



Diabetes

FOOD FIX START

How to get better blood sugars with
3 simple changes!

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If you are taking diabetes medication that could cause low blood sugar you may need to talk to your doctor before making significant changes in diet.



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Introduction

I'm Karen, Registered Dietitian, Diabetes Care & Education Specialist, wife, mom, grandmother and a person with prediabetes.

My passion for helping others with diabetes stems from my dad and other family members' experience with diabetes, plus my own gestational diabetes over 25 years ago.

I designed this workbook for those who are newly diagnosed with diabetes or struggling with high blood sugars, and want to know where to start with diet changes.

I walk you through the first 3 changes in eating habits that tend to have the biggest impact on blood sugars.

If you need to contact me with general questions or questions about the workbook [you can reach me by email at this link.](#)

Thank you for purchasing my workbook and I hope you get great value from it!

QuickStart Step 1: Drink Healthier!

The #1 thing to do – Stop Drinking Sugar!

Why?

Liquid sugars raise your blood sugar FASTER. This is why people use sweet drinks such as orange juice when they have low blood sugar.

Too much sugar causes INFLAMMATION in the body.

Sweet drinks have a lot of calories for low nutrition value and can cause WEIGHT gain.

What about diet soda?

Diet drinks can be a transition drink or an occasional drink, depending on how you feel about artificial sweeteners.

Examples: diet soda, Crystal Light, Gatorade or Powerade Zero. Artificial sweeteners are not good for us but sometimes it's a matter of choosing the lesser of 2 evils.

What about milk?

Cow's milk has natural sugar but if you stick to an 8-12 oz glass you only get about 15 grams carb, compared to about 45 grams carb in a 12 oz soda. There are lower carb milk products and carb free milk products such as unsweetened almond milk.

Are You Drinking Enough Water?

Why drink more water?

Water flushes bacteria from your bladder & helps prevent bladder infection. When you have high blood sugars you are at increased risk of infections.

Water helps digestion and prevents constipation.

Water helps keep blood pressure controlled and your heart rate stable. High blood sugar can increase blood pressure. Just think about how much harder your heart has to work to pump syrup instead of water!

Water helps cushion your joints. Having high blood sugars can cause inflammation in your joints and other parts of your body.

Water helps regulate body temperature and maintain electrolyte balance. Having a diabetes complication called autonomic neuropathy can decrease the ability for your body to sweat. That's how our body cools us down in the heat so having that problem makes heat stroke more of a risk.

There is no magic amount of water but the 6-8 glasses or 48-60 oz daily is a good range to aim for.

Are You Drinking Enough Water?

Why drink more water?

If you struggle with drinking more water and need flavor here are some ideas:

- Ice water might be more appealing to you
- Treat yourself to a fun water bottle if it helps motivate you. Know how much it holds and use the measured amount to know how many bottles you need to drink each day to reach your goal. (usually 48-64 oz)
- Use an app to remind you to drink water more often
- Add lemon or lime slices or other fresh fruit to flavor your water
- If no fresh fruit try adding frozen berries to flavor your water
- Add about 2 oz of pomegranate or grape juice to flavor your water. You may need to monitor your blood sugar since juice will raise it but if diluted enough in the water, it may not have much impact.
- Try flavored bottled water but be aware that some have artificial sweeteners.



QuickStart Step 1 Homework

What are you drinking on a daily or weekly routine?

Mark them. Add your drink if not listed.

Sweet Drinks

Regular soda/pop
Sweet coffee drinks
Fruit juice or punch
Kool-Aide
Sports Drinks
Sweet Tea
Energy Drinks
Shakes/Malts
Fruit/Juice Smoothies
Sweet alcohol drinks

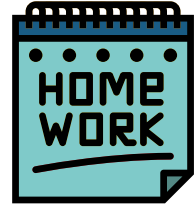
Unsweetened Drinks

Water
Coffee with no sugar
Unsweetened Tea

You can also take a few days to track your drinks. Write down what, how much and look up the carb content of sweet drinks on the container, coffee shop website, or on the **Calorie King** app or website.

Use the Drinks Cheat Sheet in the resources section to learn more about different types of drinks and their sugar content.

Your Homework



What change do I want to work on for the next week or two?

Do I need to decrease the amount of sweet drinks?

Do I need to decrease the amount of diet drinks?

My Goal is to:

Reduce or limit _____ to _____ per day or per week

Drink _____ cups/ounces water daily.

What strategies will help me accomplish this change? (examples: specific water bottle, stop buying soda)

QuickStart Step 2: Switch Your Sweets

Why switch?

