

## Are All Carbohydrates Bad?

With all the news about low carb diets out today you may be wondering are carbs really that bad? It can be confusing for those who aren't really familiar with nutrition. The truth is carbohydrates are essential to a healthy diet.

You can't just say that carbohydrates aren't all good or all bad. Some carbs are good for your health while others, when eaten often and in large quantities, can often increase the risk for diabetes and coronary heart disease.

Carbohydrates come from a wide variety of foods - bread, fruit, vegetables, rice, beans, milk, popcorn, potatoes, cookies, spaghetti, corn, and cherry pie. They also come in a variety of forms. The most common and abundant ones are sugars, fibers, and starches. The basic building blocks of all carbohydrates are sugar molecules.

All carbohydrates are handled much in pretty much the same way by our digestive system by breaking them down into single sugar molecules so they are small enough to absorb into the bloodstream. It also converts most of them into glucose or blood sugar as an energy source. This why you can feel tired if you are lacking carbs.

Our body uses carbohydrates as the most efficient energy source and if we don't have enough carbohydrates it may go to protein or fat to create glucose. The problem this creates is that once you have no more stored glycogen your body begins cannibalizing muscle tissue or organs as well as dietary protein and fat to provide the blood glucose for energy. This is undesirable because it causes your metabolism to drop due to the decreased muscle mass.

The best practice is to eat a variety of healthy carbohydrates trying to choose the ones that are the healthiest. These should be the most natural possible, meaning not in a package or can. Try to eat as many fresh vegetables and fruits as possible.

Bad carbohydrates that you want to stay away from include processed foods such as soda pop or soft drinks, snacks such as cookies and chips, and alcohol. These have all been through a highly refined process and as such are not a good choice for a healthy diet. They don't satisfy your hunger and give you nothing but calories.

Instead, replace highly processed grains, cereals, and sugars with minimally processed whole-grain products and ensure you have at least five serves of fruit and vegetables daily. Rather than cut out carbs completely for a very short-term gain (usually weight loss), there are greater long-term health benefits in learning how to differentiate good carbs over bad carbs and implementing healthy carbohydrates into your weight loss program.

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### About the Author

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