cereals such as Weetabix, Shredded Wheat, All-Bran, Special K, porridge, oat flakes, no added sugar muesli/granola/cereal bars.
Sweet puddings such as tarts, pies, crumbles, sponge puddings, trifle, ice cream and gateau	Sugar free jelly, low sugar milk puddings, home made low sugar fruit based crumbles or poached fruit
Sugar free jelly, low sugar milk puddings, home made low sugar fruit based crumbles or poached fruit	Low fat natural or Greek yoghurt or low fat/low sugar flavoured/fruit yoghurts
Jam, marmalade, lemon curd, treacle, honey, chocolate spreads, golden or maple syrup	Reduced sugar options or use a thin scraping or serving of the full sugar option

Some of these suitable alternatives still contain carbohydrate and calories and should not be eaten in large quantities.

Foods labelled as "diabetic" such as sweets, cakes and chocolates offer no special benefits compared to standard versions. They may be high in fat and calories, are expensive and some may cause diarrhoea due to the type of sweeteners used.

NATURALLY OCCURRING CARBOHYDRATES

When you eat a food containing natural carbohydrates it will break down and release glucose into your blood.

You do not need to avoid these foods as they contain important nutrients that are essential for good health.

Milk and yoghurt are good sources of calcium. However if consumed in large quantities will impact on your blood glucose levels.

Fruit can also be included in your diet - see fruit and vegetables sheet for more information.



HOW MUCH CARBOHYDRATES SHOULD I EAT?

You should include carbohydrates in your diet. The amount you need will vary from person to person depending on age, activity levels and the goals you are trying to achieve.

Not everyone with diabetes needs to restrict their intake.

If you are on sulphonylureas e.g. Gliclazide or insulin it is essential to include carbohydrate at each meal.

Your dietitian can advise on the recommended amounts for you.



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