- Better blood sugars
- Weight loss
- Reduce inflammation
- More energy



How to switch?

There are 2 Ways You Can Approach it:

➔ **Eliminate:** Sugar can be addicting and how you approach cutting your sweets intake depends on what you feel works best for you. Some people need to cut out all sweets for a few weeks until they no longer have cravings.

➔ **Reduce and substitute:** Others can cut back on how much and how often they eat sweets or substitute fresh fruit for their sweets. There is no right or wrong approach. If you need a little each day, manage to eat small portions that can work.

Chocolate cravings? I have found that dark or semi-sweet chocolate chips are the best way for me to satisfy my sweet craving without overeating. I just grab about a tablespoon. Dark chocolate tends to be more satisfying than the higher sugar milk chocolate.

Switch Your Sweets Homework

Step 1:

Identify **how often** and **how much** sweets you are eating in a typical day/week now.

Become aware of your most common go-to sweets.

You can do this by keeping a food journal or using an app to track your foods, such as myfitnesspal.

If you are journaling you don't need to track ALL sugar, just track obvious sweets: cookies, candy, chocolate, ice cream, cake, or any type of dessert.

Most fruit chews or roll ups are also in this category.

If it's a homemade dessert or a packaged sweet with one of the first few ingredients being sugar, then it is probably a sweet.

Don't overthink it.

Then notice **when** you are eating more sweets.



Switch Your Sweets Homework

Examples of situations including WHEN are listed below to help you identify problem times. Check those that are problem times for you.

Donuts, muffins, or other sweets for breakfast

Dessert after meals

Morning snack

Afternoon snack

Evening time while watching TV

When I stop for gas station/convenience store

Drive thru on the way home from work

At my workspace, break room or in my desk

Vending machine on my break at work

When I am stressed or bored

On vacation

Weekends

At family gatherings

Social or sporting events

When I make sweets for my family or grandchildren

Holidays

When I get cravings

Switch Your Sweets Homework

Step 2: Choose one or a few strategies to experiment with.

Here are some strategies to making changes:

1. Switch **WHAT** you have for sweets to fresh fruit. The sugar in fresh fruit is not harmful to your body like processed sugar is because it contains fiber, water and disease fighting nutrients. Having fresh fruit available does take some planning ahead.
2. Switch **WHERE** you eat sweets to **NOT AT HOME**. Keep sweets out of your reach and out of the house, unless it's something healthier that you can portion control to one small serving daily, such as dark chocolate.
3. Switch **WHEN** or **HOW OFTEN** you have sweets. If you feel you really need to have sweets, set some simple rules for yourself such as:
 - a. If you are going to have sweets, make them yourself and just a small batch. No packaged sweets from the store.
 - b. Choose one day of the week to make a small dessert or go out for ice cream.
 - c. Avoid the temptation of candy bars by staying out of the convenience store and paying for your gas at the pump.
 - d. No eating while watching TV unless it's portion-controlled popcorn for movie night. Make the kitchen/dining room table the only eating area for meals and snacks.
 - e. Allow yourself a small dessert at social events or special occasions.

Switch Your Sweets Homework

Step 3:

Write down your strategy/plan/goal here.

Simply having a plan can help a lot. When we have to stop and make a decision about what to choose we tend not to make the best choices.

Practice the change over the next week or two.

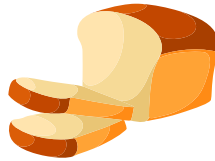
Track any changes you notice in blood sugar or energy level. You can use the food journal sheet in the resources section if you like.



QuickStart Step 3: Downsize Your Starch

WHAT TO DO:

Eat smaller portions of starch at meals and snacks.



WHY is this the next step?

Starchy foods such as bread, rice, pasta, cereals, potatoes, corn, hotdish, pizza are high carb foods and higher calorie.

Our body breaks starch down into sugar.

These foods make it harder to control blood sugars and make us gain weight because of the high carb and high calorie content.

QuickStart Step 3: Downsize Your Starch

HOW to downsize your starch:

The most basic strategy for downsizing your starch is to eat what you normally eat but cut the portion in half.

For example, if you usually have 2 cups of rice, cut it down to 1 cup. Instead of a sandwich with 2 breads, have one bread.

For meat and potato meals or protein/starch/vegetable meals the plate method can work well.

Make half your plate vegetables (non-starchy), $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate protein such as beef/chicken/fish, and $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate starch (the pasta, rice, bread, etc.

