



# Carbs—what the fad diets don't tell you

## What are carbohydrates?

- Sugars are simple carbohydrates. Examples are sucrose (table sugar), glucose, lactose (in milk and dairy products) and fructose (in fruits and vegetables). These are found naturally and are also added to foods to sweeten the flavour. Large amounts of sugars are consumed in drinks like carbonated beverages, fruit drinks, cold coffee-flavoured beverages (e.g. iced cappuccinos or frappuccinos) and sweets.
- Starch is a complex carbohydrate. Starch is a row of glucose molecules attached together. Starch is found in all grain products, vegetables, fruit, nuts, seeds and legumes.
- Fibre is a type of carbohydrate that is not broken down by our digestive system. Fibre is classified as either soluble or insoluble, depending upon how well it absorbs water.

## Benefits of carbs

Carbohydrates are an important source of energy our bodies need every day. In addition to providing energy, carbohydrate-containing foods deliver additional benefits. Research shows that people who eat some whole grains daily have a lower risk of chronic diseases and a better body mass index (BMI) than those who do not. Whole grains are found in many breads and cereals. Many fad diets tell consumers to avoid foods that are a good source of carbohydrates (carbs) in order to lose weight. Most research shows that if you consume equal calories of carbs, protein or fat, people will lose the same amount of weight.

Fibre provides important nutrients for the healthy bacteria in our lower gut. It helps with digestion and elimination, in other words, it helps keep us 'regular'. Some fibres also help bind and reduce cholesterol. Fibre is found in whole grains, whole wheat, bran, vegetables, fruit, and nuts.

More refined grains such as white bread, pasta and enriched corn meal are also beneficial as they are fortified with folate. Folate is a B-vitamin that helps maintain and make new cells. Folate is known to prevent neural tube defects in infants.

Other grains—rye, barley, oats, rice, and corn as well as ancient grains such as spelt and Kamut® provide variety and flavour in a healthy diet.

## Fabulous versatility of grain products

You can find them in breakfast, lunch and dinner menus. Grains can be centre stage in appetizers, main courses, side dishes and desserts. They are available in low fat, high fibre, and reduced calorie versions, as well as in decadent, higher calorie treats reserved for occasional enjoyment. Visit your bakery or grocery store and enjoy the versatility and benefits of grain products.

### Centre stage starts with grains

#### Appetizers

- 🌾 Mini cheese or spinach croissants
- 🌾 French stick for bruschetta
- 🌾 Pumpernickel bread bowl with spinach dip
- 🌾 Mini quiches
- 🌾 Crackers and cheese

#### Main courses

- 🌾 Pasta
- 🌾 Bread for sandwiches
- 🌾 Flatbreads for wraps or fajitas
- 🌾 Bagel pizzas

#### Side dishes

- 🌾 Dinner rolls
- 🌾 Cous cous
- 🌾 Rice pilaf
- 🌾 Barley vegetable soup
- 🌾 Garlic bread

#### Desserts

- 🌾 Cookies
- 🌾 Cakes
- 🌾 Pies or tarts
- 🌾 Squares
- 🌾 Fancy pastries

**For more information contact: Baking Association of Canada**

7895 Tranmere Dr, Ste 202 Mississauga, ON L5S 1V9 Tel: 905-405-0288, Toll Free in Canada & USA 1-888-674-BAKE (2253)

Fax: 905-405-0993 E-Mail: [info@baking.ca](mailto:info@baking.ca)

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