

Diabetes and “Carb” Counting

For 20.8 million individuals with (type 2) diabetes mellitus, it is really a balancing act. They need insulin for their cells to utilize food for energy, and they need to follow three guidelines for long-term health: control consumption of carbohydrates, limit portion size, and include non-soluble fiber in their diets. These “rules” can benefit anyone who has – or wants to prevent – this metabolic disorder.

According to Cathy Faulconer, RN, Diabetic Education Coordinator for Highland District Hospital’s Diabetes and You program, diabetes results when the pancreas produces too little insulin or the insulin is not used properly, resulting in high blood glucose. Because 100 percent of carbohydrates turn into glucose in the bloodstream, a diabetic can easily create an imbalance in their body by eating too many carbohydrates at the same time. But, carbohydrates – found in breads, grains, fruits, starchy vegetables (such as potatoes, peas, corn and squash), milk, beans and sweets – are essential to create energy for our bodies.

Suggested carbohydrate ranges are: 30-60 grams per meal and 15-30 grams per snack. To easily count carbohydrates, look at food labels for serving size, total carbohydrates (this includes “sugars”) and fiber content. Foods with 5 grams of fiber or more help control blood glucose.

If you have questions about diabetes, or would like to participate in education classes, personal diabetes and nutrition counseling, or to learn more about upcoming events, please call the Diabetes & You Program at 937.840.6674.