

# Carbohydrate-Friend or Foe



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For the last several years, there is much buzz over glycolic index and carbohydrates.

So are carbohydrates truly our best energy source or the root of our societies ever expanding belt wholes?

Beginning with the basics, carbohydrates come in two forms: simple sugars and starches. Simple sugars are composed of single chains or few chains. Glucose, sucrose, and lactose have just one or two chains. These sugars may be found in table sugar, fruit, and milk.

Complex sugars are made up of many chains. Rice, pasta, and potatoes are all examples of long chains of sugar; or 'complex carbohydrates'.

Complex carbohydrates must be broken down in order to serve as the main fuel source required for transport through your blood brain barrier and into your muscles.

In order for complex sugars to be absorbed by your intestinal wall they need to be broken down into single molecules. Once glucose is in your bloodstream, your pancreas will secrete insulin needed to enable your brain and muscles to receive glucose.

Under normal circumstances our body's mechanics run beautifully. However, when abused with all you can eat, super sized portions, and lack of energy output: our bodies Can no longer keep up. ALL types of excess foods are stored as fat. Weight gain, diabetes type 2 and heart disease are some of the consequences.

So when asked if carbohydrates are the roots of all evil? I would have to say the true villain is over consumption. Low fiber, high carbohydrates, high fat, and over consumption of foods are the enemies. So why are so many people worried about glycemic index?

Glycemic index is a ranking system that measures various foods with 50 grams of pure glucose. Glucose, measures at 100 on the glycemic index, is then compared to other food items to evaluate speed of absorption. The slower the absorption the better off you are. A much more accurate reading is the glycemic load. Glycemic load factors in quantity. For example, carrots supposedly have a lot of sugar right? Yes and no. Yes, they are high in sucrose but one carrot has <5gms. One carrot will not raise your blood sugars. You would have to eat over ten to read 50 grams.

What makes it even more confusing is when you combine your foods or use different temperatures you will have a totally different mathematically illogical result. Boiled red hot potatoes have a glycolic load of 89; whereas, boiled red cold potatoes have an index of 56.

Generally fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, and dairy have low glycemic loads. Any way you look at it brings us back to the same old boring solution- high quality, nutrient dense vitamin and mineral rich foods with portion control. Sorry!

In Good Health,

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