

# Choosing Carbohydrates Wisely When You Have Diabetes

When you have diabetes and are trying to make healthy food choices, it's important to choose carbohydrates wisely.

Carbohydrates are found in three key groups of foods. Starchy foods: which include breads, whole grains, pasta, rice, noodles, some vegetables like corn and potatoes, and beans.

Fruits. And Dairy.

Carbohydrate is also found in table sugar, syrup, and most processed foods like crackers, pretzels, chips, candy and desserts.

Most of the carbohydrate you eat is turned into glucose and used by your body for energy.

Carbohydrate raises your blood glucose more than any other type of food. That's why if you eat too much carbohydrate your blood glucose may rise to unhealthy levels.

Foods high in sugar or processed with white flour, like cakes, cookies, pies, candies and desserts, are usually high in carbohydrate. These should be enjoyed only in small amounts because they usually offer less fiber and little nutritional value and can raise your blood glucose quickly.

But since your body needs carbohydrates for energy, cutting them out altogether is not an option. Instead make your carbohydrate choices healthy.

Fruits and non-starchy vegetables are two healthier food choices. Most people today need to eat more of both. In fact, it's recommended that you get 2 ½ to 3 cups of non-starchy vegetables each day and depending on your carbohydrate needs 1 ½ to 2 cups of fruit.

These give you some of the nutrients your body needs for energy and overall health.

*"I'm a lover of vegetable and especially foods like corn and potatoes. Well, they are high in carbs so I had to decrease those and do a lot of spinach, broccoli and so forth."*

To get the fruits and vegetables you need each day, try cutting up vegetables ahead of time and snacking on them during the day.

Try a side salad with a meal. Or choose canned fruit as an affordable way to take it and go. Just be careful of juices and fruit packed in syrup. They may be adding more sugar than you need. When in doubt, fresh fruit is always the better choice.

*"Consider using fruit, for example, as a dessert and knowing it doesn't always have to be raw. It could be heated where the natural sweetness of the fruit gets enhanced, like baked apples or even lightly warming blueberries, they become like a jammy kind of thing."*

Another great way to get your daily carbohydrates is through whole grains and legumes. These carbohydrate choices can be high in fiber, which tend to fill you up, and help you feel full longer while not raising your blood glucose as fast as other carbohydrate foods.

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This is a benefit when trying to manage your diabetes.

It is recommended that you get 25-35 grams of fiber each day.

Choose high fiber carbohydrates like whole-grain pasta, pasta containing bean or legume flour, or brown rice, corn or quinoa. Look for cereal made from whole grains.

Work with your healthcare provider to find more healthy carbohydrate choices that fit into your lifestyle.