



Carbohydrate confusion. When, what type, how much?



Confused about carbohydrates?

Which diet option should you choose? High carbohydrate, low carbohydrate, fruit, no fruit, bread, no bread, are you confused about what to eat? This article is designed to give you a better idea of the type of carbohydrates to eat and when to eat them.

Are carbs really making you fat?

The reality is, any food consumed in quantities exceeding what we need will cause us to gain weight. So why have carbohydrates copped such a battering? The unfortunate issue with carbohydrates is their ability to stimulate our bodies fat storage hormone, insulin. Excess carbohydrates (sugars) = high levels of insulin and greater likelihood of fat storage. Although excessive consumption of any food has this ability, excess sugars is the worst offender.

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Which carbohydrates are the worst Offenders?

No matter what your body type, highly refined and processed carbohydrates are the worst offender when it comes to over stimulation of insulin and the body-fat storage cycle. These foods are the ones to avoid at least 80% of the time. Think pasta, flour, white rice, crackers, biscuits, bread, pastries, breakfast cereal, noodles, sweets, candy, soda, soft drink, cordial, concentrated sugar syrups. There are so many, this will give you a good idea of what I mean. Every time we eat these foods, we set off a cascade of hormonal events that lead to weight gain, inflammation and eventually disease. *Avoid these foods for a slim waistline and better health.*

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What are the best kind of weight-loss carbohydrates?

It's not difficult once we understand why some carbohydrates are more beneficial than others. The carbohydrates that will enhance your health and slim your waistline are green and brightly coloured, low-starch vegetables. Because of their high water, nutrient and fiber content, these types of carbohydrates satisfy hunger more readily, but have a much slower, less dramatic effect on insulin and thus fat storage. The high fiber content of vegetables makes them harder to break down thus slowing the *rate that sugars are released into the bloodstream*. The *high nutrient content of vegetables compared to refined carbohydrate means vegetables provide the cofactors our body needs to use these sugars for cell growth and repair*.

Double bonus!

You may be wondering what vegetables are low-starch.

Above ground vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, cucumber, lettuce, onion, capsicum, zucchini, cabbage, chard, kale, pumpkin, squash etc. *Leafy greens of all kinds can fill your plate any time to suit your personal metabolic needs*. Remember to listen to your body!

What about fruits and roots?

Once again, natural healthy foods filled with water, vitamins, minerals and fiber. *Because root vegetables and fruits are higher in sugar, these foods are best consumed during periods of high activity or in the 1-2 hour period after a workout*. When consumed this way, our body uses the sugars from root vegetables and fruits for muscle growth and repair rather than fat storage. Always consume these foods based on your personal needs so tune in and listen to those messages from your body.

Where do grain foods fit in?

Grains are a good source of nourishment when consumed in their whole grain state. Although they can be difficult to digest unless prepared correctly, whole grains can be beneficial in a healthy diet when no intolerance is present. Soaking grains overnight improves their digestibility as does slow cooking. Choose whole grains first and eat according to your personal needs. *Serve post workout only for weight loss*.





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How much should I be eating?

Portion control is the key to successful weight loss as is listening to your personal needs. We are all different and it's important to remember this when applying the principles of any diet. These guidelines are designed to help you to get to know your body better so don't compare yourself to anyone else when it comes to your nutritional needs.

The recipes in our app are portion controlled for ease of use. Post workout meals are labeled so and are the meals which contain more natural sugars.

Easy portion control

Think body size first. Lets say small and large body frame. Women more often fall into the small body frame category and men into large. This may not always be the case so make your own personal judgment for yourself.

Smallest quantity = small portion

Largest quantity = large portion

Greens and low starch vegetables:

Eat lots of these foods at every meal including breakfast. 2-4 cups will fill you up and give your body the nutrients and fiber it needs.

Fruits and roots:

1/2-1 cup of berries. 1/2-1 piece of other fruits like banana, apple, orange, pear etc. Post workout for weight loss.

Grain foods:

1/2-1 cup of cooked grain foods. Remember, for some this may be too much and others too little so adjust as you go by listening to your body's needs. Post workout for weight loss.

Refined carbohydrates:

These foods should be very rarely if ever consumed. From a health perspective they take from our body rather than giving because they lack the nutrients necessary for digestion and absorption.





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Balancing blood sugar.

You may have gathered that balancing blood sugar levels is pretty important to your overall health and waistline. I just need to make one more important point about carbohydrates and when to eat them.

Carbohydrates need protein and fat to balance blood sugar levels.

Eating carbohydrates alone without the staying power of protein and fat is a problem for blood sugar stability and balance. Just as it's important to choose high fiber and low starch carbohydrates to balance blood sugar. It's also important to consume carbohydrate foods with protein and fat for the very same reason. Both protein and fat slow down the rate that carbohydrates enter the bloodstream. The addition of protein and fat to a meal ensures greater satisfaction, more lasting power between meals and a reduced likelihood of blood sugar imbalance and sweet cravings.

Don't forget to read our protein and sugar articles which will give you more insight into this important topic.

~ Melanie Hawksley.

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