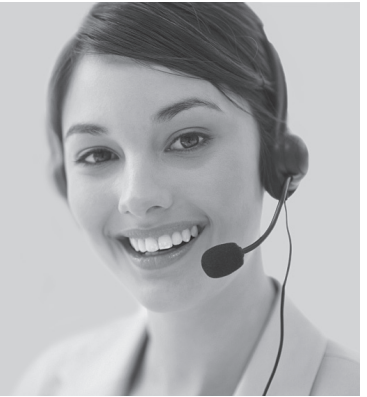


"It was great to talk with you.

Thank you for your interest in 'Getting Started Counting Carbs.'
I hope you find this tip sheet helpful.

Please give me a call if you have more questions about this or other topics.

As your UPMC Health Plan health coach, I am ready to help in any way I can."



Did you know ...?

- Carbohydrates ("carbs") are the starches and sugars in foods.
- Carbs affect blood glucose levels more than fat or protein.
- Counting carbs can help you eat about the same amount of carbs from day to day at a given meal or snack. This can help you manage your diabetes by keeping your blood glucose in your target range.

There are two ways to count carbs:

- Find out how many carbs are in each food you eat. Do this by looking in a book or on a website that lists the nutrients in foods. Then total the carbs for each meal and snack.
- A simpler approach is to use "carb choices." A carb choice is an amount of a food that has about 15 grams of carbohydrate. Example carb choices are shown on pages 3 and 4.

How Do I Use Carb Choices to Plan Meals?

Follow these guidelines:

- Eat the same number of carb choices from day to day at a given meal or snack. Talk with your doctor or a registered dietitian about what is right for you. Everyone's needs are different.
- Eat meals and snacks at about the same times each day.
- Don't forget protein. Include a protein food at every meal. Examples are cooked dried beans, split peas, lentils, fish, poultry without skin, lean meats, eggs, nuts, and seeds.
- Include small amounts of healthy fats (such as oils, nuts, seeds, liquid or tub margarine, salad dressing, or mayonnaise) at each meal.
- Eat a variety of foods. For heart health, choose foods that are low in saturated and *trans* fat. Also, include high-fiber foods. Examples are whole grain breads and cereals, fruits, vegetables, and cooked dried beans, split peas, and lentils. Fiber helps keep blood glucose steady and is important for heart health, too.



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Example Carb Choices

Note: Starred (*) foods may be high in saturated or *trans* fat. Check food labels, and limit these foods for heart health.

Grains, Breads, Starchy Vegetables (15 grams carb)

- Bagel, ¼ large (1 ounce)
- Baked beans, ¼ cup
- Bread, 1 slice (1 ounce)
- Cereal, ready-to-eat, about 1 cup (1 ounce)
- Cereal, cooked, ½ cup
- Corn or peas, ½ cup
- Crackers, non-sandwich-type, 4-6
- Crackers,* sandwich-type,* 3
- Cooked dried beans, split peas, or lentils, ½ cup
- Pancakes,* 2 (4" across)
- Popcorn, no fat added, 3 cups
- Potato, ¼ of large baked potato
- Potato chips,* 15
- Rice or pasta, cooked, 1/3 cup
- Roll, hamburger or hot dog, ½
- Soup, broth based, 1 cup
- Tortilla, 1 (6" across)
- Winter squash, 1 cup

Fruit and Nonstarchy Vegetables (15 grams carb)

- Apple, size of tennis ball
- Banana, 1 small or ½ medium
- Canned or frozen fruit, without added sugar or syrup ½ cup
- Grapefruit, ½ large
- Grape juice, 1/3 cup
- Grapes, 17
- Melon, cubed, 1 cup
- Orange, size of tennis ball
- Orange juice, 100% juice, ½ cup
- Raisins, 2 tablespoons
- Strawberries, whole, 1¼ cup
- Vegetables, non-starchy, cooked (such as green beans, broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, celery, greens [collards, kale and spinach], mushrooms, peppers, radishes, summer squash, tomatoes, zucchini, etc.), 1½ cups

Milk (15 grams carb)

- Milk, nonfat or 1%, 1 cup
- Milk, 2%,* 1 cup
- Soymilk, 1 cup
- Yogurt, nonfat or low-fat, plain or with sugar substitute, 1 cup

Sweets, Desserts (15 grams carb)

- Cake, unfrosted, 2" square
- Cookies,* 2 small
- Frozen yogurt, low-fat, ½ cup
- Graham cracker squares, 3
- Jam, sugar, or syrup, 1 tablespoon
- Pudding, sugar-free, ½ cup
- Sorbet or sherbet, ¼ cup
- Syrup, light, pancake, 2 tablespoons
- Vanilla wafers, 5



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Getting Started Counting Carbs

Carb Choices in Mixed Dishes

Many foods are a mixture of starch, protein, and fat. See below for the number of carb choices in common mixed dishes. One carb choice is 15 grams of carbohydrate.