If you want to get more specific and don't mind counting or using apps, you can track your intake with carb counting or an app that does it for you.

Remember - chips, pretzels, crackers, and popcorn are also starchy foods. Portion them to a small handful or 15-20 chips. Or buy 1 serving bags. Break the habit of eating out of the bag!



Downsize Your Starch

Success Strategies

Eat less bread products or choose a light or low carb bread. Choose a daily limit such as 2-3 slices/day. Whole grain will not be much less carbohydrate. Eat smaller portions or less often.

Brown rice has more nutrition but is similar in carbohydrate amount as white rice. Eat smaller portions or less often. Serving size strategy = limit to 1 cup or less

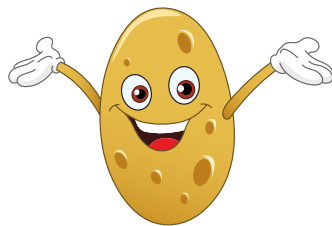
Eat smaller portions of potatoes, corn, and peas.

Choose smaller tortillas.

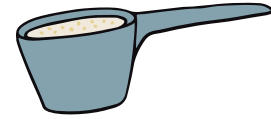
Avoid cereal or eat small portions.

Pancakes, French toast, and waffles are higher carb than bread because more sugar is added. And if you use syrup on them each tablespoon is a serving of carbohydrate. Eat these once a week or less.

Portion out chips, popcorn, and crackers. Check the package or if you are popping your own popcorn, limit to 3-6 cups popped.



Downsize Your Starch Portion Practice



Focus on 1 or 2 specific changes at a time.
Keep practicing small changes.
Eventually you will have created a new healthier lifestyle!

- Check the serving size on packaged foods
- Use Calorie King website or app or book to look up carbohydrate grams
- Use measuring cups and spoons to measure portions
- Apples, oranges, pears, nectarines the size of a tennis ball is about 15 grams
- For milk you can use the same size glass so you know how full your planned portion should be
- 3 oz of meat is about the size of a deck of cards
- 15 chips is a serving of 15 grams
- Pre-slice your butter stick into 1 Tablespoon portions
- Pre-portion snacks such as crackers and nuts into snack baggies
- Use ramekins or custard cups to help keep portions small
- A piece of pre-sliced bread is a good reference for the size of a 15-gram pancake or waffle
- Use a smaller bowl or plate to help keep portions small

Downsize Your Starch Homework

Now it's time to determine your Downsizing Strategy.

Step 1:

What are your problem starch foods?

Write down your top 3-5.

Bread, pasta, rice, potatoes, snack foods, cereal?

Step 2:

What strategy or combination of strategies would you like to try
downsizing your starch portions?

Write down 1-3 things you want to try. Be specific.

Examples:

I will limit starch at my evening meal to 1 cup and will measure it out.
For snacks I will stop buying chips and will measure popcorn out to 3-6
cups for 15-30 grams carbohydrate.

1.

2.

Downsize Your Starch Homework

Step 3:

Practice the plan.

Track your progress in your own journal or use the tracking sheet in the resource section.

Note any changes in blood sugar, energy level, weight, etc.

The purpose of tracking is to see changes over time that you may not notice on a daily basis.

Tips for tracking blood sugar.

If you are using a fingerstick meter, checking 2 hours after the start of a meal is the best time.

If you have access to use a continuous glucose monitor system, you get much better information on how your changes are working. You can search online to get more information about these systems.

They usually have a free trial offer.

American Diabetes Association recommends general targets for someone with type 2 diabetes:

Fasting 80-130

2 hours after start of a meal <180

Resources

My blog: <https://www.kmnutrition.com/blog>

To look up carb or calorie content of foods go to
<https://www.CalorieKing.com> or download free app

American Diabetes Association <https://www.diabetes.org>

Continuous Glucose Monitors

Freestyle Libre2: <https://www.freestylelibre.us/>

Dexcom G6: <https://www.dexcom.com>

Medtronic Guardian Connect:
<https://medtronicdiabetes.com/guardianconnect>

At the very end of this workbook you will find 2 additional resources:

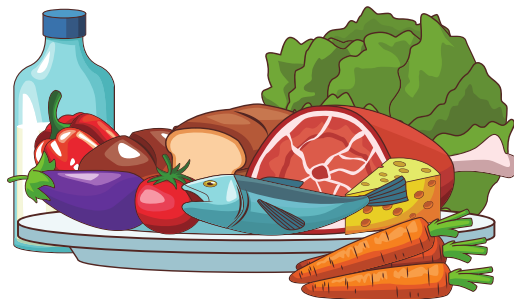
Food Journal pages

Drinks Cheat Sheet

About the Author



Karen Marschel is a Registered Dietitian and Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist. She is the founder and CEO of KM Nutrition, LLC and has helped thousands of people prevent, reverse, and manage their diabetes for over 25 years. Her mission is to help people design a healthy eating plan to prevent, reverse and manage type 2 diabetes, WITHOUT giving up their favorite foods!





