

Carbohydrate counting: a Korean 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	Korean Seaweed Soup: Miyeok-guk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Palm-sized piece of lean beef thinly sliced • ¼ cup of rehydrated dried seaweed (wakeme) • ¾ cup of cooked mixed grain rice* • Served with kimchi and tofu side dishes 	
	OR Pan Fried Tofu: Dubu Buchim <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Palm-sized pan-fried tofu served with dipping sauce on the side • ¾ cup of cooked mixed grain rice* • Served with vegetable-based Banchan (side dishes) 	
Snack	1 cup of long black coffee with ½ cup of steamed sweet potato with skin on OR Coffee made with 1 cup of low-fat milk , e.g. Latte	
Lunch	Pan-fried Mackerel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pan-fried hand-sized mackerel • 1½ cups of broccoli tofu salad • ¾ cup cooked mixed grain rice* with black beans • Served with vegetable-based Banchan (side dishes) 	
	OR Korean Noodle Soup: Buckwheat Janchi Guksu 1 cup of cooked buckwheat noodles Toppings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1½ cup of thinly sliced vegetables (zucchini, carrot, mushrooms and kimchi) • 2 pan-fried whole eggs, thinly sliced • Served with sauce made with low sodium soy sauce on the side 	

* 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	1 cup of seasonal fruit salad and 30g unsalted nuts (e.g. walnuts) OR ½ cup of low-fat Greek yoghurt topped with ½ cup of mixed berries		1
Evening meal	<p>Korean Soybean Paste Soup: Doenjang Jigae</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half palm-sized piece of lean beef • Half palm-sized tofu • 1½ cups of mixed vegetables (zucchini and onions diced and enoki mushrooms) • ¾ cup of cooked mixed grain rice • Served with vegetable-based Banchan (side dishes) OR <p>Korean Beef Bulgogi</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Palm-sized piece of lean beef fillet • 2 cups of sliced vegetables (carrots, onions, mushrooms) • ¾ cup of cooked mixed grain rice* • Served with vegetable-based Banchan (side dishes) 		3
Snack	1 cup of calcium-fortified soy milk (e.g SoGood Soy Milk) or low-fat milk OR 1 medium orange		1

* 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 breakfast cereal

				
1 regular slice bread or fruit bread (35g)	1/2 wholegrain wrap (35g)	1 small or 1/2 large mantou (steamed bun) (30g)	1 small roti or chapati (15cm in diameter) (40g)	1/3 cup raw rolled oats (30g)


<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 crumpet – round shape (40g) • 1/2 bread roll (35g) • 1/4 bagel (30g) • 1/3 Turkish bread roll (40g) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 small or 1 large steamed pork bun (60g) • 2-4 medium multigrain rectangular crackers (25g) • 1/4 cup natural muesli (30g) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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)
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Rice, noodles, grains and flour

			
1 1/2 tablespoons raw polenta (25g)	1/3 cup cooked noodles (egg, rice, vermicelli, soba or buckwheat) (55g), wheat noodles (Hokkien, or Udon) (55g), barley (65g)	1/4 cup cooked rice* (50g) or couscous (55g)	1/2 cup cooked pasta (50g), quinoa (95g), sweet potato noodles (Dangmyeon) (50g) or millet (70g)

			
7-9 (30g) rice cakes (sliced type)	1 1/2 rice paper wrappers (45g)	2 tablespoons flour or corn flour (20g)	1/2 roll sushi general (50g)

Starchy vegetables






			
1 small potato (100g) or 1/2 cup mashed	1/2 cup orange sweet potato, raw (100g)	1/2 cup sweet corn kernels (90g) or 1 medium cob (170g)	1/2 cup taro, diced cooked (60g)

* 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.

Legumes






 <p>½ cup cooked or canned bean mix (95g), chickpeas (85g), kidney beans (100g), cannellini beans (130g), or baked beans (140g)</p>	 <p>¾ cup cooked or canned lentils (140g)</p>	 <p>¾ cup dried soya beans (130g)</p>	 <p>1 cup edamame beans (190g)</p>
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Fruit



 <p>1 medium apple or pear (150g)</p>	 <p>1 small or ½ large banana (130g)</p>	 <p>1½ cups diced rockmelon or watermelon or honeydew (250g)</p>	 <p>½ cup grapes (100g)</p>
 <p>2 kiwifruits (170g)</p>	 <p>10 lychees (100g)</p>	 <p>2 medium mandarins (150g)</p>	 <p>½ small mango (100g)</p>

- 3 large apricots (170g)
- 1/4 cup durian, fresh, peeled (60g)
- 4 dates, dried and pitted (20g)
- 6 pieces dried apple (20g)
- 8 dried apricot halves (30g)
- 2-3 strips dried mango (20g)
- dried durian (20g)
- 1½ tablespoons or 20 sultanas (25g)
- 1 persimmon (75g)
- 1 cup or 20 cherries (150g)
- 1 cup diced papaya (250g)

Milk, milk products and alternatives

 <p>1 cup low- or full-fat milk or soy milk (250ml)</p>	 <p>250g low- or full-fat natural yoghurt</p>	 <p>100g low- or full-fat fruit yoghurt</p>	 <p>½ cup evaporated skim milk (135g)</p>	 <p>⅓ cup powdered skim milk (35g)</p>
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Other/miscellaneous food

 <p>3 cups air-popped corn (25g)</p>	 <p>5 chestnuts (50g)</p>
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Sauces, condiments and/or spreads

- 2 tablespoons hoisin sauce (40g)
- 3 tablespoons oyster sauce (60g)
- 1 tablespoon sweet chilli sauce (30g)
- 1½ tablespoons teriyaki sauce (35g)
- 2 tablespoons chilli paste (Korean) (40g)
- 3 tablespoons or ¼ cup tomato sauce (65g)
- 1½ tablespoons bbq sauce (35g)

Occasional foods

				
1 cup plain potato chips (25g)	4 squares milk chocolate (25g)	1 tablespoon jam (20g)	3 teaspoons honey (20g)	3 teaspoons sugar (15g)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 tablespoons or 7 teaspoons chocolate drinking powder (25g) • 2 plain sweet biscuits (20g) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 small piece of cake, unfilled, without icing (30g) • 1 regular or 2 mini spring rolls, fried (60g) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 or contact Dietitians Australia. Call **1800 812 942** or email 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.