

THE FAMILY OF CARBOHYDRATES



Carbohydrates are found in plant foods and provide the main source of energy. They are two general categories of carbohydrates: refined and complex. It is recommended that more choices are made from whole grain products to increase complex carbohydrates, fiber and other nutrients.

REFINED

Sources of refined carbohydrates include different forms of sugar, such as white or brown sugar, honey, molasses and syrup. Other foods that have a high concentration of sugar include: jellies, jam, preserves, candies, fruit drinks, sweetened beverages, sodas and alcoholic beverages. Foods with high fructose corn syrup as one of the first ingredients on the label are generally very high in sugar, too. Refined foods often are high in calories, provide very little nutrients and provide quick or short-term energy. Choose less of these food.

COMPLEX

Complex carbohydrates are a better option when choosing what to eat. Choose more of the complex carbohydrates which are found in the grain products: breads, cereals, crackers, dried peas, legumes, pasta and rice. These foods provide a variety of vitamins, minerals, fiber and phytochemicals and longer lasting energy.

WHOLE GRAINS

Some complex carbohydrates are better choices because they provide more nutrients. For example, white bread is considered a complex carbohydrate, but whole wheat bread would be a better option since it provides more fiber, B vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals than white bread. The nutrient content of complex carbohydrates varies depending if they are made from whole or refined grains. Read list of ingredients on the food label and choose those foods with whole grains listed first.

TIPS TO INCREASE WHOLE GRAINS IN YOUR DIET

Instead of

White rice
White bread
Cornflakes
Sugar coated cereal
Cream of Wheat or Rice
Soda or saltine crackers
Noodles in soup
Pretzels or Rice Cakes

Choose

Brown rice
Whole grain bread
Bran flakes
Whole grain ready to eat cereal
Oatmeal, cooked or dry
Whole grain crackers
Barley in soup
Popcorn