

Department of Nutrition & Dietetics
Patient Information

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Information

If you need this information in large print, easy read, on audiotape or in another language please call 0800 7838058 or e-mail pals@dchft.nhs.uk

If you wish to obtain a list of the sources used to develop this information leaflet please call 0800 7838058 or e-mail patient.info@dchft.nhs.uk

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Low Carbohydrate Snacks

Please note: This is general information and should not replace any personalised advice given to you by your healthcare team.

Who needs low carbohydrate snacks?

Carbohydrate (also known as '**carb**' or 'carbs') is part of many foods. When you eat most types of carb, your body digests it and turns it into simple sugars. One simple sugar is glucose, which your body uses for energy. If you have diabetes, your body cannot regulate its glucose level on its own and so it is important to regulate the amount of carb you eat (often balancing this with a diabetes medication), to help keep your blood glucose levels healthy.

Your blood glucose levels will tell you what the right amount of carb is. Some people test their own blood glucose regularly; others will have it checked by their doctor with a HbA1c test.

- If your blood glucose levels are always too high, swapping some of your usual snacks for low-carb snacks listed overleaf will help to bring your levels down.
- Even if you have healthy blood glucose levels, sometimes you might want to eat when you know you have already eaten all the carbs that your body can cope with. In this situation, a low-carb snack is the best option.
- If you get high blood glucose levels sometimes but 'hypos' at other times (hypoglycaemia is blood glucose levels lower than 4mmol/l) then you need to be careful about when you eat less carb. Please see a diabetes dietitian for more personalised information.

This advice is to be used along with a healthy balanced diet.

Please include carb at regular intervals during the day. Carbs should not be cut-out altogether and a carb-free diet is not recommended.

- Eating regularly means not going for long periods without carb (try not to skip meals) and also not binging on carbs by eating very large portions or grazing on them all the time.

If you have any questions about carbs, in relation to any aspect of diet and eating, please ask a diabetes dietitian.

Very low carb snacks

These snacks are so low in carbohydrate that they are unlikely to put your blood glucose level up at all.

- Carrot sticks
- Mange tout
- Cucumber
- Celery
- Cherry tomatoes
- Peppers
- Salsa or guacamole dip
- Sugar-free jelly
- Some brands of 'diet' hot chocolate – check product labels
- Cottage cheese

These snacks are high in calories so are not the best choice if you are trying to lose weight:

- Pine nuts
- Pumpkin seeds

Low carb snacks

These snacks contain approximately 5g of carb each, in the portion size listed. They should not have a big effect on your blood glucose level. The effect of carb is linked to portion size so if you eat more than 1 portion of food in the list, it will have a bigger effect on your blood glucose levels.

- 1 very small apple or pear
- 5 cherries
- Half a grapefruit
- 1 kiwi fruit
- 1 plum
- 100g raspberries
- 1 apricot
- 40g blueberries (20 berries)
- 85g strawberries (7 berries)
- 1 rich tea biscuit
- 1 malted milk biscuit
- 100g plain yoghurt
- Some brands of flavoured yoghurt – check product labels
- 45g olives
- 2 breadsticks
- 1 cracker
- Ice lollies made with no-added-sugar squash
- Some brands of cuppa soup – check product labels

These snacks are high in calories so are not the best choice if you are trying to lose weight:

- 70g peanuts
- 30g cashew nuts
- 25g sunflower seeds
- 10-15g crisps (1/2 a small bag)
- 1 mini scotch egg (20g weight)

Useful contacts

If you have questions, please ask a diabetes dietitian or Diabetes UK.

Dorset County Hospital Diabetes Centre
Dorset County Hospital Dietitians

Tel: **01305 255211**
Tel: **01305 254415**
Email: **dietetic.secretary@dchft.nhs.uk**
Tel: **0345 123 2399** (charges apply)
Email: **careline@diabetes.org.uk**

Diabetes UK Careline