Congratulations!

**You have completed the first 3 steps to getting better
blood sugars!**

Now what?

For more tips connect with me on

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)

or

[Click this link to contact me with questions.](#)

and remember

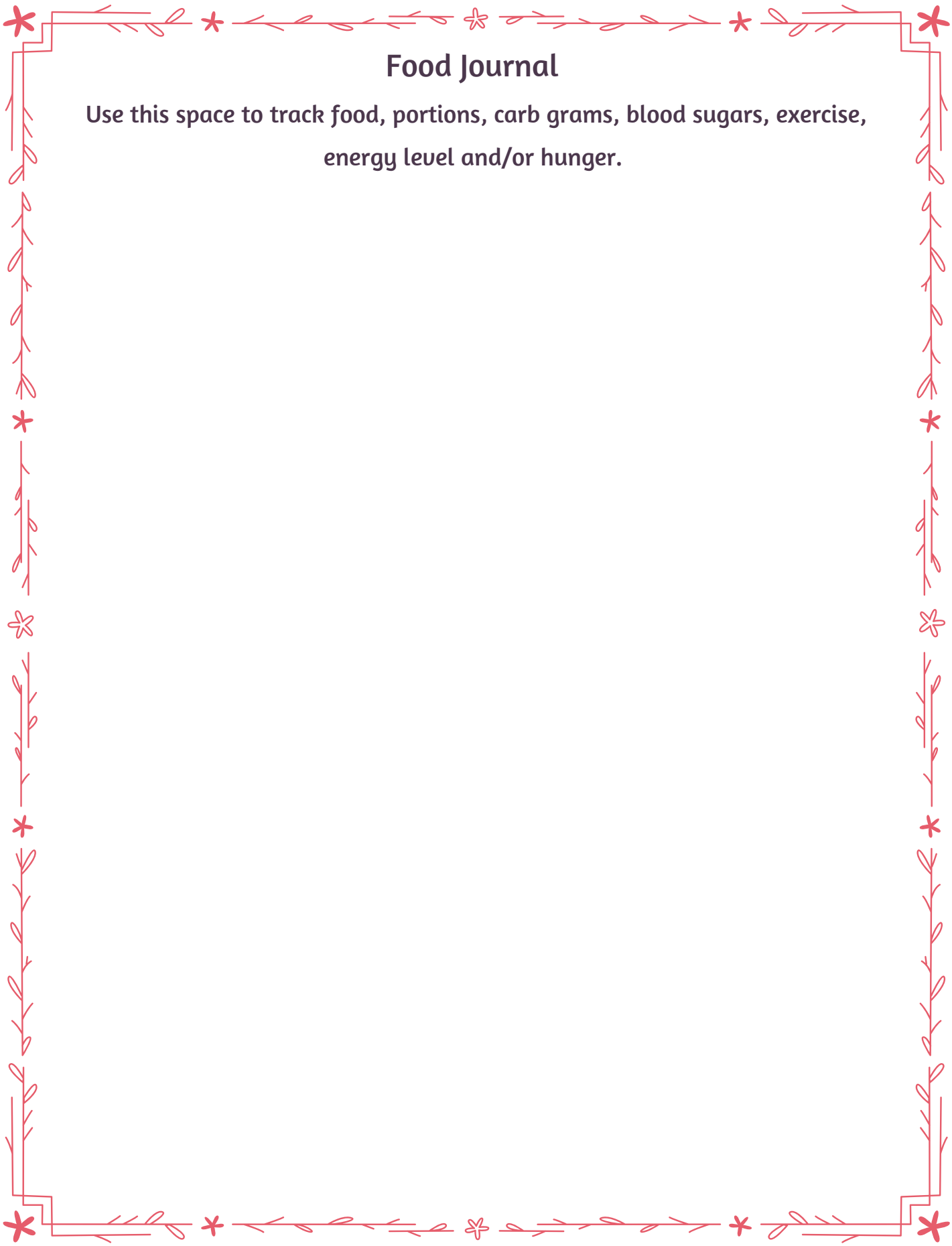
**“MODERATION. SMALL HELPINGS. SAMPLE A LITTLE
BIT OF EVERYTHING. THESE ARE THE SECRETS OF
HAPPINESS AND GOOD HEALTH.”**

– JULIA CHILD



Food Journal

Use this space to track food, portions, carb grams, blood sugars, exercise, energy level and/or hunger.



