

Fruit and Diabetes

People with diabetes shouldn't be afraid of fruit!

Fruit is packed with vitamins and minerals, including antioxidants. It also contains dietary fiber, which fills you up and helps with blood sugar control. Fruit's sweet taste makes it a natural and healthful dessert too.

Choosing fresh fruit is easy—you can either buy the whole pineapple or pay more for the pre-cut version. You can't go wrong! In the freezer aisle, it's pretty easy to find frozen fruit with no sugar added as well. The choice is trickier when you're faced with grocery store shelves filled with all sorts of canned fruit options. This is when you turn the can around to find the grams of carbohydrate per serving on the nutrition facts label.

Let's use canned pears as an example:

- Pears with No Sugar Added: 10g
- Pears in 100% Fruit Juice: 15g
- Pears in Extra Light Syrup: 15g
- Pears in Light Syrup: 20g
- Pears in Heavy Syrup: 25g

Now let's talk serving size. Whether you count carbs, use the plate method, or follow the glycemic index, serving size matters. One serving of fruit contains 15 grams of carbohydrate.

Take a look at this general guide to servings:

- Fruit juice: ½ cup
- Dried fruit: 2 tablespoons
- Canned or frozen fruit: ½ cup
- Whole fresh fruit: 1 small piece

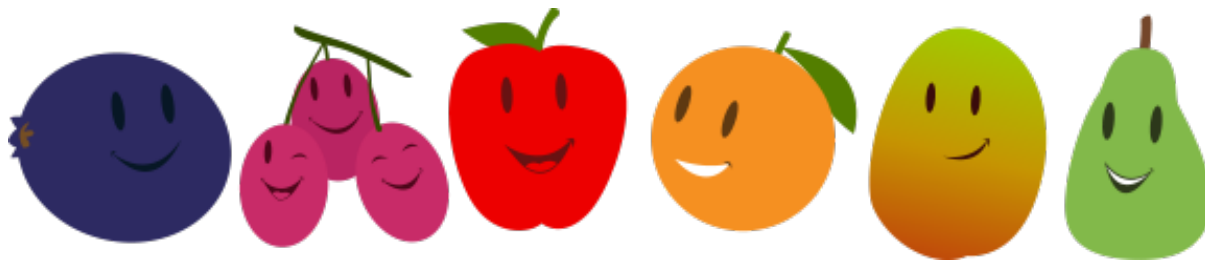
Since the carbohydrate content of fruits varies, here's a quick guide to common fruits. Each portion contains 15 grams of carbs:

- 1¼ cups strawberries
- 1 cup raspberries
- ¾ cup blueberries or blackberries
- 1¼ cup cubed watermelon
- ¾ cup cubed pineapple
- 1 extra small (4 oz) banana
- 12 fresh cherries
- ½ of a large (11oz) grapefruit
- 17 grapes
- 1 medium peach (6oz)
- ½ of a large (4 oz) pear
- 2 small plums
- 1/3 cup fruit juice blends

And here are a few more fruit tips:

- Choose whole fruit over fruit juice. The fiber will fill you up and help control your blood sugar.
- Dried fruit and 100% fruit juice are okay, but since the natural sugars are concentrated, serving sizes are small and it's easy to overdo it.

By Hollis Bass, MEd, RD



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