

Snacks between meals

Information for patients, parents and guardians

We've written this factsheet as a guide to snacking between meals for people with diabetes. Snacks between meals can be part of a healthy diet, but you should choose your snacks carefully.

When you choose a snack, you will need to think about how much carbohydrate it contains and whether this will cause your blood glucose levels to rise between meals.

Keep this factsheet in a safe place in case you need to refer back to it.

Top tips for snacking

- Eat three regularly spaced meals per day (breakfast, lunch and supper) and make sure you have a balanced diet and a healthy weight.
- Try not to have more than one snack between meals. For example, it is better to have one larger snack at 10am with the insulin units needed rather than three little snacks at 9am, 9.30am and 10.30am
- If you are having some carbohydrate in food or drink, check whether you need to give yourself some extra insulin.
- Avoid snacking on sweets and sugary foods.
- Avoid snacking on lots of high fat or protein foods.
- If you have a personal 'insulin to carbohydrate' ratio, use this to calculate insulin units needed to cover snacks.
- If you **do not** have a personal insulin to carbohydrate ratio yet, use the ready reckoner table on the next page to guide how much insulin you need with a snack.

Ready reckoner table

Age of child	Carbohydrate value				
	0 – 2 years 11 months (1u:30g)	Less than or equal to 14 grams	15 -29 grams	30 – 44 grams	45 – 59 grams
	0 units	0.5 units	1 unit	1.5 units	
3 – 6 years (1u:25g)	Less than or equal to 12 grams	13 – 24 grams	25 – 37 grams	38 - 49 grams	
	0 units	0.5 units	1 unit	1.5 units	
7 – 12 years (1u:15g)	Less than or equal to 7 grams	8 – 14 grams	15– 22 grams	23 – 29 grams	
	0 units	0.5 units	1 unit	1.5 units	
13 years plus (1u:10g)	Less than or equal to 4 grams	5 – 9 grams	10 -14 grams	15 – 19 grams	
	0 units	0.5 units	1 unit	1.5 units	

The 'ready reckoner' table uses the following ratios to calculate insulin doses:

- 1 insulin unit to 30 grams carbohydrate for children aged under 3 years
- 1 insulin unit to 25 grams carbohydrate for children aged 3 to 6 years
- 1 insulin unit to 15 grams carbohydrate for children aged 7 to 12 years
- 1 insulin unit to 10 grams carbohydrate for children aged 13 years and above

In the evening a weaker a ratio may be needed. Please discuss this with your dietitian.

Please ask the diabetes specialist nurses for a half unit Novorapid pen if you do not have one already.

Insulin from a pen can only be given as half units or whole units (for example: 0.5 units or 1 unit). There will therefore be times when you will need to use your own judgement and round up or down the insulin dose to be given. Please discuss this with your diabetes specialist dietitian.

Good snack choices

Try to stick to one snack choice between meals. Here are some examples of good snack choices.

- vegetable sticks (cucumber, carrots, celery, peppers)
- a handful of cherry tomatoes
- a portion of hummus (40g)
- two to three large breadsticks or eight to ten mini breadsticks
- one portion of fruit (banana, apple or orange)
- one cereal bar
- one slice of toast
- a small handful of olives (10)
- a small handful of nuts and seeds (25 to 30g)
- pitta bread (half to one pitta)
- a crumpet
- two or three large rice cakes or half a packet of mini rice cakes
- a yoghurt (60 to 125g pot)
- a 200ml glass of milk

Snacks to avoid

We do not recommend eating sugary snacks (such as chocolate, biscuits and fruit juice) as these make it difficult to achieve good blood sugar control and can cause tooth decay. If you choose to eat some sugary foods make sure you only eat them in small quantities and preferably at meal times. This will slow the absorption of sugar and cause less damage to your teeth.

Try not to eat lots of high fat or high protein snacks as a way of avoiding the need for extra novorapid units. This may lead to excessive weight gain and in addition to too much fat and protein in your diet.

For more information on carbohydrate values, please refer to the diet sheet 'Carbohydrate content of common foods', the 'Carbs and Cals' book and food labels.

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audiotape, please telephone **023 8120 4688** for help.

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