

# Carbohydrates



**An easier to understand guide**



# What are Carbohydrates?



Carbohydrates are also known as Carbs.

Carbohydrates are broken down into a type of sugar called glucose, which gives us energy to fuel our body.



The amount of carbs you eat affects your blood sugar, eating a lot of carbs can raise your blood glucose levels.



Some carbohydrate containing foods break down very slowly keeping our blood glucose levels more stable, which is a good thing.



Examples of these foods are fruits, seeded breads, wholegrain cereals, pulses and milk.



Other carbohydrate foods are easier for our body to digest and so can increase our blood glucose quickly.



These are foods such as jelly sweets, full sugar drinks (including fruit juice).



Starchy carbohydrates are bread, potato, pasta, rice and cereals.

Our meals tend to be based around these foods as they are cheap, tasty and filling.



You should choose wholegrain versions rather than white. This is because they break down more slowly which keeps our blood glucose more stable.

## Fruit



All fruits contain a natural sugar called fructose.

The recommended portions of fruit are:

A fist sized amount or 80g of fresh fruit



A palm sized amount or 30g of dried fruit



150 ml of fresh fruit juice

Aim to eat at least 5 portions of vegetables and fruit across the day.

Choose a variety of different colours to get lots of different vitamins and minerals - eat the rainbow!

## Milk and yoghurt



Milk and yoghurt contains a natural sugar called lactose as well as calcium which helps build and protect bones and teeth. Have 2-3 portions a day.

The recommended portions are:

1/3 pint milk and 150 ml of yoghurt



You should choose lower fat options if you are overweight such as semi-skimmed milk and low fat yoghurt.

These still have lots of calcium in which is good for our bones and teeth.



You should avoid yoghurts with jam, syrup, chocolate pieces and sweets in as these contain lots of added sugars.



There are 2 types of sugars; naturally occurring sugars and added sugars.

Your body can't tell the difference between the two, it breaks them both down in the same way.



Added sugars are found in fizzy drinks, squash and ice-cream.



Diet or zero fizzy drinks and no added sugar squash don't contain any sugar so are a healthy alternative.



Try using sweeteners rather than table sugar (such as in hot drinks and baking) such as Canderel, Sweetex, Splenda or Stevia.



Natural sugars are found in fruit and dairy products.



The recommended daily amount of added sugars (table sugar, sweets, chocolate, biscuits, cakes) is no more than 30g (7 teaspoons for both men and women).



## Top Tips:



Eat a variety of different foods including those that contain carbohydrates as we need them for energy.



Watching our portions of carbohydrates is the best thing we can do to keep our blood glucose levels stable.



Avoid added sugars where possible.

For more accessible information on a broad range of subjects please contact



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