

## Confused about Carbs?

The popularity of low carb diets may have left you confused whether to include or exclude carbs from your diet.

### What are carbs?

Carbohydrates are one of three macro-nutrients they:

- Provide our body with essential nutrients
- Provide the main source of energy for our brain and muscles
- Unused can be converted to fat for long term energy and storage

### Do carbs make you fat?

- It doesn't matter how healthy or what type of food you eat; eating more calories than you burn off can result in weight gain
- Gram for gram carbohydrates contains less than half the calories of fat

### How much should I eat?

About half our daily calorie intake should come from starchy carbs.

Carbs come in two forms, simple and complex, each vary in how quickly they digest and absorb.

- Simple (Sugars): Single or double sugar units, broken down quickly = rapid rise in blood glucose levels

Found in honey, jam, fruit, milk, vegetables, white or brown sugar, chocolate, biscuits, soft drinks, sweets and cakes.

- Complex (Starch): Many sugar units bonded together = take longer to break down

Found in all starchy foods including white or whole meal bread, rice, pasta, cereals and flour potatoes, pasta, bananas, beans, oats, pizza, root vegetables.

### What is a wholegrain?

Wholegrains are the whole seed with nothing taken out. Wholegrain foods and starchy vegetables are absorbed slower than refined carbohydrate providing a steady release of sugar and fill you up for longer.

Unless you have an allergy or intolerance to wheat eliminating any one food group including wholegrains would not be recommended as part of a healthy balanced diet.

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## TIPS OF THE WEEK

Increase wholegrain starchy foods

### BREAKFAST:

- Wholegrain cereal
- Porridge oats with berries
- Wholegrain toast with baked beans

### LUNCH/DINNER:

- Baked potato (keep the skin on)
- Fill half you plate with veg
- Swap white bread, pasta and rice with whole meal/ wholegrain versions
- Add hot or cold rice and grains such as couscous and bulgar wheat, quinoa, brown rice to salads
- Look for wholegrains high up on the ingredients list; watch out for added ingredients such as sugar

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## Did you know!

There is not enough scientific evidence to support that eating carbohydrate foods at certain time of the day is any better for weight loss.