

Carbohydrate Counting Twitter Chat:

How HCPs Can Help People with Diabetes Build Skills

Tips, Tools and Tricks

Imp't tools at home: measure spoons, cups; food scale. And **honest eyes!** (@HopeWarshaw)

Start with common tools at home, measuring spoons, cups and move on from there (@DebGreenwood)

Apps, nutrition labels and good old fashioned measuring spoons and scales. If you're **not sure, look it up!** (@MollyMacT1D)

Use measuring cup to dish out foods, **draw line on cups** at 1 cup level, draw a line on cereal bowl to make it easier (@SylviaWhiteRD)

I encourage using a **measuring cup to dish out servings** rather than a serv spoon (@SylviaWhiteRD)

Teach hand measurements i.e. a **cupped hand = ½ cup serving** (@diabetesevryday)

Use hand measurements and simple tools. Sometimes **weighing "usual" foods** for a week can do the trick too! (@susangweiner)

Portion **teaching tools: deck of cards, bar of soap, balls of diff sizes**. Samples of low cost measuring equipment. (@HopeWarshaw)

If they won't weigh/measure **suggest portion control dinnerware** and measuring serving spoons. (@eatingsoulfully)

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Setting the Stage

Don't assume bec someone has #diabetes for a long time that they understand carbs. Open up convo (@susangweiner)

Carbs are **unit of measure not a judgement of character**. We may limit carbs, but no need to take out a whole food group. (@MollyMacT1D)

It's important clients understand why carbs are important for diabetes. **Carbs = Energy**, better mood, growth in children (@Nutrichicos)

Explain clearly. Carb counting isn't abt how much carb to eat, it's about how to count it to manage glucose levels (@HopeWarshaw)

Counting carbohydrates accurately is **both a science and an art**. It takes time, practice & a lot of hard work. (@Nutrichicos)

Think: **80% of time you eat similar foods, meals**. Use this fact to help get carb counts of foods you eat often (@HopeWarshaw)

Don't get overwhelmed by all the other nutrient "asks"- just focus on carb content in the beginning (@diabetesevryday)

I share that even #RD #CDE are not accurate all the time. **Normalize the challenge**. (@DebGreenwood)

Take a step back and realize if it wasn't quite right, you can learn from your logs for next time. (@rachelheadCDE)

Remember the **meal isn't the only variable**. BG going into it, meds on board, stress levels, etc. all play a role. (@rachelheadCDE)

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Getting Started

I don't call foods "carbs." I don't use "carb choices" and the 15 gram serving concept. Adds to confusion in my mind (@HopeWarshaw)

I provide general guidelines on **carbs per day divided by food group**. i.e. 2-3 fruit, 4-6 starch etc. (@Eatingsoulfully)

Teach total grams carb and not sugar grams. **Sugar grams are part of total carbs** (@diabetesevryday)

Demonstrate label reading for carbs (@diabetesevryday)

Identify food groups with carbs - i.e. often they think berries don't have carb (@diabetesevryday)

I've found **a simple 2 sided list w/ carb vs non carb** containing foods is a great jumping off point for discussion. (@rachelheadCDE)

Milk has carbohydrates in it and it **doesn't matter the whole, skim or whatever.** (@zsquaredmama)

Ppl need to understand **diff b/w healthy and unhealthy sources of carb** related to energy, nutrition, fiber, more (@HopeWarshaw)

I mention that **fruit, milk, and starches turn to sugar** in the body, and that's okay, we need those for some of our energy. (@zsquaredmama)

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Personalization is Key

1st I just want client to learn abt amts of foods they eat. **Ask: How often willing to weigh, measure?** Share insights! (@HopeWarshaw)

Ask and teach from list of foods (and drinks) the client consumes. No need to know carb counts of many foods (@HopeWarshaw)

Focus on meals they eat. **Get their story.** Help figure carb counts in meals. Suggest change if carb high (@HopeWarshaw)

Memorize the carb counts and serving size for 3 most eaten meals. **Never "eyeball" a serving size** on cereal! (@MollyMacT1D)

Important to **base on usual meal pattern** (@Eatingsoulfully)

Talk about real life situations. **Talk about combo of different foods.** (@susangweiner)

