



Insulin Dependent Diabetes Trust

Type 2 and You
Issue 6 - January 2011



Welcome to the sixth issue of Type 2 and You.

Counting Carbs

Why count carbohydrates?

Counting the amount of carbohydrate you eat and drink is a way of understanding what carbohydrates are and how they affect your blood sugar levels and the amount of medication and/or insulin you will need to take. By learning to count carbohydrates you will also learn the importance of testing your blood sugar levels and how your medication and/or insulin can be adjusted according to what you eat. The role of carbohydrate counting is different for people who have diabetes that requires treatment with insulin and those that take other types of medication.

- For people with type 2 diabetes who do not require insulin, carbohydrate counting is a way of monitoring the amount of carbohydrate they eat and how this affects their blood sugar levels, weight levels and medication intake.

- For people with type 2 diabetes that use insulin, carbohydrate counting is a way of matching their insulin dose with what they eat. In both cases it can lead to a greater freedom in lifestyle and better general health but at first requires patience and hard work, along with testing your blood sugar regularly to see the effects different type of food have on your blood glucose levels. That said, IDDT is aware that people with Type 2 diabetes may be refused blood glucose testing strips but the above are the reasons why IDDT believes that everyone with Type 2 diabetes, who wants to manage their diabetes in this way, should be able to obtain blood glucose test strips from their GP.

Different types of carbohydrates.

Before you start counting carbohydrates it is important that you understand something about the different types of carbohydrates there are in the food we eat and the way they affect our bodies. It is also important to know a little about the role of fibre. All carbohydrates are broken down into glucose, the type of sugar that the body needs for energy. However they can be roughly broken down into two groups.

- Simple carbohydrates are quickly absorbed by the body and can give you a quick sugar “hit” or “spike”, and can be found, for example, in desserts and sweets.
- Complex carbohydrates take longer to be absorbed and result in more gently raised blood sugar levels, over a longer period of time, and can be found in foods like bread, potatoes, pasta and rice. Because of this they are better for you.
- The amount of fibre that is in the food we eat also affects how quickly the carbohydrates are absorbed, for example whole-grain bread will be absorbed more slowly than white bread and for the same reason is also better for you.

Some examples

Below is a table of some common foods and the amount of carbohydrate they contain, along with an indicator as to whether they are simple or complex carbohydrates.

Food/Portion Size	Grams of Carbohydrate	Simple/Complex
White Bread, 1 slice	14.8g	Complex
Soft White Roll, 60g	31g	Complex
Baked beans, 200g can	30.6g	Complex
Cornflakes, 30g	25.3g	Complex
Porridge, 100g, with milk	13.7g	Complex
Semi-skimmed milk, 250ml	11.8g	Complex
Tomato Ketchup, 1tbs	3.7g	Contains Both
Cheddar Cheese, 25g	0g	None
Orange Juice, unsweetened 250ml	22g	Simple
Lucozade, 330ml	59.1g	Simple
Eggs, 1 medium	0.6g	Complex
Apple, 1 medium	21g	Contains Both
Strawberry Jam, 1tsp	3.2g	Simple
Cumberland Sausages, 2	3.6g	Complex
Pasta, 100g cooked	20g	Complex
Mashed Potato, 90g	13.9	Complex
Fruit Yoghurt, 125g pot	22.1g	Contains Both
Digestive Biscuits, each	10g	Contains Both
Chocolate Cake, 75g slice	42.3g	Contains Both

A few tips from other Carb Counters

- Check the nutrition labels on food packets to find out the carbohydrate content.
- Start keeping a list of the carbohydrate content of foods you eat regularly.
- You may need to start by weighing foods a couple of times but very quickly you will learn to estimate by eye.
- Test your blood sugar levels regularly to learn the effects that different foods have on your blood sugar levels.
- Remember that your diet is not all about carbohydrates and you need to look at the amount of fat in your diet. You should try to reduce the amount of fat you eat, particularly if you are trying to lose weight.

