



Black and African American Cuisine General Nutrition Tips

Living with T1D doesn't mean that traditional dishes and family favorites are off the menu. With a little planning and awareness of how different types of food work together, you can enjoy all of your family's treasured recipes!

Carbohydrate Counting

Carbohydrate (carb) counting is a tool used to help manage type 1 diabetes (T1D). Carbohydrates turn into glucose once consumed. Carb counting allows you to accurately estimate the amount of carbohydrates in a serving and will assist in getting you closer to dosing insulin correctly. There are a variety of resources that you can use to help estimate carbs in different carb foods. Measuring cups, spoons, food scales, and food apps can be used along with carb counting skills for an accurate measurement.



Carb-Counting for Mixed Dishes with Additional Carbohydrates

Mixed dishes are common in many cultures of the African Diaspora, whether it is macaroni and cheese from the African American culture, Fufu with cassava, which is common in many African countries, or plantains in many Caribbean cultures. These foods are carbohydrates (starchy vegetables or grains), which break down into sugar once eaten. Other common mixed dishes that represent the different regions of the African Diaspora include:

- Soups
- Stews or dishes with lima beans
- Stewed lentils with non-starchy vegetables like callaloo, cabbage, or okra
- Jollof rice
- Black-eyed peas
- Jambalaya

It's important to consider the impact of carbohydrates in meals and traditional dishes on your blood-glucose.

With your support, we are creating a movement to improve and change life with T1D, advancing breakthroughs on the way to cures.

To find out more, visit [BreakthroughT1D.org](https://www.BreakthroughT1D.org).



Pre-Meal Bolus

Timing your pre-bolus insulin is a critical part of managing T1D around meals. Depending on guidance from your healthcare team, insulin may be taken 15–20 minutes before eating or immediately after a meal. The exact timing often depends on the type of carbohydrate in the meal. Typically, fast-acting carbs may require earlier dosing to better match post-meal blood sugar spikes, while slower-digesting carbs might allow for more flexibility. Always follow your individualized plan and monitor how your body responds.

Blood Glucose Monitoring and Pattern Recognition

Monitoring your blood glucose is a great way to learn how certain foods impact your blood glucose levels. Monitor your blood glucose levels before and two hours after taking the first bite of your meal. As you monitor, take note of how fast or slow your blood glucose rises. For example, eating macaroni and cheese, using refined white noodles may cause your blood glucose levels to raise faster because of the lack of fiber, compared to using whole wheat noodles. Also, take note of how much of a carbohydrate you are eating in one sitting—larger portions of carbohydrate foods will impact your blood glucose longer compared to smaller portions. Carbohydrates with high fiber amounts such as green (less-ripened) plantains and beans may cause your blood glucose levels to rise slower due to the high amount of fiber in these foods. Track the patterns based on your personal experience of eating carbohydrate foods. Share the patterns with your healthcare team to discuss any adjustments that may be needed for insulin doses.

Watch for Delayed Glucose Spikes

A delayed glucose spike is a rise in blood glucose levels that happens several hours after eating, instead of the usual 1–2 hours post-meal. Be mindful and consider that delayed glucose spikes can occur when high-protein and high-fat meals are digested, causing a delay in glucose absorption. Sometimes the glucose rise will continue 3-5 hours after eating. Examples of foods or dishes that can cause a delayed glucose spike include macaroni and cheese, fried fish with plantains and beans, red beans and rice with smoked sausage, okra stew with cornmeal, cassava, or Fufu.

Eating a meal when you have T1D requires extra thought. Consider having to take the following steps:



KNOW

Study the menu and know your options.



STOP

Prick finger or check CGM to determine blood sugar.



THINK

Add up all the carbs for the items you plan to eat.



WAIT

Administer insulin 20 min. prior to eating.



DOUBLE CHECK

Wait 2 hours, check your numbers again.

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