



## FEAR FOOD - CARBOHYDRATES

- Carbohydrates are one of the three basic macronutrients alongside protein and fat. We need all three for our body to function properly, but carbs are especially important, as they are our bodies main source of fuel. With inadequate carbohydrate intake, you may feel foggy, light-headed, nauseous, and both mentally and physically fatigued.
- The human brain runs on glucose, the breakdown product of carbohydrates – it’s the *only* type of fuel it can use. That’s one of the reason mood is so easily affected by inadequate carbohydrate intake – think hanger! When you don’t get enough carbs, your body will break down both fat and muscle to create glucose for your brain.
- What *is* a carbohydrate? A basic molecule made up of carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen - that’s it! There is nothing inherently “evil” about carbs. While they are often associated with foods commonly thought of as “unhealthy,” carbohydrates are found in most foods, including many that are commonly labeled healthy, like grains, legumes, fruits, and vegetables. Once a carbohydrate been digested and broken down, your body can’t tell what food it came from - quinoa or a cookie!
- You may’ve heard of “simple” carbs vs. “complex” carbs. What’s the difference?
  - **Simple carbohydrates** - contains less fiber, which allows the food to be digested quickly and providing the body with a quick source of energy.
    - Examples: refined grains like white bread, white rice and regular pasta, table sugar and sweeteners, soft drinks, candy, baked goods
  - **Complex carbohydrates** – these higher fiber carbohydrates contain more fiber, which allows glucose to enter your system and provide energy more gradually. These foods generally keep you feel full longer, and tend to have more vitamins and minerals.
    - Examples: Beans and lentils, whole grains (oatmeal, whole wheat pasta and bread, quinoa, etc.), starchy vegetables (potatoes, corn), and fruit.
  - Keep in mind that while complex carbs tend to be more nutritious, bodies need both simple *and* complex carbohydrates. Only eating complex carbohydrates can lead to digestive issues, especially bloating from excess fiber. There are also situations where simple carbs are the healthiest choice, like when you need a quick source of fuel for exercise, need to bring your blood sugar up quickly, or want a food to tide you over for your meal without spoiling your appetite.