

CLEARING UP CARB CONFUSION

Carbs get so much attention when it comes to nutrition conversations because they are the biggest double-edged sword our bodies have to deal with. Carbohydrates are important for our body, but our bodies weren't designed to be surrounded by so much readily available carbs.

When our body does get an onslaught of carbs (usually from starchy carbs or sugar), it handles them by releasing insulin. Insulin is part of a lot of important functions in the body but by design it is a storage hormone. So instead of signaling our body to burn fat, our bodies actually get the signal to store fat whenever we eat a lot of carbs.

This is why you can expect to make the biggest dent in your weight loss if you begin to control for carbs with every meal.

WHERE ARE CARBS FOUND?

Carbs are found in a lot of different foods but in general you can view them in this distinction:

FOODS THAT WILL FUEL YOUR BODY (EVERYDAY FOODS) Non-starchy veggies! Beans, legumes, nuts and seeds High fibre 100% whole grains (REAL, whole grains- think quinoa, buckwheat, steel cut oats, brown rice)

***You don't have to include grains at each meal, or in each day. Some fruits (mostly berries)*

FOODS THAT MAY NOURISH YOUR SOUL FROM TIME TO TIME All candies, jelly and jams Sodas, fruit juices, fruit drinks Pudding, custards and other sweets Processed refined grains like flour Bread and pasta made with any refined flour Cakes, cookies and other sweet bakery products. Sweeter fruits (bananas, pineapples, dates etc.)

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "CONTROLLING" FOR CARBS? Firstly, notice that the emphasis is not on eliminating carbs but rather on controlling for them. At the beginning of this program we looked at how our brains tend to be resistant to restriction so we are going to stick to the theme of adding the right foods to crowd out the foods that aren't serving our interests.

When it comes to carbs, and all food for that matter, the poison is in the dose. If you eat very little starchy carbs, but really prefer white noodles- eat white noodles. The little you have isn't going to make a difference. But, if you have a bagel for breakfast, sandwich for lunch and pasta for dinner, controlling the amount of starchy carbs will greatly impact your results.

In addition, "controlling" for carbs also acknowledges that it's not realistic to avoid all of the foods in the "Foods that nourish your soul" lists. We all like to indulge so it's important to learn how to enjoy those foods without affecting your waistline.

So in this context you can think of carb control as substitution. The goal is to substitute as many of the “against fat loss” carbs with “help with fat loss” carbs.

- Fill more of your plate with NON-STARCHY VEGGIES and reduce starchy carbohydrates
- Shift from more processed foods to less processed foods
- Eat the highest QUALITY foods you can find
- Reduce intake of sugar
- Potatoes to sweet potatoes (or any root vegetable)
- Do what is an improvement for YOU

My main point to get from all of this is that *there is no one size fits all solution*. How well your body tolerates carbs and how much you actually need depends on factors that are specific to you and you only. Your carb tolerance can shift with age, the season, activity level, etc. The more you experiment and tune into your body to see how it feels when you manipulate your carb intake, the more understanding you will have about what works perfectly for you!

Of course, eating slowly, and for energy, trumps everything. And keep eating plenty of those healthy and colorful high-fibre veggies! I hope this clears up some of the confusion about carbs!