What do you eat during the week? **Does it differ from the weekend?** Meet the #PWD where they are in their journey (@susangweiner)

Ask ppl to **bring in labels** from foods they eat, drink. (@HopeWarshaw)

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Tips for Dining Out

Have clients **practice at home for 1 week** w measuring so they feel comfortable when dining out (@diabetesevryday)

I say the **more you measure, weigh at home, the more accurate “guesstimator”** you’ll be w restaurant foods (@HopeWarshaw)

Ask client order in fav restaurants. Look up, add up counts w client. Show how easy to find.
Practice together (@HopeWarshaw)

Restaurant menus, restaurant nutrition facts from websites or apps. Ask ppl to **bring in menus from fav restaurants.** (@HopeWarshaw)

If ur restaurant doesn’t have the info, **look @ similar menu items @ other restaurants** that have nutrition info (@diabetesevryday)

I like to **look around at portions being served** as I’m being seated at a sit down restaurant b/4 ordering (@HopeWarshaw)

Beware hidden carb gms: sugar and starches in sauces, marinades, gravies. Flour, bread crumbs for pan-sear fish, meats (@HopeWarshaw)

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Practical Portion Control Tips

Weigh, **measure foods once a week**. Monday good day to suggest. First day of week. Keeps eyes honest! (@HopeWarshaw)

Measure portions for a week and then **use same dishes** and do a visual for portion (@diabeteseveryday)

Read food labels, **pre-portion foods** for an easy grab and go that's already carb counted (@susangweiner)

Don't forget the **portion size associated with label**, often forgotten step (DrNBereolos)

My personal favorite: **Keep the measuring cup inside the cereal box**. Keeps portions in check & you count carbs accurately (@Nutrichicos)

In office/clinic, **ask to measure out X amt of dry cereal into bowl**. Then measure it in measuring cup. Teachable moment! (@HopeWarshaw)

I love to **look at nutrition labels of random food** in the supermarket. Great for traveling and surviving buffets. (@Nutrichicos)

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Connecting the Dots between Carb Counting and Glucose Monitoring

Teach paired glucose readings and assessment of findings (@diabetesevryday)

Show how **mealtime insulin has a direct effect** on BGs using BG logs with paired readings (@diabetesevryday)

Many ppl don't realize how food affects BG. PPBG shows the (surprising) direct effect. **Carb counting is a tool to help.** (@rachelheadCDE)

PPBG tells us a lot! Check if u can. Even savvy carb counters face foods w/o labels. Big weak link in diabetes care. (@rachelheadCDE)

Ask client to propose experiment. Ex: measure foods most meals 2 days next 3 weeks. See diff in BGs. (@HopeWarshaw)

Pre/post **meal checks also assist #T2D** clients realize they need to progress BG lowering meds (@HopeWarshaw)

Look at your **BGM/ CGM data 1-3 hours after meals.** If giving additional corrections then look at carb ratio. (@MollyMacT1D)

Looking for post meal glucose, we want a very smooth hill rather than a very steep cliff. **Cliff = Check** Carb Counts. (@MollyMacT1D)

A food log is so helpful to compare to the spikes! (@SylviaWhiteRD)

Keep track. For some it's keeping a pen to paper log others using an app. Diff strokes for diff folks! (@susangweiner)

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Advanced Carbohydrate Counting and Technology

Yes, I think more #CDEs need to learn that **protein, high fat does impact #BG**
(@DebGreenwood)

New studies show fat and protein raise BG up to 8hrs & insulin requirements increase
(@Nutrichicos)

Teaching pp to count protein & fat might not be for everyone. **Know your audience.**
(@Nutrichicos)

Use tech tools to help document and use educated guess based on portion size suggestions in apps (@DebGreenwood)

Use apps that **scan barcodes for packaged foods.** (@DebGreenwood)

MyFitnessPal can help with recipes. (@zsquaredmama)

Yes, practicing with them helps! **If clients mention a food, I pull out my phone app and find it**
(@SylviaWhiteRD)

For pumpers also work with extended and combo bolus. **May need slower, lower doses**
(@HopeWarshaw)

Teach extended bolus on pumps for high fat meals (@SylviaWhiteRD)

CGM is great to compare spikes and discuss what was eaten and how many carbs were estimated. (@SylviaWhiteRD)

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