Keep in mind that these are *estimates*. Packaged and restaurant foods vary greatly. The most accurate way to count carbs is to read Nutrition Facts labels. See below for instructions. Also ask for nutrition facts when you dine out.

Note: Many mixed dishes are very high in sodium and fat. Look for items with no more than 400 milligrams of sodium and 10 grams of fat per serving. Or make your own mixed dishes—with herbs and spices instead of salt, and with only a little fat.

Food	Serving Size	Carb Choices
Beef or chicken or shrimp with vegetables in sauce, Oriental	1 cup (about 5 oz.)	1
Breakfast sandwich, sausage biscuit or English muffin with eggs, cheese, or meat (fast food)	1 sandwich	2
Burrito (beef and bean), frozen	1 (5 oz.)	3
Casserole (such as tuna noodle, lasagna, spaghetti with meatballs, chili with beans, macaroni and cheese)	1 cup	2
Chicken breast, breaded and fried (fast food)	1 (about 5 oz.)	1
Chicken nuggets (fast food)	6 (about 3½ oz.)	1
Chicken salad	½ cup	½
Chicken sandwich, grilled (fast food)	1	3
Chicken thigh, breaded and fried (fast food)	1 (about 4 oz.)	½
Coleslaw	½ cup	1
Dinner-type meal, frozen	14-17 oz.	3
Egg roll, with meat	1 (about 3 oz.)	1
Fish sandwich, with tartar sauce (fast food)	1	2½
French fries (fast food)	Small	3
French fries (fast food)	Medium	4
French fries (fast food)	Large	5
Hamburger (fast food)	Regular Large with cheese	2 2½
Hot dog with bun (fast food)	1	1
Macaroni or pasta salad	½ cup	2



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Nachos with cheese (fast food)	Small (about 4½ oz.)	2½
Noodles and vegetables in sauce (chow mein, lo mein)	1 cup	2
Onion rings (fast food)	1 serving (about 3 oz.)	2½
Pizza, cheese pepperoni, regular crust (fast food)	⅛ of a 14"	2½
Pizza, cheese with no meat, thin crust (fast food)	¼ of a 12"	2½
Pizza, meat topping or cheese with no meat, thin crust, frozen	¼ of a 12"	2
Pocket sandwich, frozen	1 (4½ oz.)	3
Pot pie, frozen	1 (7 oz.)	2½
Potato salad	½ cup	1½-2
Salad, grilled chicken type, no croutons (fast food)	1	1
Soft-serve ice cream cone (fast food)	1 small	2½
Soup, bean, lentil, or split pea; chowder; cream; tomato; vegetable beef, chicken noodle, or other broth type	1 cup (8 oz.)	1
Soup, oriental noodle	1 cup (8 oz.)	2
Stews (beef or other meats with vegetables)	1 cup	1
Submarine sandwich (fast food)	6-inch sub	3-3½
Taco, hard or soft shell, meat and cheese (fast food)	1 small	1
Tuna salad	½ cup	½

What Are Free Foods?

"Free foods" have *fewer than 20 calories and less than 5 grams of carb per serving.*

Limit these free foods to three servings per day (not at the same time):

- Catsup, 1 tablespoon
- Cream cheese, fat-free, 1 tablespoon
- Low-sugar jam, 1-2 tablespoons (check label)
- Nondairy creamer, 1 tablespoon
- Salsa, ¼ cup
- Vegetables, nonstarchy, raw, 1 cup

You may eat these free foods in any amounts:

- Diet soda and other diet drinks
- Herbs, spices, seasonings (Watch the sodium content.)



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What About Foods Not Listed Above?

