Carbohydrates (Carbs)

All types of carbohydrates (carbs) will raise your blood sugar, not just sweets. Any carbohydrate food you eat will turn into glucose and raise blood sugar after digestion. Below are some examples of foods containing carbohydrates.

Healthy Eating

Healthy eating is about more than just counting carbs. It is important to eat a variety of foods. For most people these include:

- At least 2 servings of fruits and 3 servings of non-starchy vegetables
  - Non-starchy vegetables, which are high in fiber and very low in carbs. 1/2 cup cooked and 1 cup raw are counted as “0” carb choices or “free”
  - At least 3 servings of whole grains (oatmeal, brown rice) or legumes (green peas, lentils, beans)
  - 2-3 servings of lowfat dairy (1% or non-fat)
  - Lean protein and healthy fats

Protein foods (lean meat, poultry and fish) and fats do not directly affect blood sugar and can help you feel satisfied. Chicken breast and fish are good choices. To keep your heart healthy, choose healthy fats like those found in canola, olive or soybean oil, avocados, unsalted nuts and seeds. Fatty fish, such as salmon contain healthy fats (omega 3 fatty acids).

How Much Carbohydrate Do You Need?

Most women need 3 to 4 carbohydrate choices per meal and most men need 4 to 5 carbohydrate choices per meal. A Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) can help you know the right amount of carbohydrate for you. Check with a local hospital or [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org) to find an RDN near you. On the following page is a list of carbohydrate choices and their serving sizes. Becoming familiar with the carbohydrate food choices and serving sizes allow you to eat foods that you enjoy.
# Carbohydrate Choices

(1 carb serving = 15 grams carbohydrate)

## Grains (cooked)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serving size</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oatmeal, Wheat cereal</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice (white, brown)</td>
<td>1/3 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spaghetti</td>
<td>1/3 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couscous, Semolina</td>
<td>1/3 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley, Bulgur, Quinoa</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Non Starchy Vegetables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serving size</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spinach, eggplant, Okra, Cauliflower, cucumber, Cabbage, green beans, Zucchini, onions</td>
<td>1/2 cup cooked or 1 cup raw</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Breads/Starchy Vegetables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serving size</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Pita</td>
<td>1 medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole wheat pita</td>
<td>1 medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaak (Crispy Bread)</td>
<td>1 piece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squash</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread slice (Whole Wheat, White)</td>
<td>1 slice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes (all types)</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Fruits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serving size</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apple, Orange</td>
<td>1 small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banana</td>
<td>1/2 large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clementine,</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blueberries, Blackberries</td>
<td>3/4 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plums</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pomegranates</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapes (small)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapes (large)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figs</td>
<td>2 Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raisins, diced dried fruit</td>
<td>2 TBS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cantaloupe</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>3 small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strawberries (whole)</td>
<td>1 1/4 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pineapple</td>
<td>3/4 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watermelon (diced)</td>
<td>1 1/4 cup</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Dairy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serving size</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1% or Non-fat, almond, goat milk</td>
<td>8 fl. oz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plain Non-fat or 1% Yogurt</td>
<td>6 fl. oz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buttermilk</td>
<td>8 fl. oz.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Legumes

### Cooked, drained

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serving size</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fava Beans</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lentils</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chickpeas, garbanzo beans</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Peas</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Handfuls $\approx$ 1 cup (crackers, wafers)

Thumb $\approx$ 1 TBP or 1 oz. Labneh, cheeses

Thumb tip $\approx$ 1 tsp (oils, spreads, spices)

Palm $\approx$ 3 oz. (fish, poultry, cooked veggies)

Fist $\approx$ 1 cup (Pasta, rice, fruit, veggies, cereals, soup, milk, yogurt)

These portion estimates are based on a woman’s hand size. Hand sizes vary. Portion estimates will change based on the size of hand used.

**Hand Guide to Portion Size**

**Sample Menu**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breakfast (3-4 carb)</th>
<th>Lunch (3-4 carb)</th>
<th>Snack (1-2 carb choice)</th>
<th>Dinner (3-4 carb)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 cup oatmeal or 1/2 whole wheat pita bread</td>
<td>1/2 cup Lentil soup and 1/2 cup sautéed spinach</td>
<td>1 oz unsalted nuts or 1/4 cup Hummus</td>
<td>1/3 cup bulgur wheat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 boiled egg (twice per week)</td>
<td>1/2 whole wheat pita bread</td>
<td>1 Apple or 1 cup baby carrots</td>
<td>1 cup lamb and vegetable stew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 banana</td>
<td>6 oz non-fat yogurt</td>
<td>Tea or coffee with non-fat or 1% milk</td>
<td>1/2 cup Tabouli salad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea (green or black) or coffee with non-fat milk</td>
<td>1 orange</td>
<td></td>
<td>6 oz. non-fat Kefir</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**References:**


Icons made by Freepik from www.flaticon.com
## Personalized Menu

Feel free to use this form to make your lovely and healthy menu.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Carbohydrate Choices</th>
<th>Serving Sizes</th>
<th>Food Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breakfast</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lunch</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Snack</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dinner</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Icons made by [Madebyoliver](http://www.flaticon.com) from [www.flaticon.com](http://www.flaticon.com)
In general, limit foods high in refined carbohydrate like white rice and white flour, sugary drinks and desserts, fruit juices, honey, syrup and molasses. Unhealthy fats like ghee, lard, butter, margarine should be avoided or limited.

1. Limit deep fried foods such as samosas, kibbi, falafel, fried vegetables such as eggplant, cauliflower and others. Choose baked or stewed options instead.
2. Choose roasted or grilled meat, poultry or fish instead of fried.
3. Choose tawook and grilled meat instead of meat/chicken shawarma.
4. Limit salads made with high fat dressing. Ask for salad dressing on the side and use a small amount.
5. Try whole wheat pita bread instead of white bread.
6. Choose fresh fruit for dessert. Limit Arabic sweets like Baklava, Kataef, Knafe, Mamool etc.
7. Limit sugary beverages e.g., Tameer Hindee, Kamer El-Deen, Jalab, etc.
8. Limit foods prepared with salt, pickles, makdoos, mukhalal. Avoid salting food.
9. Select unsalted nuts and seeds (mixed nuts) in small amount.

Authors: Laura Yatvin, RDN, CDE, MPH; Lama Mrayati; Maha Mrayati, RDN, MD; Tassneem Rajeh.