

Nourrir la vie

Foods and Blood Sugar

What are carbohydrates?

Carbohydrates are the sugars in food that can raise your blood sugar levels. It can be difficult to spot foods that contain carbohydrates, because they may not always taste sweet.

Carbohydrates are found in:

- Starches/ Grains :
 - Bread and flatbreads (chapati, tortillas, pitas)
 - Plantain, cassava, potato, sweet potato and yam
 - Pasta, couscous, rice, bulgur, faro, quinoa, corn
 - Breakfast cereals, oatmeal, etc.
- Fruits
- Milk and yogourt
- Legumes
 - Chickpeas/ garbanzo beans
 - Lentils
 - Black, kidney, or navy beans
 - Split peas, etc.

Most vegetables, meat, poultry, fish, cheese and nuts contain little or no carbohydrates.

Mini Glossary

- Glycemia (blood sugar): the amount of sugar present in your blood



It's important not to exclude carbohydrate-rich foods from your diet. They are the primary source of energy during pregnancy and are essential for baby's development!



How can I achieve good glycemic control?

The key to good diabetes management is to ensure that blood sugar levels rise and fall as gradually as possible. We can compare rising blood sugar levels to mountains:



A big mountain is harder to climb. Similarly, if blood sugar levels rise quickly and sharply, it's more difficult for the body to return to normal blood sugar levels.



A small hill is easier to climb. Similarly, if blood sugar rises little and slowly, it's easy to return to normal blood sugar levels.

Managing blood sugar through diet

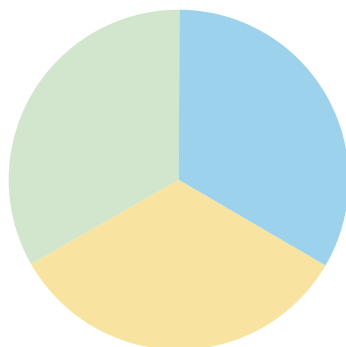
Combining the right foods

A balanced meal contains a third of vegetables, a third of grains or starches and a third of protein-rich foods. Fiber and protein in meals and snacks help slow the rise of blood sugar.

Fiber-rich foods

- Whole grain foods
- Vegetables and fruits
- Légumes*
- Nuts and seeds

**Legumes also contain protein and fiber*



Protein-rich foods

- Meat and poultry
- Fish and seafood
- Eggs
- Tofu
- légumes : beans, chickpeas, lentils
- Milk, yogurt and cheese
- Nuts and seeds

Choosing the most suitable carbohydrate sources

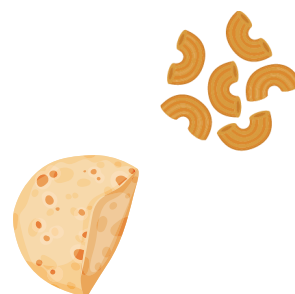
Some carbohydrate-rich foods have less impact on blood sugar levels than others.

Prioritize whole grains

These foods contain more fiber. fiber helps slow the rise of blood sugar.

Examples :

- Whole wheat pasta or couscous
- Whole grains bread
- Corn tortillas, chapatis or pitas made from whole wheat flour
- Oats, barley, bulgur, quinoa
- Brown rice



Limit foods rich in simple sugars

Foods that are rich in simple sugars can raise blood sugar quickly. For example :

- Sweet foods : doughnuts, cakes, cookies, candies, chocolate, etc.
- Sweet beverages : soft drinks, juices, chocolat milk, etc.
- Sugar, honey, maple syrup, corn syrup, brown sugar, jam, etc.

Note: This handout is intended for information purposes only. It does not replace the recommendations made by a healthcare professional. If in doubt or if you have questions, please consult a healthcare professional as soon as possible.

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) contributed financially to the development of this document. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the official position of PHAC. | April 2024 | 2182 avenue Lincoln, Montréal (Québec) H3H 1J3 | Tel. 514-937-5375 | www.centrealima.ca | All rights reserved to Alima, Centre de nutrition sociale périnatale

