

How Many Carbs Does My Child Need?

When a child is first diagnosed with diabetes, parents often wonder, “How many carbohydrates should my child have at each meal?” While every child has different needs based on age, activity, and food preferences, here are some general guidelines to get you started.

Age	Carbs (grams) for Meals	Carbs (grams) for Snacks (if needed)
Boys		
< 5 years old	30-45 g at each meal	15-20 g
5 – 12 years old	45-60 g at each meal	15 -30 g
13 – 18 years old	60-75 g at each meal	15-30 g
Girls		
< 5 years old	30-45 g at each meal	15-20 g
5 – 12 years old	45-60 g at each meal	15-20 g
13 – 18 years old	45-75 g at each meal	15-30 g

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This document is not intended to take the place of the care and attention of your personal physician or other professional medical services. Our aim is to promote active participation in your care and treatment by providing information and education. Questions about individual health concerns or specific treatment options should be discussed with your physician.

Recommended

[How Foods Affect Glucose Levels](#)

[Understanding Carbohydrates](#)

[Reading Nutritional Labels](#)

[Understanding Portion Size](#)

[Low Carb Snack Ideas](#)

Sources

[Understanding Diabetes: Chapter 11 - Normal Nutrition](#)

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[The 12 Question Carb Quiz](#)

[Diabetes Care and Education - resources on carbohydrate counting](#)

[Institute of Medicine's Estimated Average Requirements for Dietary Reference Intakes \(DRIs\)](#)

[Estimated Calorie Needs per Day by Age, Sex, and Physical Activity Level](#)
