

Basics: Carbohydrates are composed of sugar molecules and come in different forms such as sugars, starches, and fibers. The cells of the body rely on carbohydrates as the main source of energy.

Carbohydrates come in two basic forms : simple and complex. Simple carbs are one, two, or at most three units of sugar linked together in single molecules, and they have a sweet taste. Complex carbs are hundreds or thousands of sugar units linked together in single molecules. They are the starches and fiber in our food.

There are two groups of complex carbs : starches and fiber. Starches can come from vegetables or grain products and contain lots of fiber or none at all. The amount of fiber contained is generally influenced by the amount of processing by the food manufacturer. High fiber foods such as vegetables and whole grain products play an important role in preventing high blood pressure, high cholesterol, cancer, diabetes, etc.

Carbs to Choose: Healthy sources of carbohydrates include beans, fruits, vegetables, and whole grain cereals and breads. These high fiber foods break down more slowly in the digestive system helping to regulate blood sugar levels and prevent type II diabetes and heart disease.

Carbs to Lose: Carbohydrates are also found in many processed foods such as white bread, cookies, cake, and sweetened cereals. Most of these foods have little nutritional value and are broken down quickly in the digestive system. This may lead to low energy, excessive snacking, and sugar cravings.



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