

# Carbohydrate counting: a Bengali quick guide

## What are carbohydrate foods?

Carbohydrate foods, or carbs, are a source of fuel and nutrients for your body.

Carbs are:

- » **Sugars**, such as the natural sugar in fruit and milk or the added sugar in soft drinks and many packaged foods.
- » **Starches**, including grains such as wheat, rye, barley, oats, rice and other grains, foods made from these grains such as breads, pasta and breakfast cereals, starchy vegetables such as corn and potatoes; and dried beans, lentils, and peas.

## Why is the amount of carbohydrate you eat important?

Once in the stomach, carbs get broken down into glucose, which raises your blood glucose levels. Therefore:

- » Eating or drinking large amounts at one time can lead to high blood glucose levels.
- » Eating too little, or skipping a meal can lead to low blood glucose levels, known as hypoglycaemia (a hypo). This can occur if you are on insulin or certain other diabetes medications.

## How to count carbohydrates

Counting carbs is simply keeping track of the amount you eat in your meals, snacks, and drinks across the day.

An exchange, has around 15 grams of carbs.

**1 exchange**  
**=**  
**15 grams of carbohydrate**



## How much should you eat?

This depends on your age, gender, weight and activity levels.

**As a general guide:**

	Carbohydrate grams (g) at main meals	Exchanges
Women	30g - 45g	2-3
Men	45g - 60g	3-4

## Do you need to eat snacks?

Most people who need to take insulin or other glucose-lowering medications do not need snacks through the day or before bed to prevent a hypo. However, for some people a snack may be recommended. Please talk to your diabetes health professional about whether this applies to you.

If you wish to include snacks in your meal plans, please talk to your dietitian about how to best do this.

For adults requiring a carb snack, a general guide is to aim for 1–2 carb exchanges per snack (15–30g of carbs).

## Sample meal plans

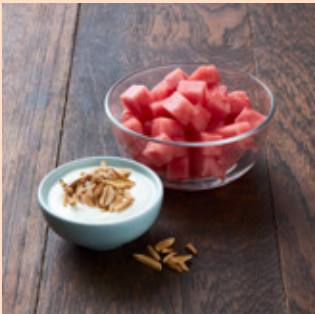

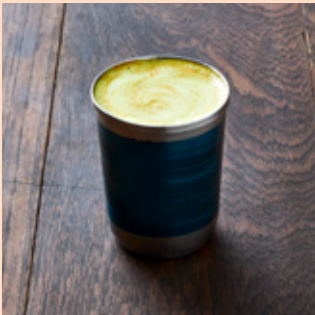
Here are two examples of what carb counting looks like. Each meal has three (3) exchanges and each snack has one (1). The carb foods are in **bold**.

Meal	Food	Carbohydrate Exchanges
Breakfast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» A glass of water with 2 tablespoons of lemon juice</li> <li>» 2 <b>wholemeal chapatis</b> (about 15 cm in diameter)</li> <li>» 1 cup <b>dhal</b></li> </ul>	3
	OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» A glass of water with 2 tablespoons of lemon juice</li> <li>» 2 <b>idlis</b> (about 10 cm diameter) or 2 <b>dosa</b> (about 25 cm diameter)</li> <li>» 1 cup <b>lentil</b> and vegetable curry (sambar)</li> <li>» chutney made with vegetables e.g. tomato or capsicum or eggplant</li> </ul>	
Snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» 4 pitted <b>dates</b> (about 20g)</li> <li>» ¼ cup unsalted, raw or dry-roasted walnuts (10 whole walnuts)</li> </ul>	1
	OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» 1 small <b>banana</b></li> <li>» ¼ cup (30g) raw or dry-roasted nuts e.g. walnuts</li> </ul>	
Lunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» A glass of water with 2 tablespoons of lemon juice</li> <li>» 1 small <b>wholemeal roti</b> (15cm diameter)</li> <li>» ¾ cup cooked <b>dried beans</b> (Usali/Sundal/Phaliyan)</li> <li>» 1 cup curried cauliflower</li> <li>» 1 cup savoury lassi (1 tablespoon of yoghurt mixed with 200 mls water)</li> </ul>	3
	OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» A glass of water with 2 tablespoons of lemon juice</li> <li>» 3 <b>wholemeal chapatis</b> (about 15 cm in diameter) or ¾ cup cooked <b>brown basmati rice*</b></li> <li>» Palm-sized piece of lean meat or skinless chicken or a hand-sized piece of fish cooked with herbs and spices</li> <li>» 1 cup cooked non-starchy vegetables e.g. vegetable korma</li> <li>» 1 cup savoury lassi (1 tablespoon of yoghurt mixed with 200 mls water)</li> </ul>	



