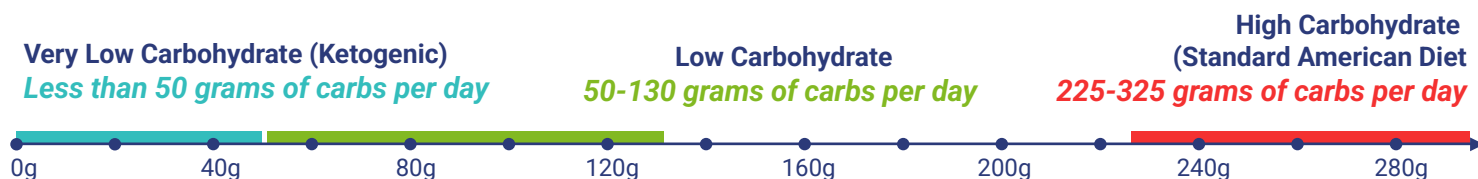


Getting Started on a Low Carb Lifestyle for Type 2 Diabetes

What is a low carb lifestyle? A low **carb** lifestyle limits your intake of carbohydrates (carbs) from foods like bread, pasta, rice, potatoes and other starchy vegetables, sweets, baked goods, sugary beverages, and fruits and emphasizes proteins, non-starchy vegetables, and healthy fats.



Meal with ~16g of carbs

4-5 oz Grilled Fish or Chicken	0g carbs
3 cups Mixed Salad	5g carbs
1 oz Feta Cheese and Olives	1g carbs
2 tbsp Ranch Dressing	2g carbs
1/2 Avocado	8g carbs



Meal with ~47g of carbs

1/2 cup Brown Rice	22g carbs
1/2 cup Black Beans	15g carbs
4-5 oz Steak	0g carbs
1.5 cups Grilled Vegetables	10g carbs



Meal with ~150g of carbs

2 slices Pepperoni Pizza	70g carbs
4 pcs Mozzarella Sticks	30g carbs
1/2 cup Marinara Sauce	10g carbs
12 oz Regular Soda	40g carbs

How does a low carb lifestyle help my diabetes? Reducing your carb intake also reduces your body's **blood sugar** and **insulin** levels. When your insulin levels are low, your body stops storing extra sugar as fat, and starts using stored fat for energy. This can make it easier to lose weight and have more energy!

The benefits of a low carb lifestyle



WEIGHT LOSS



**REDUCED BLOOD
PRESSURE**



**REDUCED HUNGER
& CRAVINGS**



**BLOOD SUGAR
CONTROL**



**INCREASED
ENERGY**

What are carbs? Carbs (i.e., carbohydrates) are a nutrient that is broken down by the body into sugar (glucose). There are 3 types of nutrients: carbs, fat, and protein.

What is blood sugar (or blood glucose)? Blood sugar is the level of sugar in your blood after your body breaks down nutrients into glucose for energy.

What is insulin? Insulin is a chemical released when you eat carbs. Everyone needs insulin to live.

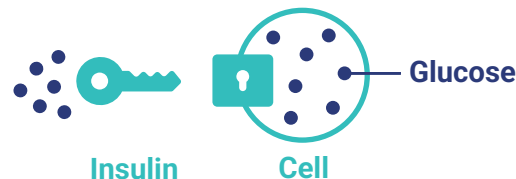
Updated December 2024

The American Diabetes Association supports individualized eating plans for people with type 2 diabetes. Reducing your carbohydrates can help you control blood sugar and reduce medications.

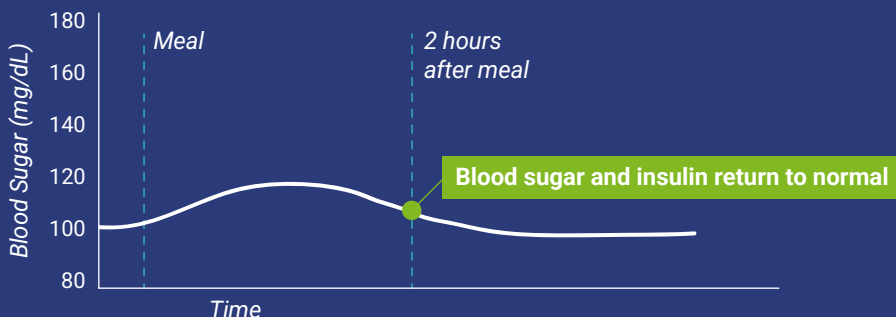
Want to learn more?
Scan or visit
MCT2D.org/patients



