Who is the leaflet for? What is its aim?
This leaflet is for children aged 6-10 years who have diabetes. It will tell you a bit more about how to match your insulin to what you are eating. This is called carbohydrate counting.

What is Carbohydrate Counting?
A lot of the food you eat contains something called carbohydrate. When you eat carbohydrate it increases your blood glucose level. Carbohydrate is found in food like bread, pasta, potatoes, cake biscuits, fruit, sweet treats and sugary drinks. To keep your blood glucose levels within target after a meal, it can help to give the right amount of insulin for the carbohydrate in that meal so your body can use the energy for growing and running around.

If not enough insulin is given, the blood glucose level will be high and if too much is given, it might go low. With carbohydrate counting, the idea is to get the balance right between insulin and carbohydrate.

We hope that carbohydrate counting will give more freedom with eating, with less worries about highs and lows.

Carbohydrate counting can also help with things like PE, sleepovers and parties where you might eat things that contain lots of carbohydrate. If you give the right dose of insulin for the food, you might not go high afterwards.

Frequently asked questions

Who should I ask?
The dietitians are the members of our team who can help you with this. Please ask one of them when you are in clinic and they will be happy to help. They run regular carbohydrate counting sessions in the diabetes clinic where you and your parents can learn how to do it.
Isn’t it really complicated and time consuming?
No! To begin with, it may take some time to work out how much carbohydrate there is in your foods, but most people learn quickly. We will show you and your parents so you will be able to do it altogether.

What happens next?
Once you have practiced carbohydrate counting for a few days, the next step is to fill out a food diary for 5 days, writing down what you eat, when you eat it, what your blood glucose levels are and how much insulin you have given.

What do I need?
You will need some scales, a calculator and somewhere to record all of the information. There are some useful carbohydrate counting books and apps available to help you with your carbohydrate counting.

What if it’s not for me?
We understand that carbohydrate counting maybe a little difficult at first but you won’t be expected to do this on your own. The diabetes team will be able to help you find out a way to make it a little easier for you. By carbohydrate counting, it will help you get good control of your blood glucose levels.

Contacts/Further information
www.carbsandcals.com/app - application for Iphone and androids
www.carbsandcals.com - Carbs and Cals book
www.myfitnesspal.com/food/ - to help with nutritional information guidance
E-mail kidz.diabetes@addenbrookes.nhs.uk
Telephone: Monday to Friday 09:00 to 17:00 01223 274638
Out of hours: 01223 245151, ask for ‘child diabetes on rotawatch’
We are now a smoke-free site: smoking will not be allowed anywhere on the hospital site. For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

Other formats:
If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio, please ask the department where you are being treated, to contact the patient information team: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk. Please note: We do not currently hold many leaflets in other languages; written translation requests are funded and agreed by the department who has authored the leaflet.

Document history
Authors/ contact number | Children’s services – 01223 245151
Pharmacist | Nigel Gooding
Publish/Review date | November 2017/November 2020
Version number/Ref | V2/PIN3088/25111