## Birmingham Women's

 and Children'sNHS Foundation Trust

Workbook for children and young people

## Diabetes and Lifestyle

# Carbohydrate Counting 



## What is carbohydrate and why is it important?

- Carbohydrate is the main nutrient in food that provides energy for the body so you can breathe, walk, run, play football and dance.
- Carbohydrate is broken down into glucose by the digestive system and enters the blood stream.
- Glucose is needed in the body's cells (muscles, organs) to make energy, but glucose cannot be transported from the blood without insulin, the key!
- Insulin is the key that opens the lock on the cell door to allow glucose to move from the blood stream into the cell to produce energy.
- Insulin also allows the body to store glucose in the liver and the muscles if it is not needed for energy.



## Matching insulin to carbohydrate

- The more carbohydrate you eat the more insulin (keys) you need to open the cells.
- Counting carbohydrate allows you to match the insulin to the carbohydrate you eat.
- Matching insulin to carbohydrate will allow you to keep blood glucose between $4-7 \mathrm{mmol} / \mathrm{l}$.


## Activity

1. Each one of these slices of bread contains 10 grams of carbohydrate.
2. The insulin to carbohydrate ratio is one unit of insulin for every 10 grams.
3. Draw how many insulin keys you would need for the different amounts of bread below


## Balancing Insulin

What will happen to the blood glucose level?


## What do you normally eat?

Please fill out your usual daily food intake. Each meal time has two to three spaces where you can write your most popular choices at that time. The more detail you can include, such as portion sizes, the better. If you do not eat at that time leave it blank.


## Breakfast:

1. 
2. 
3. 

Mid-morning
1.
2.

## Lunch

1. 
2. 
3. 

## Drinks:

Write down all the drinks you usually have.

This table shows which foods contain carbohydrate that need counting, and those that do not

| Food Group | Contain carbohydrate | Do not contain carbohydrate, or minimal amounts |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Starchy carbohydrates | Bread <br> Breakfast cereal <br> Rice <br> Pasta, noodles <br> Crackers <br> Potatoes <br> Chapatti, Naan, <br> Flours, grains, oats |  |
| Fruit (fructose is a natural sugar) and vegetables | All fruit (this includes tinned and dried fruit) <br> All fruit juices <br> Peas \& sweetcorn <br> Sweet potato, parsnips, <br> butternut squash | Most other vegetables contain too little to count. |
| Milk and dairy (lactose is a natural sugar) | Milk - All types Yoghurts Fromage-frais | Cheese |
| Protein | Sausage rolls (the pastry) <br> Meat pies (the pastry <br> and crust) <br> Battered Fish (the batter) <br> Baked Beans <br> Kidney beans <br> Lentils | Meat, chicken, fish, eggs, Tofu, Nuts and seeds |
| Fat and added sugar products (Sucrose) | Biscuits \& Crisps Sugary drinks (Coke, Lemonade, Powerade) Jam and marmalade, Sugar, Honey, Sweets (Starburst, Skittles) Ice-cream, Chocolate Cakes, Custard Sauces | Butter <br> Margarine <br> Oils <br> Cream <br> Salad Cream <br> Mayonnaise |

## How much carbohydrate do I need?

Everybody needs carbohydrate for energy and the government recommendations are for you have $40 \%$ to $55 \%$ of energy from carbohydrate.

| Age (years) | Average daily carbohydrate requirement in grams |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Boys | Girls |
| $\mathbf{1 - 3}$ | $70-145 \mathrm{~g}$ | $70-130 \mathrm{~g}$ |
| $\mathbf{4 - 6}$ | $140-195 \mathrm{~g}$ | $130-185 \mathrm{~g}$ |
| $\mathbf{7 - 1 0}$ | $165-250 \mathrm{~g}$ | $150-240 \mathrm{~g}$ |
| $\mathbf{1 1 - 1 4}$ | $215-330 \mathrm{~g}$ | $200-290 \mathrm{~g}$ |
| $\mathbf{1 5 - 1 8}$ | $280-400 \mathrm{~g}$ | $240-310 \mathrm{~g}$ |

To provide your body with a consistent supply of energy it's best to spread carbohydrate as equally as possible throughout the day. This is not possible every day but, a structure to your normal eating pattern would help your energy levels and blood glucose control.

Your average daily carbohydrate requirement calculated with your Dietitian is:
$\qquad$

Daily carbohydrate: $\square$ $g$ to
 $g$

Main meals carbohydrate: $\square$ $g$ to $\square$ 9

## What do you need to count carbohydrate?

To count carbohydrate accurately you will need:

- A set of scales that weigh in grams
- A calculator
- Food labels
- Carbs and Cals Book and/or APP
- Household measures such as a tablespoon, cup, favourite bowl, glass


## Carbohydrate counting methods

There are lots of resources, techniques, tips and tricks for carbohydrate counting, all with advantages and disadvantages. The most accurate methods involve weighing foods.
Sometimes this is not possible and you will need to use different techniques according to the situation. Listed below are the different methods.

