



Striving to educate our patients to be more ProActive towards a healthier lifestyle.



Special Nutrition Edition!

Carbohydrates are often the focus of many diets, but in reality, carbohydrates play a crucial role in a healthy lifestyle. Carbs are one of three macronutrients (Carbohydrates, Proteins, Fats) and are our bodies' main source of energy. A balance of these three macronutrients is critical for proper functioning of the body. Some examples of carbs are fruits, starchy vegetables, breads, pastas, rice, sugar, syrup and honey. So, before we eliminate carbohydrates from our diets altogether, we need to learn more about them.

Function of Carbohydrates:

Carbohydrates are a main source of fuel for our bodies. The energy released from carbohydrates is used in the central nervous system and in our muscles. Carbs are also important for regulation of proper brain function, mood and memory. The recommended daily intake for carbohydrates is 135 grams, which can fluctuate depending on activity levels and underlying disease states, such as diabetes.

There are three main groups of carbohydrates in food:

- Starches (or complex carbohydrates)
- Sugars (or simple carbohydrates)
- Fiber

On the nutrition label for foods, the term “total carbohydrate” includes all three of the main types of carbohydrates.

Starch:

Foods that are high in starch include:

- Starchy vegetables – peas, corn, lima beans and potatoes
- Dried beans, lentils, and peas (pinto beans, kidney beans, black eyed peas, and split peas)
- Grains like oats, barley and rice.

The grain group can be broken down into two groups: whole grain and refined grain

A grain contains three parts:

- Bran – This is the outer hard shell of the grain, it is the part that provides the most fiber and most of the B vitamins and minerals
- Germ – This is the next layer and is packed with nutrients including essential fatty acids and vitamin E
- Endosperm – the soft part in the center of the grain, it contains the starch.

Whole grains contain all three parts, while the refined grain only contains endosperm or the starchy part. Therefore, eating whole grains is more nutritious because it contains more vitamins and minerals than refined grains.

Sugar:**There are two main types of sugars:**

- Naturally occurring sugars such as those in milk or fruit
- Added sugars such as those added during processing such as fruit canned in heavy syrup or sugar added to make cookies

Examples of common names for sugars are: table sugar, brown sugar, molasses, honey, beet sugar, cane sugar, confectioner's sugar, powdered sugar, raw sugar, turbinado, maple syrup, high-fructose corn syrup, agave nectar and sugar cane syrup.

Chemical names of sugars:

- Fructose – fruit sugar
- Lactose – milk sugar
- Glucose – simple sugar
- Sucrose – fruit and simple sugar

Fiber:

Fiber is the indigestible portion of plant based foods. For good health, adults need to try to eat 25 to 30 grams of fiber each day. However, most Americans do not get nearly enough fiber in their diet, so while aiming for this goal is wise, any increase in fiber in your diet can be beneficial. Most Americans only consume about half of what is recommended.

Fiber contributes to digestive health, helps to keep you regular, and helps to make you feel full and satisfied after eating. A diet that is high in fiber may have additional health benefits, such as a reducing cholesterol levels.

Good sources of dietary fiber:

- Beans and legumes
- Fruits and vegetables (especially those with edible skins and/or seeds)
- Whole wheat pasta
- Whole grain cereals
- Whole grain breads
- Nuts

An excellent source of fiber contains 5 grams or more per serving, while a good source of fiber contains 2.5 to 4.9 grams per serving.

It is important to get fiber from foods rather than supplements. In addition to the fiber, these foods have high nutritious value. They contain many important vitamins and minerals. Keep in mind that it is important that you increase your fiber intake gradually to prevent stomach irritation and that you increase your intake of water to prevent constipation.

Challenge yourself to be more aware of the food choices you make and how they affect your overall health. Stay tuned for more Nutrition Editions of The ProActive in 2017!

Sincerely,
Your ProAct Team

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