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Carbohydrates

#1 Fuel for Body and Mind

Breanne Nalder Harward, MS, RDN

Carbs are the nutrients that provide our bodies with energy, which are measured as calories. We use carbohydrate energy to think, play, move, work, focus, and exercise. Therefore, they are essential to daily life! Think of your body as an engine in which carbs are the fuel for the "gas tank," so must be refilled throughout the day to maintain energy levels. Here are some tips on the best ways to incorporate carbs into your everyday routine.

Food Sources:

1. Whole Grains: bread, rice, cereal, pasta, crackers, oats, quinoa, buckwheat, etc.
2. Fruit & Veggies: All fruits and starchy vegetables; potatoes, squash, peas, corn, beans and lentils.
3. Dairy: Low or non-fat dairy products are naturally high in carbs (plant milks are too!).
4. Sport Foods & Drinks: designed specifically to provide carbs for optimal performance

Carbohydrate Functions:

- Main energy source for the brain (aka brain food!)
- Stored in liver & skeletal muscle as glycogen
- Fuels muscles during exercise, especially high intensity

Tips & Tactics:

- Always choose WHOLE GRAINS over processed grains. Whole grains are digested more slowly so you feel full longer and have better insulin response (more stable blood sugar).
- Look for products with SHORT ingredient lists containing recognizable words.
- Make every meal COLORFUL - focus on fruits and vegetables which are naturally high in essential vitamins, minerals, and natural sugars.
- Limit foods with added sugar (soda, highly processed foods, candy, baked goods).
- Choose foods high in fiber (fruits, vegetables, whole grains). This also aids in digestion by stimulating thirst/hydration.
- Favor carbohydrates with high NUTRIENT DENSITY and pack a lot of nutrients per gram.
- Choose easily digestible carbs, low in fiber and low in fat before, during, & after exercise
- Be sure to use a sport drink when exercising over 45 minutes or in the heat.
- Avoid cramping and/or bonking by starting each workout well-fueled and hydrated.

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Recipe: Banana Sushi

Ingredients:

- 4 slices bread of choice, crusts removed (tortillas also work)
- 2 Bananas, peeled, ends trimmed
- 1⁄2 cup nut butter of choice, apple butter, honey or Nutella

Directions:

- Lay 2 slices of bread on the counter next to each other, slightly overlapping one another to create 1 big rectangular piece. Push together at the seam and use a rolling pin to gently flatten the slices of bread.
- Gently spread your favorite spread evenly over both bread pieces and lay a whole banana in the middle. Carefully roll up the bread around the banana, bringing one long end over the other. Slice each log into 6 pieces, 1-1.5” thick. Repeat with remaining the bread slices and bananas.
- Sprinkle cinnamon and/or salt on the rolls for an extra kick of flavor!

Nutrition Facts:

Kcal: 455 ·Carb: 60g ·Fat: 19g ·Protein: 17g ·Sodium: 271mg ·Potassium 422mg