\* One exchange of cooked rice can range from ¼ to ⅓ cup depending on the type of rice and the way it is cooked and packed.

## Sample meal plans – continued









Meal	Food	Carbohydrate Exchanges
Snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» ¾ cup diced <b>watermelon</b> topped with</li> <li>» ¼ cup <b>natural or low-fat natural yoghurt</b> sprinkled with</li> <li>» 2 teaspoons roasted slivered almonds</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» ¾ cup diced <b>papaya</b></li> <li>» ¼ cup <b>natural or low-fat natural yoghurt</b> sprinkled with</li> <li>» 2 teaspoons slivered (roasted) almonds and a few saffron strands</li> </ul>	 <p>1</p>
Evening meal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» A glass of water with 2 tablespoons of lemon juice</li> <li>» ½ cup cooked <b>basmati rice</b>*</li> <li>» Curry made with palm-sized piece of skinless chicken</li> <li>» ¾ cup mung dhal and carrot kosambari (salad)</li> <li>» 1 cup savoury lassi (1 tablespoon of yoghurt mixed with 200 mls water)</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» A glass of water with 2 tablespoons of lemon juice</li> <li>» ½ cup cooked <b>brown basmati rice</b></li> <li>» 1 cup curry made with <b>lentils</b> or <b>dried beans</b> e.g. chickpea masala</li> <li>» 1 cup cooked non-starchy vegetables e.g. green beans cooked with tomato</li> <li>» 1 cup savoury lassi (1 tablespoon of yoghurt mixed with 200 mls water)</li> </ul>	 <p>3</p>
Snack	<p><b>1 cup turmeric milk made with</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» 200 ml <b>fat-free milk</b></li> <li>» 1 teaspoon <b>honey</b></li> <li>» ¼ teaspoon turmeric powder</li> <li>» ½ teaspoon crushed cardamom, cloves, cinnamon and pepper mix</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <p><b>Badam kheer made with</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» 150 ml <b>fat-free milk</b></li> <li>» 1½ <b>dried dates</b> and</li> <li>» 1 tablespoon almond meal</li> </ul>	 <p>1</p>

\* One exchange of cooked rice can range from ¼ to ⅓ cup depending on the type of rice and the way it is cooked and packed.

## Carbohydrate exchanges

Here are exchanges of foods that have around **15 grams of carbohydrate**. Use as a general guide only.






### Bread and bread products

			
1 small roti or chapati (about 15cm diameter) (40g)	1 round crumpet (40g)	1/2 bread roll (35g)	1/2 wholegrain wrap (35g)
			
1/2 pita 'pocket' bread (35g)	1/4 large pita bread (25g)	1 regular slice of bread or fruit bread (35g)	1/2 English muffin

### Breakfast cereals

				
1/3 cup raw rolled oats (30g)	1/4 cup natural muesli (30g)	1 1/2 wheat biscuit type cereal (25g)	1/2 cup flake type cereal with dried fruit (30g)	1/2 cup porridge (oats cooked with water) (130g)









### Rice/pasta/grains/flour

				
1/4 cup cooked rice* (50g) or couscous (55g)	1/2 cup cooked Poha or Aval (flattened rice) or puffed rice (Mandal) (60g), pasta (75g), quinoa (95g), or millet (70g)	1/4 cup dry semolina (60g)	1 idli (about 10cm in diameter) (40g)	1 dosa (about 25cm in diameter) (55g)






- 1/3 cup rice noodles (55g)
- 2 tablespoons flour or corn flour (20g)
- 1/3 cup vermicelli (60g)
- 1/3 cup cooked barley (65g)
- 1/3 cup besan (chickpea flour) (30g)
- 1/2 cup upama (cooked semolina) (55g)
- 1/2 cup spicy rice or khichadi (70g)

\* One exchange of cooked rice can range from 1/4 to 1/3 cup depending on the type of rice and the way it is cooked and packed.




