

# Diabetes: Understanding Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are your body's main source of fuel. The body turns them into glucose, a special kind of sugar. When you have diabetes, your body has trouble with glucose, so you have to watch how many carbohydrates you eat. Your dietitian will probably recommend that 50-60 % of your calories come from carbohydrates. There are two types of carbohydrates: complex and simple.



## Maximize Complex Carbohydrates

Your meal plan will call for lots of complex carbohydrates. They turn to glucose slowly in your body. Foods high in complex carbohydrates include whole-grain breads and cereals, pasta, fruit, potatoes, rice, bulgur, dried beans, squash, and peas.

Eat \_\_\_\_\_ grams of complex carbohydrates per day.

## Minimize Simple Carbohydrates

Your meal plan may allow for some simple carbohydrates. But don't eat a lot of them. They have few nutrients and lots of calories, and they make your blood glucose go up quickly. Candy, cookies, cake, pie, jam, and jelly contain simple carbohydrates.

Eat no more than \_\_\_\_\_ grams of simple carbohydrates per day.

## What About Alcohol?

Ask your healthcare team whether you can have alcohol. If they say you can drink alcohol, always eat a carbohydrate at the same time. This helps prevent low blood sugar.