

# Healthy Eating

## Understanding



CARBOHYDRATES (OR CARBS) ARE ONE OF THE MAIN TYPES OF NUTRIENTS IN OUR DIETS. FATS AND PROTEIN ARE OTHER NUTRIENTS.

Carbs with a simple chemical structure are called sugars. Sugars are found naturally in foods such as fruits, vegetables, and milk products. They're also added to many foods and drinks.

Complex carbs, such as starches and fiber, are found in whole-grain breads and cereals and in starchy vegetables such as potatoes.

Your digestive system changes the carbs you eat into glucose, a type of sugar that your body uses for energy.

Simple carbs are more quickly digested and absorbed than complex carbs, so simple carbs can raise your blood glucose levels faster and higher. If you have diabetes, you need to manage your blood glucose levels. High blood glucose can damage your tissues and organs.

It makes sense to eat more complex carbs, according to researchers at NIH. And not just people with diabetes, but everyone. Complex carbs are more gradually absorbed and help control blood sugar levels.

Whole foods with complex carbs will give you more minerals and vitamins too and are usually good sources of fiber.

### Make Wise Carb Choices

- Try different kinds of beans and lentils.
- Choose cereals high in fiber (5 or more grams per serving, read the label for this information).
- Switch to whole grains. Look for whole-grain bread, whole-wheat pasta, brown or wild rice, barley, quinoa, and bulgur.
- Eat more fresh fruits and vegetables and drink less juice.
- Snack on fruit and small portions of nuts and seeds.
- Limit candy.

