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The Truth About Carbs

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Carbohydrates tend to get a bad rap. The truth is our bodies require carbs to function optimally. In fact, as you can see from the pie chart above, our diets should be made up of around 50% carbs! Carbohydrates are one of three main nutrients found in our food and drinks, along with proteins and fats.

So, what exactly is a carb?

Any of a large group of organic compounds that include sugars, starch, and cellulose, containing hydrogen and oxygen in the same ratio as water (2:1) and used as structural materials and for energy storage within living tissues.

Our body breaks down carbohydrates into glucose. Glucose (blood sugar) is the main source of energy for our body's cells, tissues, and organs.

Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes are chockfull of carbs. Those are what we call "good carbs" also known as complex carbohydrates, these are the carbs our bodies need.

The "bad carbs" are processed foods that contain empty calories, also known as simple carbohydrates. Think sugary drinks and cereals, salty potato chips and French fries, white bread, pastries, cookies and cakes. These are the carbs to avoid.

Please don't be afraid of carbs. Carbs in their natural, fiber-rich form are generally healthy. Processed foods with sugar and refined carbs don't provide the same nutritional benefits as carbs in their natural form and are more likely to lead to negative health outcomes. Choose complex carbs to get the most nutrition with the least impact on blood sugar.