

Topic 3: Choosing Healthy Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates provide our bodies, especially the brain, with energy. People who do not eat enough carbs may suffer from “brain fog” which means difficulty focusing and getting headaches, but also, may get symptoms of low blood sugars: irritability, cravings for sweets, and shakiness.

Carbs can be a part of a healthy, balanced diet when including proper portions and types, such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, starches, beans and legumes. These provide fiber, B vitamins, minerals that are important for many body functions.

Tips for including carbohydrates in your diet:

- Choose foods with whole wheat or other whole grains as the 1st ingredient.
- Choose foods with at least 3 grams of fiber or more, and less than 10 grams of added sugar.
- Choose whole fruit and vegetable options instead of juice, which do not contain fiber.
- 15 grams of carbs is equivalent to 1 slice of bread. To help with portion control, meals can contain up to 15-30 grams of carbs, snacks may contain up to 15 grams.

Unhealthy sources of carbs are those that are highly processed (very different from the original, natural form) and contain added salt, fats and added sugars. These include foods made with enriched white flour (cookies, crackers, breads, pastries), sugary beverages, sugar breakfast cereals.

Choose Instead	Avoid/Limit
raw non-starchy veggies	fried veggies, veggie chips/sticks
frozen plain veggies	frozen with sauces
canned plain veggies	canned with salt
cooked veggies	veggie juice/juice drinks
raw fruits with edible skin-on	fruit juice/juice drinks, smoothies
canned fruit in 100% juice	canned fruit in syrup
dried fruit without sugar	dried fruit with sugar
potatoes with skin-on	mashed potatoes, fried potatoes, potato snacks
raw, frozen, canned corn/peas	creamed corn, corn tortillas, corn flour
plain popcorn	corn chips, movie theatre popcorn
100% whole wheat products	enriched flour (white flour)
quinoa, oats, barley, farro	oatmeal cookies, flavored instant oatmeal
whole beans, chickpeas, hummus	refried beans, bean chips, falafel
brown rice	white rice
whole lentils	lentil chips
acorn/butternut squash	butternut soup
pumpkin	pumpkin pie, pumpkin spiced treats

Topic 3: Choosing Healthy Carbohydrates – Patient Form

Part 1: Test Your Knowledge

1. Which option is considered a healthy choice for carbohydrates
a. V8 veggie juice b. wheat cereal with 1 gram of fiber and 15 grams of sugar
c. hash browns d. apple with skin-on

2. If you start having headaches, fatigue, difficulty focusing, and you are craving more snacks and sweets, what are you probably not eating enough of?
a. Protein b. carbohydrates c. fat d. sodium

3. What is a good snack to eat midday?
a. Small banana with 1 Tbs natural peanut butter b. Baby carrots with ¼ cup hummus
c. 100% whole wheat crackers with turkey slices d. All of the options

Part 2: Diet Log – Pick 3 days and log your food and drink intake

Meals, Snacks and Drinks	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Breakfast			
Snack			
Lunch			
Snack			
Dinner			
Snack			
Drinks			

Part 3: Exercise

Did you exercise this week? YES NO

If not, why: _____

If yes, what did you do and how often: _____

Part 4: Weekly Weigh-in

What is your weight today? _____

Today's Date: _____

Your name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Dietitian Signature: _____ (Lin Lin Shao RD LD)