Food Journal

Use this space to track food, portions, carb grams, blood sugars, exercise, energy level and/or hunger.



Food Journal

Use this space to track food, portions, carb grams, blood sugars, exercise, energy level and/or hunger.

Drinks Cheat Sheet

Drink	Karen's Quick Points
<p>Coffee/Coffee Drinks</p> <p>My daily intake is _____ grams carb/day.</p>	<p>Black coffee has no sugar. Flavored creamers add about 1 teaspoon sugar for every 1 tablespoon of creamer. Coffee drinks such as mocha, latte and cappuccino range from 10 to 30 teaspoons of sugar per drink depending on the size.</p>
<p>Soda/Diet soda</p> <p>My daily intake is _____ grams carb /day.</p>	<p>16 oz bottle has about 52 grams of carbohydrate (about 13 teaspoons sugar). A 20 oz Mt Dew has about 77 grams carb. (about 19 teaspoons of sugar). Diet soda or Zero versions = 0 carbohydrate but use artificial sweeteners which have no nutrition value. Consider the common ingredients in cola: caramel color, aspartame, phosphoric acid, potassium benzoate</p>
<p>Sports Drinks</p> <p>My daily intake is _____ grams carb /day.</p>	<p>Examples: Gatorade or Powerade, 20 oz has about 36 grams carb. The Zero version has no sugar but will have artificial sweeteners. Also have coloring added.</p>
<p>Juice</p> <p>My daily intake is _____ grams carb /day.</p>	<p>100% fruit juice has just as much sugar as soda but it's natural fruit sugar. It will have the same effect on blood sugar. Juice <i>drinks</i> may be mostly added sugar and coloring. There are a few low sugar juices, but they will usually have artificial sweeteners.</p>
<p>Tea</p> <p>My daily intake is _____ grams carb /day.</p>	<p>Unsweetened tea has no sugar. Sweet tea will vary depending on if you add sugar or it is bottled. Unsweetened home brewed teas are healthy, especially green tea.</p>
<p>Energy Drinks</p> <p>My daily intake is _____ grams carb /day.</p>	<p>A new energy drink I just researched has 39 grams carb (almost 10 teaspoons of sugar). Also has high fructose corn syrup like many sweetened drinks. Besides sugar and caffeine, energy drinks contain stimulants such as guarana, taurine, and L-carnitine. Can be dangerous to some due to the effect on heart rate and blood pressure.</p>
<p>Dairy Drinks</p>	<p>Cow's milk has natural sugar and skim, 1%, 2% and whole milk all have about the same amount of sugar. The fat is what is different. 1 cup milk has about 12</p>

<p>My daily intake is _____ grams carb /day.</p>	<p>grams carbohydrate (3 teaspoons sugar) so is usually not a problem unless you are drinking 20+ ounces at a time. Milk is a good source of calcium as well. Shakes and malts are extremely high in sugar due to natural milk sugar PLUS added sugar from chocolate or other flavorings. Example a large chocolate shake at DQ is 147 grams carbohydrate. That's almost 37 teaspoons of sugar!</p>
<p>Smoothies</p> <p>My daily intake is _____ grams carb /day.</p>	<p>Smoothies can have healthy ingredients. I love them but be careful. They can have a lot of carbs. My favorite smoothie has about 40 grams carb for only about 10 oz but has healthy ingredients: Greek yogurt, banana, frozen blueberries, Kefir, and flax and chia seeds. A Bolthouse Farms Strawberry Parfait Breakfast Smoothie has 72 grams carb for 15 oz.</p>
<p>Alcohol Drinks</p> <p>My daily intake is _____ grams carb /day.</p>	<p>There are many sweet alcoholic beverages that are high in sugar. This would be the same concern as juice or soda. Beer is not high in sugar. Yes, it contains some carbohydrate but not added sugar. Alcohol itself does not raise blood sugar and this is an entire lesson by itself. Best advice is MODERATION.</p>
<p>Water!</p> <p>I drink ____ ounces water daily.</p>	<p>Water is the best thing for our body!!</p> <p>There are many flavored waters out there, some with artificial flavors and some with just a slight juice flavoring added. Good tap water, filtered, if necessary, is best.</p>