1. Carbs \& Cals Book and APP:

Weighing is the most accurate
2. Food labels:

Carbohydrate information - weighing and working out your portion sizes or using the typical portion on the label


## "The more you weigh the better the day"

## Carbs \& Cals Book and APP:

a. Weighing: If your portion of rice weighs $\mathbf{2 0 0} \mathbf{g}$ on the scales:


Example: $51 \div 163 \times 200=62.5 \mathrm{~g}$ carbs

b. Weighing: getting your rice portion to the same weight as the picture:

Weigh your rice portion and add or take off rice until it weighs exactly 163 g . Then your portion will have 51 g carbohydrate.

Work out this example if your pasta weight on the scales is 160 g :


## Food labels: carbohydrate information

- When you are counting carbohydrate it is very important to count all of the carbohydrate (starch and sugar) not just the sugars.
- When counting carbohydrate from food labels uses the "Total carbohydrate" and NOT the "of which is sugars".
- Food labels by law have to tell you the "Total carbohydrate per $\mathbf{1 0 0} \mathbf{g}$ " and often they have per portion.
- If the portion size is exactly what you are going to eat then use per portion.


## Crisps

|  | Per 100 g | Per 40 g bag |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
| Energy | 483 kcal | 193 kcal |
| Protein | 6.5 g | 2.6 g |
| Total carbohydrates <br> of which sugars | 58.0 g <br> 1.0 g | 23.2 g <br> 0.4 g |
| Fat | 25.0 g | 10.0 g |
| Fibre | 3.9 g | 1.6 g |

For foods that give the portion size of an individual item in the packet, you can use the Total carbohydrate per item and add up how many you are having.

## Whole-wheat Digestive Biscuits

|  |  | Per 100 g |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
| Energy | 306 kcal | 37 kcal |
| Protein | 6.2 g | 0.7 g |
| Total carbohydrates | 66.8 g | 8.0 g |
| of which sugars | 18.4 g | 2.2 g |
| Fat | 18.4 g | 2.2 g |
| Fibre | 5.8 g | 0.7 g |

How many grams of carbohydrates in three biscuit?


If the label does not give the total carbohydrate per portion size or the portion size you are going to have is more or less than the suggested portion size, you will need to weigh the food and use the carbohydrate per $\mathbf{1 0 0} \mathbf{g}$.

The method below allows you to work out the carbohydrate for your portion size:

## Total carbohydrate per $\mathbf{1 0 0} \mathbf{g}$

$x$ your portion (g) = Carbohydrates (g)
100

## Cheese and Tomato Pizza

Using the pizza food label you can work out the total carbohydrate from a pizza slice that weighs 250 g on the scales.

| Per 100 g |  |
| :--- | :---: |
| Energy | 238 kcal |
| Protein | 9.3 g |
| Total carbohydrates | 28.7 g |
| of which sugars | 2.7 g |
| Fat | 9.6 g |
| Fibre | 2.3 g |

28.7g
$\stackrel{\bullet}{\bullet}$
x $\mathbf{2 5 0 g}$ $=72 \mathrm{~g}$
100

## Now it's your turn!

Using the equation above and the food label below work out the total carbohydrate for a bowl of fruit and fibre that weighs 65 g on the scales:
$9 \quad 100 \quad x$
g =
g

## Fruit and Fibre

| 30g cereal with 125 ml <br> semi-skimmed milk | Per 100 g |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
| Energy | 180 kcal | 380 kcal |
| Protein | 6.0 g | 8.0 g |
| Total carbohydrates <br> of which sugars | 30.0 g <br> 9.6 g | 69.9 g <br> 26.0 g |
| Fat | 4.0 g | 6.0 g |
| Fibre | 2.6 g | 9.0 g |

## Important things when using labels

Be careful of food labels with suggested serving sizes that include small portion suggestions or two foods. For example:

- Breakfast cereal suggested serving sizes is 30 g cereal with 125 ml semi-skimmed milk (see Fruit and Fibre label above). Therefore to get the carbohydrate count right you will have to have exactly 30 g Fruit \& Fibre and 125 ml semi-skimmed milk.
- Young children's cereal portion sizes can be much less than the suggested serving size, whereas teenage boys' portions are much larger.


## Handy Measures

Keep a list of common foods you have, their portion size, and carbohydrate amounts and note them on the sheet in this booklet. Examples of this include:

1. Put a mark on plastic bowls or cups
2. Find a container that, when full, matches the amount you want to eat.
3. Use the same spoon to serve foods out and know how many spoonfuls make up your portion.

| Your portion in <br> grams | Household <br> measure | Carbs grams |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |

Carbohydrate calculator for common food


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# Using the carbohydrate calculator how many carbohydrates are there 

## In $\mathbf{3 0 g}$ of dry rice?

In 50 g of cooked rice?

