

Common Advanced Carb Counting Scenarios

When using advanced carb counting, you may sometimes need to adjust your insulin routine to keep your blood sugar in your target range.

Here are four common scenarios that may happen and how to manage them.

First, let's look at what to do if your blood sugar is high before you eat. If your blood sugar is above your premeal target, you will need to take extra insulin as part of your bolus dose.

This is called a "correction dose." Use your correction factor to calculate how much extra insulin you need.

Then add this amount to your regular bolus dose based on your insulin-to-carb ratio.

These two numbers added together will tell you how much total bolus insulin you need.

Next, let's look at the opposite scenario. What should you do if your blood sugar is low before you eat? If this happens, follow the 15-15 Rule to treat the low first.

Eat something with about 15 grams of carb, wait 15 minutes, then check your blood sugar again.

If your reading is still at or below 70 mg/dL, repeat these steps.

Once your blood sugar is back in your target range, use your insulin-to-carb ratio as usual to calculate your bolus insulin dose.

Another common scenario - you're not sure ahead of time how many carbs you will be eating, like at a holiday meal or when you treat yourself to seconds.

In this case, take enough insulin 10 to 15 minutes before your meal to cover the amount of carb you know you will be eating, plus any correction factor needed for high blood sugar.

Then, in the middle or at the end of your meal, take more insulin to cover any extra carbs you are eating.

Lastly, what should you do when you're at a restaurant and you're not sure when the food will arrive? To be safe, wait and take your insulin dose when you get your food.

You can also apply this to meals that have multiple courses, with extended time between each course.

It may take some practice to get to know your body and the best way to manage your diabetes in these scenarios. When in doubt, check your blood sugar often. Make changes to your insulin routine, if needed.

And regularly review your carb counting practices with your diabetes care team.

They can make sure you are correctly adjusting for new situations.