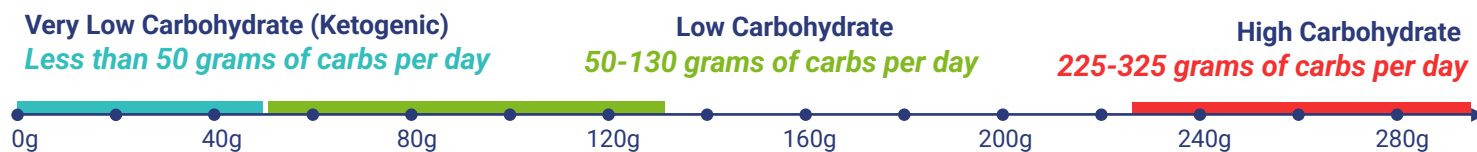


Getting Started on a Low Carb Lifestyle for Type 2 Diabetes

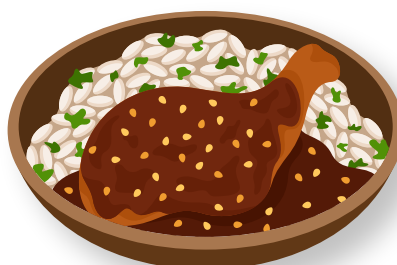
for Hispanic Cuisine

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 ~25g of carbs

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------|
| 2-3 Eggs | 0g carbs |
| 1/2 Avocado | 6g carbs |
| 1/4 cup Ranchero-style Salsa | 6g carbs |
| 1/2 cup Peppers and Onions | 8g carbs |
| 1/4 cup Cheese | 3g carbs |



Meal with ~45g of carbs

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------|
| 4 oz Chicken | 0g carbs |
| 1/2 cup Mole Sauce | 20g carbs |
| 1/2 cup Rice | 25g carbs |



Meal with ~73g of carbs

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| 2 pcs Corn Tortillas | 35g carbs |
| 4 oz Chicken/Beef | 0g carbs |
| 1/2 cup Enchilada Sauce | 10g carbs |
| 1/4 cup Cheese | 3g carbs |
| 1/2 cup Rice | 25g 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.

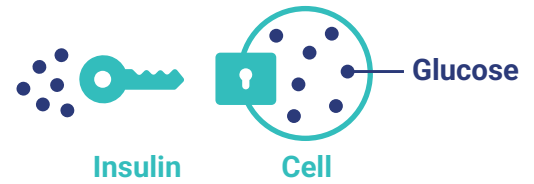
Updated April 2026

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

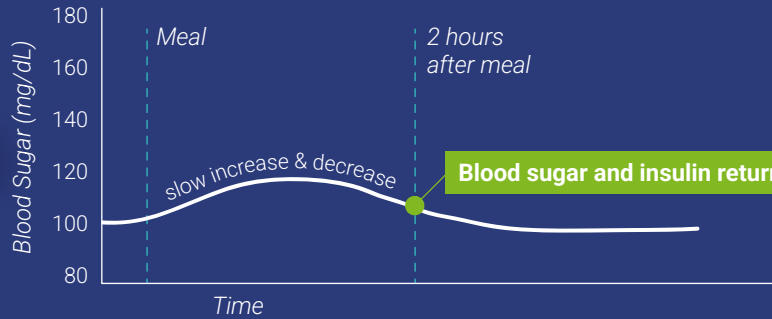


What does insulin do? Insulin helps move glucose (sugar) from the blood into the cells for energy. You can think of insulin as a key that unlocks your cell so that glucose can enter. High levels of insulin tell your body to store extra sugar as fat. Low levels of insulin tell your body to burn fat for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



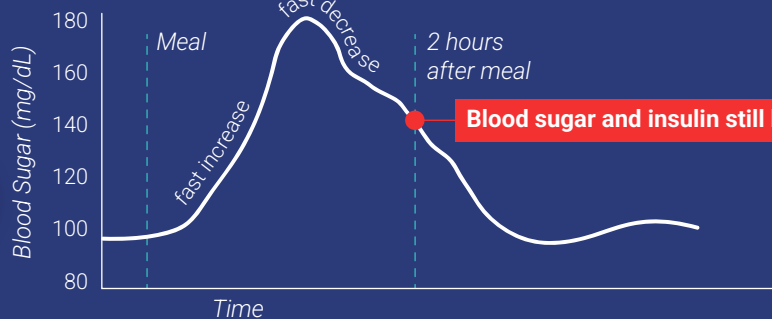
What happens when you eat a low vs. high carb meal?

LOWER CARB



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

HIGHER CARB



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.** Swap high carb, sugary snacks like chips, pastries, and sweet breads for lower-sugar fruits, such as berries or a small portion of melon. For savory snacks, try fresh vegetables with salsa or guacamole, hard-boiled eggs with chili and lime, or nuts and cheese like queso fresco.

Choose this	Instead of
Eggs or omelette	Pan dulce/tamales
Water with lemon	Fruit Juice
80%+ dark chocolate, sugar-free Jell-O	Pastries
Jicama, zucchini, squash	Yucca/cassava
Lettuce or nopal "tortillas"	Flour/corn tortillas
Riced cauliflower	Rice
Mixed nuts, string cheese, jerky	Crackers/tortilla chips
Grilled chicken, steak, pork, fish	Fried foods
Sliced veggies, pickles, olives	Packaged snacks
Sparkling water, fruit-infused water	Soda
Seltzer, gin or vodka club soda	Beer
Berries, melon, kiwi, apple	Desserts/sweets
Nopales, jicama, cauliflower	Potatoes/plaintains
Nuts or seeds	Fried toppings
Mustard, oil and vinegar, herbs, spices	Ketchup
Almond or coconut flour	Wheat/corn flour
Heavy cream, sugar-free creamer	Flavored creamer
Unsweetened, stevia, monkfruit	Sugar/honey/agave
Make it a bowl (on salad)	Burritos/tacos

A very low carb (ketogenic) eating pattern should not be used in combination with SGLT2 inhibitor medications. Talk to your doctor before reducing the carbohydrates in your diet.