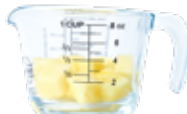




## Starchy vegetables

			
1 small potato (100g) or ½ cup mashed	½ cup corn kernels (90g) or 1 medium cob (170g)	½ cup taro, diced and cooked (60g)	¾ cup yam, diced uncooked (Suran) (120g)
			
½ cup orange sweet potato, uncooked (100g)	⅓ cup cassava, cooked (50g)	½ medium green banana, peeled and cooked (75g)	1 tablespoon tapioca (sago) (50g)

## Legumes

				
½ cup cooked or canned bean mix (95g), chickpeas (85g), kidney beans (95g), cannellini beans (130g)	¾ cup cooked or canned lentils (140g)	½ cup mung beans, cooked (85g)	½ cup soya beans (dried) (90g)	¾ cup lima beans cooked (150g)

## Fruit

			
1 small or 1/2 large banana (130g)	½ small mango (100g)	1 1/2 cups diced rockmelon or watermelon or honeydew (250g)	1 cup diced pineapple (190g) or papaya (250g)
			
2 kiwifruits (170g)	½ cup jackfruit, sliced (90g)	½ cup grapes (100g)	1/2 medium pomegranate (120g)






- 3 large apricots (170g)
- 2 medium mandarins (150g)
- 3 fresh figs (150g)
- 1 large peach or nectarine (200g)
- 3 cups strawberries

- 3 to 4 guavas (360g)
- 1 large grapefruit (300g)
- 2-3 strips dried mango (20g)
- 1 cup or 20 cherries (150g)
- 6 prunes (50g)

- 8 dried apricot halves (30g)
- 4 dates, dried and pitted (20g)
- 1½ tablespoons or 20 sultanas (25g)
- ¼ medium custard apple (100g)



## Milk, milk products and alternatives

				
1 cup fat-free, low- or full-fat milk, soy milk or buttermilk (250ml)	1/2 cup evaporated skim milk (135g)	250g fat-free, low- or full-fat natural yoghurt	100g fat-free, low- or full-fat fruit yoghurt	1/2 cup low-fat custard

- 1/3 cup skim powdered milk (35g)

## Other/ Miscellaneous Food



3 cups air-popped corn (25g)

## Occasional Foods

				
1 cup plain potato chips (25g)	1 tablespoon jam (20g)	2 plain sweet biscuits/ fruit slice biscuits (20g)	4 squares milk chocolate (25g)	1 small vegetable samosa (50g)

- 3 teaspoons honey (20g)
- 3 teaspoons sugar (15g)
- 1 small piece of cake, unfilled, without icing (30g)
- 6 plain crispbreads, small square or round
- 10 rice crackers
- 1 1/2 thick or 3 thin rice or corn cakes (20g)
- 1 medium scoop of plain vanilla ice-cream (70g)

## Find a dietitian

If you have any questions, ask your dietitian. To find one, go to [dietitiansaustralia.org.au](http://dietitiansaustralia.org.au) or contact Dietitians Australia. Call **1800 812 942** or email [info@dietitiansaustralia.org.au](mailto:info@dietitiansaustralia.org.au)

## Carbohydrate counting is a tool to better manage your diabetes.

### The NDSS and you

A wide range of services and support is available through the NDSS to help you manage your diabetes. This includes information on diabetes management through the NDSS Helpline and website. The products, services and education programs available can help you stay on top of your diabetes.