



A lifestyle approach to improving mood and wellbeing

"LET THY FOOD BE THY MEDICINE AND THY MEDICINE BE THY FOOD."

HIPPOCRATES

Carbs: What Are They, and Should You Eat Them?

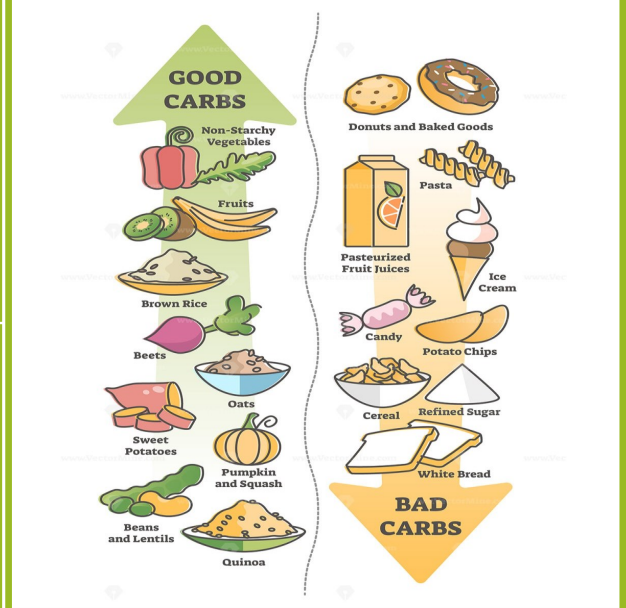
Carbs, or Carbohydrates are one of the three important macronutrients that our bodies need to function properly (the other two are protein and fat). One of the primary purposes of carbohydrates in our diet is to provide fuel for our bodies and our brains. Though there is a lot of information floating around about carbs, keep in mind that not all carbs are created equal. There are many different types of carbohydrate-containing foods and they can vary in their health effects. The main types of dietary carbohydrates are sugars, starches, and fiber.

Simple vs Complex Carbs: Which Is Better? .

Carbs are sometimes referred to as "simple" versus "complex" or "whole" versus "refined." Whole carbs are minimally processed and contain the fiber found naturally in the food, while refined carbs have been processed more and have had the natural fiber removed or changed. This is an important distinction because fiber is critical for optimal health. It helps maintain a healthy digestive system by promoting regular bowel movements, preventing constipation, and facilitating the smooth movement of waste through the body. Additionally, a high-fiber diet can contribute to overall health by potentially lowering cholesterol levels, managing blood sugar, and reducing the risk of certain diseases like heart disease and colon cancer. So, **complex or whole carbohydrates** are known to be **health-promoting**.

On the other hand, **simple or refined carbohydrates** have been known to be **disease-promoting** and have been linked to health conditions like obesity and type 2 diabetes. Refined carbohydrates tend to cause spikes in blood sugar levels, which can lead to a subsequent crash that can trigger hunger and lead to food cravings. Additionally, they're usually lacking in many essential nutrients. In other words, they're "empty" calories, leaving your body craving more of what it needs, but never getting it!. Simple or refined carbohydrates should be minimized or eliminated from your diet whenever possible.

Eat More of These; Less of These



What About Potatoes?



It's true that potatoes are high in carbohydrates, which can lead to spikes in blood sugars. However they are also a healthy source of energy, containing a plethora of micronutrients our bodies need. They're a good source of vitamins, minerals and fiber. As a bonus, potatoes are low in calories, contain no fat or cholesterol, and are sodium-free. They're high in vitamin C and potassium and are a good source of vitamin B6. A medium potato, about 5.5 ounces, contains only 145 calories. BUT...how potatoes are prepared and what they are served with matters! Avoid frying them or adding lots of cream and butter. Serve them with a source of lean protein, like chicken or fish, and a green vegetable.

Sources for this month's newsletter: have been taken from <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/good-carbs-bad-carbs>; <https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/its-ok-to-say-yes-to-potatoes>; https://vectormine.b-cdn.net/wp-content/uploads/Good_Carbs_vs_Bad_Carbs_outline.jpg

The Food and Thought Program works to promote awareness and provide short term counselling around the important link between nutrition and emotional health. For more information or for a referral to the program, please contact the Food and Thought Program

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