What Is A Smart Carb?

With the common reference to "Smart Carbs" one would be forgiven to think that a smart carb has something to do with the I.Q of a potato. Is it not true that if one carbohydrate can make you thinner and another fatter, then one of them must be dumb? And if not, then what exactly is a smart carb?

Not so recently, carbohydrates have been associated with increase in weight. This is after a low/ fat free campaign that saw little significant results in reducing obesity in the general public.

As a result, some enthusiastic quarters started to point at carbohydrates as being the direct cause of weight gain rather than dietary fat, as was previously understood. And in a quick rejoinder they proposed different type of high protein diets that replaced substantial amounts of carbohydrates in the diet. This was the beginning of the low carb craze that was to follow.

This tended to contravene conventional wisdom that suggests that majority of your calories should be supplied by carbohydrate food group. More studies into the matter brought to the surface the concept of smart carbs.

Carbohydrates can be grouped into two main forms. There are simple carbohydrates, the kind that is quickly digested and the complex carbohydrates that take time to get assimilated.

The difference in the two is in their structures. The complex carbohydrates include forms of carbohydrates that the human body cannot digest. Some of these structures include hemi-cellulose and cellulose. This is as opposed to starch which is a simple carb and is easily digested.

Complex carbohydrates have the indigestible carbs covering the starch providing a challenge to the enzymes in trying to reach the starch. The starch is then slowly digested and sustainably releases into the blood.

The smartness of a carb is related to how that particular carbohydrate food is assimilated into the body and its effect on blood glucose.

All ingested carbohydrates are broken down to glucose. Glucose is the main source of energy in the body. The blood always has a narrow rage of glucose concentration in circulation to provide energy to body cells.

Every time there is an increase in glucose due to carbohydrate digestion, the body releases hormones that convert this glucose into fat for storage and later use. This fat is stored in adipose tissue that makes up the protruding bellies, large underarms etc.

In the reverse, when there is a decrease in glucose the body releases a different hormone that converts fat into energy for use by the body.

Non-smart carbs have a tendency to be quickly digested and absorbed into the blood that they quickly increase the amount of glucose in the blood. This spike of glucose results to hormones release that converts it into fat.

The problem with this is that you need this energy for periods in-between meals. But when the body converts most of the energy into fat, it is not immediately available for use.

What is worse is that the body tends to make you feel hungry demanding more glucose rather than release the stored fat. This is because the body tends to preserve its energy storage.

Smart carbs on the other hand are not as easily digested. The indigestible carbs coat the digestible carbs providing a temporary defense against food enzymes; as a result, enzymes breakdown the carbs in a much slower pace. This results to a sustained release of glucose in the blood. And as glucose trickle in you keep using it, resulting to no-body-fat being created

Another advantage of smart carbs is that the indigestible part of it contains roughage. This keeps your stomach full providing a sense of satiety for longer. Non smart carbs on the other hand are digested quickly and leave the stomach fairly empty, signaling you to eat.

Smart carbs are also often referred to as whole carbs. Generally they low processed carbohydrates. Processing is a huge culprit in making carbs dumb.

Source: http://www.articlecircle.com

About the Author

? Mark Kimathi writes on Top 4 Reasons for Weight Loss Failure at Health-eMark (http://www.health-emark.com) and related topics like celebrity diets (http://www.health-emark.com/celebrity-diets-cats.html)