

Carbohydrate Foods in a Healthy Diet



How to match carbohydrate food amounts in main meals for different physical activity levels.

Why do we need carbohydrate?



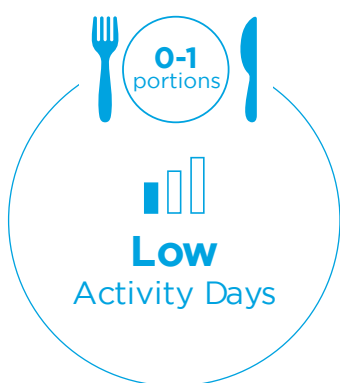
1. Carbohydrate provides energy to fuel brain function and physical activity, including everyday tasks, leisure and sporting activities



2. Many carbohydrate foods are also sources of dietary fibre, important for gut health, including wholegrain cereals and grains, fruit, vegetables and legumes.

How much carbohydrate food do I need?

The amount of carbohydrate food recommended in a healthy diet will depend on your level of physical activity. You will need more carbohydrate food portions on more active days than less active days.



What is a low, medium and high activity day?

0-1 hr



Low intensity physical activity and/or incidental activities

including leisurely or everyday activities
e.g. walking, gardening, cleaning or shopping.

1-2 hr



Moderate to intense physical activity and incidental activities

which slightly increase and maintain your heart rate e.g. bike riding, swimming, jogging, gym classes, and hiking.

2+ hr



Intense physical activity and incidental activities accumulated over a day

involving repetitive exercises and a high heart rate
e.g. boxing, spin classes and team sports.

Portion Size Guide

This portion size guide provides examples of amounts equivalent to one portion of carbohydrate. Use this guide for amounts and for choosing a variety of carbohydrate foods to balance your meal.

	1 portion
Pasta/noodles/grains	½ cup cooked pasta/noodles/quinoa ¼ cup cooked rice
Legumes (beans, peas, lentils)	¾ cup cooked beans or legumes
Bread	1 slice bread or ½ roll or wrap
Starchy vegetables	1 medium potato ¼ medium sweet potato ½ corn cob
Fruit	1 piece fruit (medium apple, banana, pear) 2 small pieces fruit (kiwi fruit, nectarine, apricot)
Dairy Foods	1 glass milk (250mL) ½ cup yoghurt

Meal ideas

Beef Stir Fry



0 portions

Beef Stir Fry



½ cup rice = 2 portions

Beef Stir Fry



¾ cup rice = 3 portions

Omelette



1 slice of toast = 1 portion

Lamb and chickpea salad



½ cup rice + ¾ cup chickpeas = 3 portions

Grilled fish + dessert



¼ medium sweet potato + ½ cup cooked quinoa + 1 piece fruit + ½ cup yoghurt = 4 portions

HOW TO ORDER FREE RESOURCES

Meat & Livestock Australia's nutrition resources provide practical tips for planning and serving healthy, balanced meals. These patient-friendly resources include portion guidance for meeting protein, carbohydrate and iron needs for different dietary requirements and life stages.

WHO IS MLA?

Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) is an industry owned Rural Research and Development Corporation that delivers marketing, research and development services to Australia's red meat and livestock industry. Our activities in nutrition research and communications aim to support the consumption of Australian red meat in healthy, balanced meals.



For more information, visit www.mlahealthymeals.com.au