If you are interested in finding out more, IDDT produces a free information leaflet “Carbohydrates” and can supply a “Collins Gem Carb Counter” book at a subsidised price of £2.99 (normally £3.99) If you would like either or both of these then contact us using the details at the end of this newsletter.

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A NICE word about DESMOND

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is an independent organization responsible for providing national guidance on promoting good health and preventing and treating ill health.

NICE makes recommendations to the NHS on:

- new and existing medicines, treatments and procedures.
- treating and caring for people with specific diseases and conditions, such as Type 2 diabetes.

NICE makes recommendations to the NHS, local authorities and other organisations in the public, private, voluntary and community sectors on:

- how to improve people’s health and prevent illness and disease.

NICE works with experts from the NHS, local authorities and others in the public, private, voluntary and community sectors - as well as patients and carers. It makes independent decisions in an open, transparent way, based on the best available evidence and including input from experts and interested parties, including patients.

As such, all healthcare professionals are expected to take it fully into account when they make decisions about your health care. For people with diabetes, this means that the guidelines are a good guide to the type, level and quality of care you should expect from your doctors and nurses. The guideline that relates to the management of type 2 diabetes is called CG87. If you have the internet it can be downloaded in full at:

<http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/pdf/CG87NICEGuideline.pdf>

Or if you prefer, you can order it by telephone: 0845 003 7783

The guidance notes cover many aspects of living with type 2 diabetes including education about the condition and lifestyle, different types of treatment and the management of the complications of diabetes.

IDDT tries to support people with managing as many aspects of the condition as possible and is a firm believer that people have a right to a structured programme of education about diabetes when they are first diagnosed. From the telephone calls IDDT receives all too frequently it has become aware that this type of education and information provision is sadly lacking.

If you feel that you have not been offered enough information about how to manage your condition, whether it is by diet only, diet and tablets or by taking insulin then the NICE guidelines are a good place to start to learn what your healthcare team should be considering when they are supporting you with managing your diabetes. For example, simply pointing out that NICE recommends that patients should be given professional dietary advice and the opportunity to attend a specialist education course may be enough to persuade them to give you what you need.

Education Courses

There are several different educational courses designed for people with type 2 to learn about the management of their condition. One of the most commonly known of these is the Diabetes Education and Self Management for Ongoing and Newly Diagnosed (DESMOND).

Desmond is a group of several learning courses, designed to help the person with diabetes become the expert in their care. They offer practical advice about managing diabetes as well as the opportunity to meet other people with the condition. If you think that you may benefit from attending a DESMOND course then you can either ask your GP to refer you or if you prefer you can self refer. To self refer or to find out details of courses running near you then the website below will be of help:

<http://www.desmond-project.org.uk/programmes-271.html>

Or the DESMOND National Office can be contacted by telephone on: 0116 258 5881.

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More Drug Concerns!

In the last issue of Type 2 and You we reported on the withdrawal of Avandia (rosiglitazone), amid concerns about the safety of the drug. At the time, we also wrote about the possibility that those people taking Avandia, would be given Actos (pioglitazone) as an alternative but that there were concerns about the safety of this drug as well.

These concerns are justified, as all drugs in this family can cause fluid retention and, in turn, heart failure. As such Actos, along with all other drugs in this family, should not be given anyone with a history of or at any stage of heart failure.

Now, in addition, to this there may be another problem with Actos.

In the USA, the Federal Drug Agency (FDA) has announced that it is carrying out an ongoing review of the information about the drug. This is following the findings of a ten year study to investigate whether Actos is associated with an increased risk of bladder cancer. Although no direct link was found the study did show an increased risk of bladder cancer in those people who had been taking the drug the longest, as well as those who had been taking the highest dose over the time.

As always, the advice is that if you are worried, do not stop taking your medication but to go and discuss your medication with your doctor.

IDDT Quarterly Publications

IDDT produce a wide range of **free** information leaflets, including information on Carbohydrates, Hypoglycaemia, Diet and Exercise and Exercise and your Heart. These can be sent by post or downloaded from our new website.

For more information contact us!

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