

# Low Carbohydrate Diet for Type 2 Diabetes

## What is a low carbohydrate diet?

A low carbohydrate (or “carb”) diet is a plan for eating and drinking less **carbohydrates**, a type of nutrient found in sugary foods, pasta, and bread. Instead of eating carbs, you focus on eating whole foods and vegetables with lots of protein.

## Low carb diet definitions:

Diet type	Amount of carbohydrates per day
Low carb diet	50-130 grams of carbohydrates per day
Very low carb diet	Less than 50 grams of carbohydrates per day
Keto diet	Less than 20 grams of carbohydrates per day

## How does a low carb diet help my diabetes, health, and well-being?

Reducing the carbs you eat and drink can reduce your blood sugar. It can also help you reach and stay at a healthy body weight. Some other benefits of low carb diets include lower blood pressure, reduced hunger and cravings, improved blood sugar control, and increased energy.

## How can I get started on a low carb diet?

The basics of a low carb diet are to:

- Eat more meat, fish, eggs, vegetables, and foods with natural fats (like butter)
- Avoid foods with sugar and starch (like potatoes, corn, bread, pasta, beans, and rice)

To start your low carb diet, try changing how you eat 1 meal per day (like breakfast, lunch, or dinner). Change your food choices for that meal to fewer carbs, and do this for 1-2 weeks. After you feel comfortable with these changes, think about making changes to another daily meal. Focus on:

- Adding protein, non-starchy vegetables, and foods with healthy fats (like avocado, olive oil, olives, nuts, seeds) to your regular meals
- Reducing starches and sugars
- Replacing sugary drinks (such as soda pop and fruit juice) with tea and water
  - If you use flavored coffee creamer, replace it with a sugar-free creamer.
- Snacking on fruits and vegetables
  - Replace starchy and sugary snacks (such as chips and granola bars) with berries and non-starchy vegetables (peppers, cucumbers, celery, etc.).
  - Add fats and proteins for a balanced snack.

### **What are some low carb food and drink choices?**

Use the tables below to help you learn about low and high carb food choices for your meals and snacks. Different choices are listed by how many grams (g) of carbs are in 1 serving.

- Try to eat lots of the foods in the 0-10 g carb range (following the serving sizes). These are listed in the tables with green headers.
- Avoid eating a large amount of foods in the 10-20 g carb range. These are listed the table with the yellow header.
- Avoid foods in the high carb (20+ g) range, listed in the table with the red header.

Key for measurements in the table:

- g = grams
- oz = ounces
- tsp = teaspoon
- tbs = tablespoon


<b>0 g carb foods</b>		
<b>Protein:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chicken (3 oz)</li> <li>• Turkey (3 oz)</li> <li>• Beef (3 oz)</li> <li>• Pork (3 oz)</li> <li>• Salmon (3 oz)</li> <li>• Egg (1)</li> </ul>	<b>Dairy:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Butter or ghee (1 tsp)</li> </ul>	<b>Liquids:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water</li> <li>• Coffee (16 oz)</li> <li>• Olive oil (1 tsp)</li> <li>• Vinegar (1 tsp)</li> </ul>
<b>1-2 g carb foods</b>		
<b>Protein:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ham (2 slices)</li> <li>• Bacon (2 slices)</li> </ul>	<b>Dairy:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cheese (1 oz)</li> <li>• Cream cheese (1 tbs)</li> </ul>	<b>Fruits/Vegetables:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lettuce (2 cups)</li> <li>• Spinach (2 cups)</li> <li>• Olives (4 large)</li> <li>• Mushrooms (1 cup)</li> <li>• Avocado (1.5 cups)</li> </ul>
<b>3-4 g carb foods</b>		
<b>Protein:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Almonds (1.25 cups)</li> <li>• Hummus (1 tbs)</li> </ul>	<b>Fruits/Vegetables:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabbage (1 cup)</li> <li>• Asparagus (½ cup cooked)</li> <li>• Cauliflower (1 cup)</li> <li>• Broccoli (1 cup)</li> <li>• Tomato (1 cup)</li> <li>• Cucumber (1 cup)</li> <li>• Zucchini (1 cup)</li> <li>• Eggplant (1 cup)</li> </ul>	<b>Liquids:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White wine (5 oz)</li> </ul>





5-10 g carb foods	
<b>Protein:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Salami (5 slices)</li> </ul>	<b>Fruits/Vegetables:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peppers (1 cup)</li> <li>Kale (1 cup)</li> <li>Onions (½ cup)</li> <li>Brussels sprouts (1 cup)</li> <li>Squash (1 cup)</li> <li>Carrot (1 cup)</li> </ul>

10-20 g carb foods			
<b>Grains/Starch:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potato (3 oz)</li> <li>Bread (1 slice)</li> </ul>	<b>Dairy:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2% milk (1 cup)</li> <li>Plain yogurt (1 cup)</li> </ul>	<b>Fruits/Vegetables:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corn (1 ear)</li> <li>Raspberries (1 cup)</li> <li>Strawberries (1 cup)</li> </ul>	<b>Sweets:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ice cream (2/3 cup)</li> <li>Jam and jelly (1 tbsp)</li> </ul>

High carb (20+ g) foods		
<b>Grains/Starch:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breakfast cereal (55 g carbs per 1 cup)</li> <li>Bagel (60 g carbs each)</li> <li>Pasta (43 g carbs per 1 cup cooked)</li> <li>French fries (64 g carbs per large serving)</li> </ul>	<b>Fruits:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Banana and apple (27 g carbs each)</li> </ul>	<b>Sweets:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chocolate (100 g carbs per 1 cup)</li> </ul>

### What are some more resources for low carb diets?

	<p>Lower Carbohydrate Eating: A Free Starter Guide for Patients</p> <p><a href="http://www.mct2d.org/resource-library/low-carb-starter">www.mct2d.org/resource-library/low-carb-starter</a></p>
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	<p>Healthy Eating JUMPSTART - A Lower Carb Lifestyle Website for Patients</p> <p><a href="http://www.mct2d.org/resource-library/healthy-eating-jumpstart-a-lower-carb-lifestyle-website-for-patients">www.mct2d.org/resource-library/healthy-eating-jumpstart-a-lower-carb-lifestyle-website-for-patients</a></p>
	<p>4-Step Process to Building Your Low Carb Plate</p> <p><a href="http://www.mct2d.org/resource-library/4-step-process-to-building-your-low-carb-plate-and-understanding-nutrition">www.mct2d.org/resource-library/4-step-process-to-building-your-low-carb-plate-and-understanding-nutrition</a></p>
	<p>Low Carb Grocery Shopping List</p> <p><a href="http://www.mct2d.org/resource-library/low-carb-grocery-shopping-list">www.mct2d.org/resource-library/low-carb-grocery-shopping-list</a></p>
	<p>Daily and Weekly Food Log Tracker with Carb Cheatsheet (see page 2!)</p> <p><a href="http://www.mct2d.org/resource-library/mct2d-daily-meal-amp-blood-sugar-tracker-with-carb-cheatsheet">www.mct2d.org/resource-library/mct2d-daily-meal-amp-blood-sugar-tracker-with-carb-cheatsheet</a></p>

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The information in this handout is adapted from "[A Pragmatic Approach to Translating Low- and Very Low-Carbohydrate Diets Into Clinical Practice for Patients with Obesity and Type 2 Diabetes](#)" by Dina Hafez Griauzde, Kathleen Standafer Lopez, Laura R. Saslow, and Caroline R. Richardson

Tables adapted from the Michigan Collaborative for Type 2 Diabetes (MCT2D) Low Carb Cheatsheet

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