## Plan for putting carb counting into daily life:

Who is responsible for carb counting and what resources to be used at:

Home:
School: $\qquad$
Relatives: $\qquad$
Friends: $\qquad$

Eating out: $\qquad$
Can you use handy measures?
$\qquad$
What barriers do you think there might be to accurate counting?
$\qquad$
How will you overcome those barriers? What support do you need?

What would help to involve and improve the carbohydrate counting skill of a person with diabetes?

## How balance are your meals?

Use the Eat Well Guide on the next page to divide your plates up by food group.

Breakfast


Lunch


Evening meal


Mid-morning


Mid-Afternoon


urce: Public Health England in association with the Welsh Government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland

Eat less often and
in small amounts

# A healthy balance is achieved by eating the right proportions of foods in our diet. 

## Fruit and vegetables

- Eat a variety of fresh, frozen or tinned.
- Aim for at least $\qquad$ portions spread throughout the day. A portion is a handful or around 80 g .
- Limit fruit juice to 1 glass a day.


## Starchy carbohydrate foods:

Bread, pasta, rice, breakfast cereals

- Have foods from this group at each main meal
- Eat similar portion sizes of starchy carbohydrate foods at main meals. This will help to keep your blood glucose control consistent
- Try to use granary bread, basmati rice, pasta and high fibre breakfast cereals. Thes have a low glycaemic index and will keep you fuller for longer.


## Protein foods:

Lean meat, poultry, fish, beans, eggs and alternatives

- Choose $\qquad$ portions a day
- A portion is about the size of your palm
- Eat oily fish twice a week, i.e. salmon, trout, mackerel, as these are rich in omega 3 and help to reduce risk of heart disease.


## Milk and dairy:

Milk, yoghurt, cheese

- Aim for $\qquad$ to $\qquad$ portions a day.
- A portion is a pot of yoghurt, 150 ml of milk or 30 g cheese (matchbox)


## Fat and sugary foods:

Crisps, chocolate, sweets, cakes, biscuits

- Keep these to a minimum as they contain very few vitamins and minerals
- Choose low fat options and have treats less often and in small amounts
- Choose unsaturated fat options


## Drinks

## Recommended:

- Limited that require insulin: Milk, fruit juice, hot chocolate
- Limited that do not require insulin: caffeinated drinks e.g. tea, coffee, diet fizzy drinks

Avoid:
$\qquad$

The Eatwell Guide promotes a balanced and varied intake to improve health, and this will also improve your blood glucose control.

## Some tips:

1. Eat three consistent meals that all have a similar mix of foods groups and portion sizes.

## For example:

- Similar carbohydrate amounts
- Protein at main meals
- Including vegetables at each meal

2. Small fruit as a mid-morning snack that is no greater than 10 g carbohydrate if having without insulin
3. Having more whole foods and less processed foods
4. Having water or no added sugar drinks
5. Keeping high fat and sugary snack foods to a minimum
6. Avoid diabetic foods.

From the assessment with the dietitian of your usual meals compared with the Eatwell Guide. What do you think are the key changes that will improve your health and blood?

Your key changes


1 $\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$

2

3 $\qquad$
$\qquad$

4 $\qquad$
$\qquad$

## Food and activity diary

In order to create an individualised nutrition plan please complete the food diary for 5 days before your appointment being as specific as possible:

- Remember to include all food and drinks including any snacks, spread/butter, type of milk full fat/semi skimmed/ $/ \%$ skimmed milk
- Describe foods as accurately as you can in handy measures(tablespoons, teaspoons, slices) or in weight(g/oz or ml/oz)
- State method of cooking e.g. grilled, baked, fried
- If possible, give recipe for homemade items or rough quantities
- Brand names are helpful to include, if available

