



Carbohydrates: The Good, Bad and Ugly

Endless media debates and constantly changing trends have left the general public dazed and confused about weight management and the role carbohydrates play. One high profile diet declares carbohydrates are bad for you and a high protein diet is the only way to lose weight. Then, before you know it, another popular diet contradicts the high protein diet and demands a high carbohydrate program.

The reality is, the body needs both carbohydrate and protein, as well as fat, to be balanced and healthy.

Ugly Information

Carbohydrates have been blamed for the obesity epidemic in Americans. The truth is not that simple.

Although high protein diets warn that ALL carbohydrates are “bad”, the reality is that not all carbohydrates are created equal. As tends to be the case with anything extreme, the high protein diet does not tell the whole story in relation to carbohydrates. To declare that carbohydrates make you fat is an uninformed and uneducated statement. The bottom line — over-consumption of ANY food will result in weight issues.

Beautiful Information

Carbohydrates are the body’s main source of energy. Carbohydrates play an important role in the functioning of the internal organs, the nervous system, and muscles. They are also needed to regulate protein and fat metabolism. Carbohydrates are found almost exclusively in plant foods. The exception is milk products, which are derived from animals, and contain a significant amount of the carbohydrate macronutrient.

Bad Carbohydrates

The refined and processed flours and sugars found in packaged foods are called “simple” carbohydrate sugars and are considered the “bad” kind. White breads, crackers, candies, and store bought baked goods such as cookies and cakes, are not the type of carbohydrates you want to be consuming. These are indeed “bad” carbohydrates and are full of fat. They are made with refined white flour and contain little to no fiber and need to be minimized or

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Good Carbohydrates

“Good”, unrefined, complex carbohydrates include fruits, vegetables, peas, beans, and whole wheat products. They contain vitamins, minerals and nutrients essential to our health. These “good” carbohydrates nourish your body and help in weight management.

What You Can Do

Ideally carbohydrates should make up 50-60% of one’s diet. Although this percentage allows for a minor portion of refined, processed carbohydrates, true healthy eating requires the majority of carbohydrate intake to include complex carbohydrates - rich, starchy vegetables, whole natural grains, rice, and legumes and “naturally occurring” simple sugars found in fresh fruits and vegetables. These unrefined carbohydrates are packed full of fiber, vitamins and minerals.

Carbohydrates Summary

COMPLEX: 45% of diet

Grains
Brown rice
Legumes
Whole grain breads and pastas
Starchy vegetables

SIMPLE: 10% of diet

Fruits
Some vegetables

REFINED: 5% of diet

White rice
Pastries
Refined flour
White bread
Cookies
Donuts
Candy
Soft drinks
Sugar

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