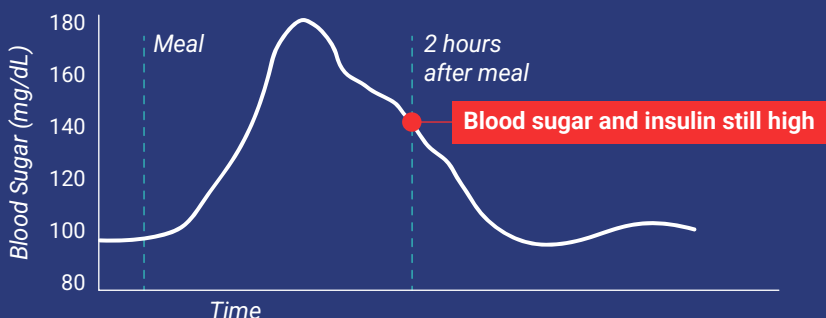
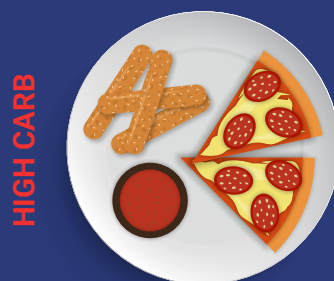
What does insulin do? Insulin helps move glucose (sugar) from the blood into the cells for energy. You can think of insulin as a key that unlocks your cell so that glucose can enter. High levels of insulin tell your body to store extra sugar as fat. Low levels of insulin tell your body to burn fat for energy.



What happens when you eat a low vs. high carb meal?



Lower levels of blood sugar and insulin allow your body to burn fat for energy making you feel more energetic and full.



Extreme high and low levels of blood sugar and insulin causes hunger, cravings, and tiredness which lead to weight gain over time.

Getting Started

- ☐ **Start by changing one meal at a time (e.g., breakfast).** It can be easier to transition gradually to a low carb meal plan. Start with making changes to one meal and do this for a few days to a week. Once you've got the hang of it, modify your next meal to low carb. Focus on...
 - Adding protein, non-starchy vegetables, & healthy fats
 - Swapping out your starch (bread, rice, potato, pasta etc.) for non-starchy vegetables (broccoli, leafy greens, cauliflower, green beans etc.)
- ☐ **Listen to your hunger cues.** One benefit of following a low carb lifestyle is you don't have to count calories. You are encouraged to eat when you are hungry and stop when you are full.
- ☐ **Replace sugary drinks such as pop and fruit juice with water and unsweetened beverages.** Enjoy black coffee and unsweetened teas. If using flavored creamers, replace it with a splash of heavy cream or sugar-free versions.
- ☐ **Find good snack options.** Replace high carb, sugary snacks like chips and baked goods with low sugar fruits like berries. For savory snacks, try veggies and dip, deviled eggs, tuna salad, or nuts and cheese combos. Combining fats and protein help make a balanced and satisfying snack.

Choose this	Instead of
Eggs or omelette	Cereal or bagel
Water with lemon	Juice
80%+ dark chocolate, sugar-free Jell-o	Pastries
Greek yogurt w/ berries	Ice cream
Lettuce wrap, low carb bread	Bread
Riced cauliflower	Rice
Mixed nuts, string cheese, jerky	Crackers
Grilled chicken, steak, pork, tofu	Fried foods
Sliced veggies, pickles, olives	Packaged snacks
Sparkling water, fruit-infused water	Soda
Seltzer, gin or vodka tonic	Beer
Berries, melon, kiwi, apple	Sugary snacks
Mashed cauliflower, rutabaga, kohlrabi	Potatoes
Keto "cloud" dough, nut flour crust	Pizza dough
Mustard, oil and vinegar, herbs, spices	Ketchup
Almond or coconut flour	White flour
Heavy cream, sugar-free creamer	Flavored creamer
Stevia, monkfruit, erythritol, sucralose	Sugar
Zucchini noodles, hearts of palm pasta, shirataki noodles, spaghetti squash	Pasta

Low carbohydrate eating patterns should not be used in combination with SGLT2 inhibitor medications. Talk to your doctor before reducing the carbohydrates in your diet.