| Time/Blood Glucose Insulin dose | Food eaten and drinks | Portions size Weight or measure | Carbohydrate (g) | Activity type, how long, how hard |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Time: 08:00 BG: 6.8 Insulin: 3.5 units | Rice krispies semi skimmed milk | $\begin{aligned} & 30 \mathrm{~g} \\ & 200 \mathrm{ml} \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 25 \mathrm{~g} \\ & 10 \mathrm{~g} \end{aligned}$ |  |
| Time: 10:30 BG: Insulin: | apple | medim | 10 g |  |
| Time: 12:30 BG: 7.5 Insulin: 7 units | White bread spread thinly with olive spread Ham <br> Walkers crips <br> Muller lite yogurt (strawberry) <br> Grapes | 2 slices medium <br> 2 slices <br> 1 bag <br> 1 pot <br> 12 | $\begin{aligned} & 30 \mathrm{~g} \\ & 0 \mathrm{~g} \\ & 16 \mathrm{~g} \\ & 12 \mathrm{~g} \\ & 12 \mathrm{~g} \end{aligned}$ |  |
| Time: 16:00 BG: 5.3 Insulin: | Digestive biscuit | 3 biscuits | 30 g | Football at 16:20 for 60 minutes so no insulin with digestive biscuits |
| Time: 18:00 <br> BG: 12.2 <br> Insulin: 6units + <br> 2units correction | Cooked spaghetti low fat Bolognese meat sauce Garlic bread | $\begin{aligned} & 150 \mathrm{~g} \\ & 3 \text { tblspn } \\ & 2 \text { slices } \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{array}{\|l\|} \hline 37 \mathrm{~g} \\ 10 \mathrm{~g} \\ 20 \mathrm{~g} \end{array}$ |  |
| Time: 20:30 BG: 8.0 Insulin: 2units | Toast with olive oil spread Semi-skimmed milk | 1 slice medium 100 ml | $\begin{aligned} & 15 \mathrm{~g} \\ & 5 \mathrm{~g} \end{aligned}$ |  |

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## Glossary of Terms

Background/basal insulin: is needed to keep blood glucose levels under control, and to allow the cells to take in glucose for energy. It is usually taken once or twice a day depending on the insulin, or delivered hourly from an insulin pump as a basal rate.

Blood glucose: the main sugar found in the blood and the body's source of energy.
Bolus insulin: an amount of insulin taken to cover a rise in blood glucose from a meal or snack, and may also include a correction dose.

Carbohydrate: A nutrient in food that gets digested into glucose causing the blood glucose to rise.

Carb ratio: A ratio that specifies the number of grams of carbohydrate covered by each 1 unit of rapid- or short-acting insulin.

Coeliac disease: is when the gut lining becomes sensitive to gluten.
Continuous Glucose Monitoring (CGM): Glucose monitored continuously in the interstitial space, measured by an indwelling sensor.

Correction dose: The amount of insulin required to bring the blood glucose from a high level back to target and is determined by the insulin sensitivity/correction factor.

Correction factor refers to the number of $\mathrm{mmol} / \mathrm{l} 1$ unit of rapid acting insulin lowers your blood glucose.

Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA): A serious complication of diabetes that occurs when your body produces high levels of blood acids called ketones. This happens when there is not enough insulin in your body. DKA can develop when your body can't produce enough insulin at diagnosis, when your body requires high amounts of insulin during insulin, or when the you do not give adequate insulin.

Glucagon: A hormone that releases stored glucose in the liver to increase the blood glucose level.

Glycaemic Index (GI): is a way to rank foods based on how quickly a food will raise blood glucose.

HBA1c: a test that measures your average blood glucose level over the last 2-3 months. Also called Haemoglobin A1C.

Hyperglycaemia: higher than normal blood glucose. Fasting hyperglycaemia is blood glucose above a desirable level after not eating for at least 8 hours. Postprandial hyperglycaemia is blood glucose above a desirable level 1 to 2 hours after eating.

Hypoglycaemia: also called low blood glucose, a condition that occurs when one's blood glucose is lower than normal. Signs include hunger, nervousness, shakiness, perspiration, dizziness or light-headedness, sleepiness, and confusion. If left untreated, hypoglycaemia may lead to unconsciousness.

Hypothyroidism: is when the thyroid gland becomes underactive.
Interstitial space: The space between the cells of the fat tissues where the indwelling sensor measures the glucose level.

Insulin: A hormone that moves glucose from the blood into the cells of the body. It is often referred to as working like a key to open the door of the cell.

Insulin pump therapy: Involves wearing an insulin pump which provides a steady stream of rapid acting insulin into your body. The rapid acting insulin is delivered continuously over 24 hours as a basal rate to replace long acting insulin. Small bolus's are programmed to cover carbohydrate intake and correction doses for high glucose levels.

Lipohypertrophy: If you inject into the same place a lot of the time, you are at risk of developing some lumps and bumps where the insulin is not absorbed effectively from.

Macro-vascular Complications: Problems in the small large vessels in the body (Heart, Brain and legs)

Micro-vascular Complications: Problems in the small blood vessels in the body (eyes, kidneys, feet and hands)

Multiple Daily Injections (MDI): the administration of 3 or more insulin injections each day. This includes one injection of long-acting insulin (24h hours active) and an injection of rapid or short-acting insulin before each meal.

Type 1 diabetes: A long-term condition in which the pancreas produces little or no insulin and the only method of treatment is insulin replacement.
It is an autoimmune condition, meaning the body's own immune system has attacked and destroyed the cells that make insulin in the pancreas.

Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of diabetes, where your body does not produce enough insulin, does not use insulin properly, or both.

