



# Nutrition *fact sheet*

## Carbohydrates

The latest nutrition news is that the Atkins diet is out, and so is seriously restricting your carbohydrate intake. People have re-discovered that carbohydrates are the preferred fuel for both the body and mind.

### Smarter Carbohydrate Choices

- Whole grain breads, cereals, & crackers; whole wheat pasta, brown rice, quinoa
- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Dried beans and peas

### Key Benefits of Smart Carbohydrate Choices

- Source of vitamins, minerals, & phytonutrients
- Naturally lower in fat and calories
- Provides fiber which...
  - » Is filling
  - » May help regulate blood sugar
  - » May help lower cholesterol

## What about added sugars?

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans state that since sugars contribute calories with few nutrients, look for foods and beverages which are low in added sugars. When we consume products with added sugar, we are simply getting a sweet taste and empty added calories. It is time to think about limiting the high calorie, low nutrient content foods such as soda pop and other sweetened beverages, along with candy, desserts, cookies, ice cream and some snack foods.

## Read the ingredient list

Make sure that added sugars are not one of the first few ingredients. Common names for added sugar include:

- Sugar
- Sucrose
- Glucose
- High fructose corn syrup
- Corn syrup
- Honey
- Maple syrup
- Fructose
- Corn Sweetener
- Molasses
- Evaporated cane juice
- Cane crystals



## Nutritious Carbohydrates are where to get more energy!

**Focus on Fruits** - Eat a variety of fruits—whether fresh, frozen, canned, or dried—rather than fruit juice for most of your fruit choices. For a 2000 calorie diet, you will need 2 cups of fruit each day (for example, 1 small banana, 1 large orange, and 1/4 cup of dried apricots or peaches)

**Vary your veggies** - Eat dark green veggies, such as broccoli, kale, and other dark leafy greens. Choose red and orange veggies, such as carrots, sweet potatoes, peppers, tomatoes, pumpkin, and winter squash. Try beans and peas, such as pinto beans, kidney beans, black beans, garbanzo beans, split peas, and lentils.

**Make half your grains whole every day** - Including whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice, or pasta. Look for a whole grain as the 1st ingredient such as whole wheat flour, oats or brown rice.



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## How Many Carbohydrates are too much?

The Choose My Plate website is a great resource to help you find out how much food from each food group you need for good health and a healthy weight. The site is filled with nutrition information and tips plus you can track your food choices.

### Here's what to do:

1. Click on this website, [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)
2. In the "I want to..." box select "Get a personalized plan".
3. Fill in your age, sex, height, weight and activity level and click on submit.
4. Choose My Plate will list recommendations on how much food you are to eat from each food group to maintain your weight and more.
  - a. Click on the food groups or the tips for more information.
  - b. Look at your options under, View, Print and Learn More. You can print a copy of your recommendations or start tracking your food choices.