

Transcript

Pastas, whole grains, fruits, vegetables, milk, ice cream, candy, cakes, cookies, pretzels, the list goes on and on. These are carbohydrate foods and we love to eat them. However, carbohydrates have the greatest effect on your blood glucose.

When you eat carbohydrates, they are turned into glucose and used for energy now, or stored in your cells for later use. Fifteen minutes to one and a half hours after you eat carbohydrates, your blood sugar, also called blood glucose, will rise.

If your blood glucose is often high, over time, you are at an increased risk for long-term health problems including heart disease, stroke, eye disease, kidney disease and amputation.

Your body needs the energy that carbohydrates provide, so cutting them out is not an option. Instead, you can learn to better control the amount of carbohydrates you eat, what types of carbohydrates you eat and when you eat them, to help prevent high blood glucose and the long-term health problems it can cause. This is called carbohydrate counting.

To begin carbohydrate counting, meet with your diabetes care team. Together, you will determine how much carbohydrate you should have at each meal and snack based on your age, health, medications and daily routines. This is called your meal plan.

Carbohydrates are measured in grams. One serving of carbohydrate is 15 grams. To find out how much carbohydrate is in the different foods you eat, read the food label. Other tools such as websites like calorieking.com and nutritondata.com; as well as apps for your tablet or smartphone like MyFitnessPal and CalorieKing can also help you understand the amount of carbohydrates in different foods.

Then, based on the number of carbohydrates in the foods you eat, you can see whether the foods you choose fit into your meal plan. For example, if your meal plan suggests you aim for about 45 grams of carbohydrate at lunch, take a look at a typical lunch you eat and count the number of carbohydrates.

If you eat a turkey sandwich with lettuce and tomato on 2 slices of whole grain bread, 1 cup of apple slices and a glass of non-sweetened iced tea, the total number of carbohydrates in this meal is about 45 grams and fits into your meal plan. But, if you decide to add 2 chocolate chip cookies to your meal you add another 23 grams of carbohydrate, putting you over your lunch time target and raising your blood glucose.

When carbohydrate counting, be careful to count the amount of carbohydrates based on the serving size you actually eat and not just the amount on the food label. For example, a serving of Chex Mix contains 22 grams of carbohydrate. But that is for a ½ cup portion. If you eat more than that, remember to increase the number of grams of carbohydrate you count. It can make a big difference and will affect your blood glucose level.

Carbohydrates affect your blood glucose. To better control your diabetes and still enjoy carbohydrate foods, begin to carbohydrate count. Meet with your diabetes care team to set up a meal plan and begin to understand the amount of carbohydrates in the foods you eat to keep your blood glucose in your target range.