How Much Should I Eat?

How much you need to eat depends upon your activity. Women shouldn’t eat less than 1200 calories a day and men shouldn’t eat less than 1500 calories a day. Use the formula below to figure out how many calories you are eating now to maintain your current weight.

If you are: Multiply your weight by:

Obese, very inactive or always dieting 10
Over 55, an active woman or an inactive man 13
A very active woman or an active man 15
A very active man or an athlete 20

\[ \text{Your Current Weight} \times \text{Number above} = \text{Calories per day to stay at your current weight} \]

To lose weight, subtract 500 to 1000 calories per day.

Once you know how many calories you need each day, you can figure out how many carbohydrates (carbs) to eat each day. The chart on the back shows how many servings and grams of carbs are recommended for various calorie levels. These recommendations provide 40 - 50% of total calories from carbs. Carbs should be spread throughout the day.
Try to choose healthy carbs such as whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, rather than using your carbohydrate allowance up on "big ticket" items like sweets. Eat a variety of foods!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calorie Level</th>
<th>Carb Servings</th>
<th>Carb Grams</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1200</td>
<td>9 - 10</td>
<td>135 - 150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500</td>
<td>10 - 12</td>
<td>150 - 180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>12 - 15</td>
<td>180 - 225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2100</td>
<td>15 - 18</td>
<td>225 - 270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2400</td>
<td>17 - 20</td>
<td>255 - 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2800</td>
<td>20 - 23</td>
<td>300 - 345</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Foods that contain carbohydrate include:
- starchy vegetables
- fruits and fruit juices
- milk and yogurt
- sweets and desserts
- grains, breads, cereals and dried beans

The best place to get carb information (how much of the food contains how much total carb) is from the food label. If there is no label, you can get the information from a carb counting book (or check our web site for links to on-line food information).

Your diabetes educator can help you learn to read food labels.

Your diabetes educator can also help you plan how to space your carbs, based on whether you need to:
- Eat no more than a maximum number of carbs at meals (if you are using diet, physical activity or medicines that do not cause low blood glucose) OR
- Be consistent in timing and amount of carbs (if you are taking medicines that can cause low blood glucose) OR
- Match insulin to carbs (if you are taking pre-meal fast-acting insulin).

Ask which of these would be best for you.

For other diabetes information, check our Web site at: www.amc.edu/diabetes