

Diabetes Management: Creating Your Carbohydrate Counting Meal Plan

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Transcript

"So, I hear you found out you have diabetes and you're here today to learn about carbohydrate counting."

"Yes."

When carbohydrate counting, your goal is to use your food choices to better control your blood glucose. First, speak with members of your healthcare team for nutrition advice or a registered dietitian for in-depth nutrition counseling. Together you will develop a meal plan.

"She asked me, you know, about my lifestyle and what's convenient for me, and about my family. So we mapped out a diet that was going to accommodate my needs."

Your meal plan is individual for you and based on your nutritional needs, daily routines, age, what medications you take, if any, how active you are, and other goals of your management plan, including weight loss.

Taking all of these factors into account, your diabetes care team will help you develop a meal plan. Carbohydrates are measured in grams. Your meal plan will suggest the number of grams of carbohydrate you should eat at each meal and snack and a total for the day.

A typical meal plan may look like this, 45 grams of carbohydrate for breakfast, 60 grams of carbohydrate for lunch, 15 grams of carbohydrate for an afternoon snack, and 60 grams of carbohydrate for dinner, for a daily total of 180 grams of carbohydrate.

Remember, your meal plan is individual for you and takes your lifestyle into account. Perhaps you take insulin and have an evening snack of 15 grams of carbohydrate as well as an afternoon snack.

What if your job doesn't allow you to snack during the day? In that case, you may consume more carbohydrates at each meal and add an evening snack to reach your daily total.

Work with your diabetes care team to ensure your meal plan is something you can put into practice based on your lifestyle and how you really eat.

"So tell me, do you like to have six small meals a day, or do you like to have three meals with one or two snacks in between?"

"I usually eat three meals, not a lot for breakfast."

However your meal plan looks, it is helpful to remember that your goal is to try to keep your blood glucose at a healthy level and avoid high blood glucose after you eat. To do this, stay consistent. Count the carbohydrates you eat and try to stay as close to your meal plan as possible, ideally within 15 grams of carbohydrate.

Space your carbohydrate intake evenly throughout the day and try to eat at about the same time each day. If snacks are not an option because of your daytime schedule, try not to wait any longer than 4 to 5 hours between meals. Your meal plan will help you do this.

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"So, I've come up with a meal plan for you and it's going to include your three meals a day with a snack. Does this sound good? Do you think this will work for you?"

"I certainly will try it. Yes, I think it will work."

"Great."

Creating a meal plan is the first step to gaining better blood glucose control through carbohydrate counting. Make sure it works for you and your lifestyle and follow it every day.