You can figure out the number of carb choices for any food. Here's how:

- For a packaged food, look at the Nutrition Facts on the label. For a food without a label, look for the food in a "counter." (A counter is a book or website that lists the amount of nutrients in foods.)
- Find the serving size on the label or in the counter.
- Find the grams of total carbohydrate in that serving size. (A gram is a unit of weight. One paper clip weighs about 1 gram.)
- Divide the grams of total carb by 15. The result is the number of carb choices in that serving size.

Example (using label shown):

- 4 oz. contains 13 grams of total carbohydrate.
- 13 divided by 15 = about 1.
- 4 oz contains about 1 carb choice.
- How about 8 oz? That amount contains about 2 carb choices.

The amount you eat is very important! If you eat twice as much as the serving size on the label or in the counter, you will get twice as many carbs. If you eat half as much, you will get half as many carbs.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 4 oz. (113g)

Servings Per Container 4

Amount Per Serving

Calories 280 **Calories from Fat** 130

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 14g **22%**Saturated Fat 3.5g **18%**

Trans Fat 2.5g

Cholesterol 12 mg **40%****Sodium** 640 mg **27%****Total Carbohydrate** 13g **4%**Dietary Fiber 1g **4%**

Sugars 0g

Protein 24g

Vitamin A 2% • Vitamin C 2%

Calcium 2% • Iron 6%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

	Calories	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less Than	65g	80g
Saturated 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

Calories per gram:

Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4



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What About Protein and Fat?

Many foods that are high in protein and/or fat contain little or no carbohydrates. They don't have that much effect on blood glucose. Examples are meat, fish, chicken, turkey, eggs, cheese, oils, margarine, nuts, and peanut butter.

But some high-protein foods *do* contain carbohydrates and affect blood glucose. Examples are milk, yogurt, cooked dried beans, split peas, lentils, breaded foods such as fried fish or chicken, and mixed dishes such as lasagna.

Also keep in mind that some fats increase the risk of heart disease. Limit saturated fat, which is found in fatty meats, poultry skin, cheese, butter, cream, whole and 2% milk, palm oil and coconut oil. Also avoid *trans* fat, which is found in stick margarine, shortening, many baked goods, fried foods, and fast foods. Instead, choose oils, nuts, seeds, tub or liquid margarine, and mayonnaise in small amounts.

Sample Meal Plan

Many meal plans include 4 or 5 carb choices per meal and 1 or 2 carb choices per snack. The meal plan below is *only one example*. Talk with a registered dietitian for your own meal plan.

Meal, Time,	# Carb Choices	Sample Menu	# Carb Choices
Breakfast 7 a.m.	4	1½ cups strawberries, whole	1
		¾ cup dry cereal	2
		1 cup nonfat milk	1
		1 egg, scrambled in 1 teaspoon tub margarine	0
Lunch 12 p.m.	4	2 slices (1 ounce each) whole wheat bread	2
		3 ounces shaved turkey breast	0
		2 teaspoons low-fat mayonnaise	0
		1½ cups steamed green beans	1
		1 orange	1
Snack 3 p.m.	1	1 apple	1
Dinner 6 p.m.	4	3 ounces baked chicken without skin	0
		1 medium potato (6 ounces)	2
		1 teaspoon tub margarine	0
		1½ cups steamed carrots	1
		1 cup nonfat milk	1
Snack 8 p.m.	1	3 cups light microwave popcorn, no fat added	1



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Getting Started Counting Carbs

My Meal Plan

Fill in the chart below to create your own meal plan. Ask a registered dietitian to help you.

Meal and Time	# Carb Choices	Sample Menu	# Carb Choices
Breakfast __:__ __			
Lunch __:__ __			
Dinner __:__ __			
Snack __:__ __			
Snack __:__ __			
Snack __:__ __			



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Take Action

1. Keep a food record every day. Use copies of the form below. Compare your food records to your My Meal Plan on page 7.
2. Once a week, choose one or two changes you would be willing to make during the next week to better follow your meal plan. Do your best to make those changes.
3. Talk with a registered dietitian about any questions you have about your meal plan or carb counting. Review your food records together. Discuss any changes to your meal plan that might make it work better for you.

My Food Record

Make copies of this form to use as a food record. Keep one copy blank so you can use it to make more copies in the future.

Meal and Time	# Carb Choices	Sample Menu	# Carb Choices
Breakfast __ : __ __			
Lunch __ : __ __			
Dinner __ : __ __			
Snack __ : __ __			
Snack __ : __ __			
Snack __ : __ __			



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