

## **Understanding Carbs...**

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### **What is a carb?**

Carbohydrates are found in plant foods and dairy, and generally break down into the sugar glucose (the body's preferred energy source) during digestion. Carbs come in two main forms, simple and complex, and vary in the speed of break down. Simple and/or refined carbs (your "white" foods or sugars) digest very quickly causing problematic blood sugar spikes. Complex carbs (you whole grains, fruits/veggies) contain a larger amount of dietary fiber which takes the body a longer time to breakdown during digestion using additional calories (energy units) and gentler swings in blood sugar levels.

### **Is cutting carbs a healthy way to eat?**

Cutting back on refined and simple carbs is absolutely a healthier way for everyone to eat! However, as mentioned above, not every carb is the same! Complex carbs contain some vital nutrients for the body and a healthy dose of fiber which is good for our gut and heart health, takes longer for the body to process, and gives us a good dose of energy. Because complex carbs are loaded with fiber and some starch, they help us to fill full longer assisting us in weight control. Current dietary recommendations do NOT include cutting carbs completely out of your diet.

### **Will I lose weight cutting carbs from my diet?**

When cutting down calories of any kind, you will be able to lose weight. However, slashing calories from carbs vs. fats is no better or worse in the long run. Any type of dietary restriction that includes less sugar, less processed foods and junk food, less sodium-filled food, and fewer overall calories will result in weight loss and better digestive and hearth health. Remember, quality matters in your food choices. Choose whole foods, lower sodium foods, low sugar foods, high fiber foods, and foods that are nutrient-dense.

### **My recommendations...**

Focus on complex carbohydrates (whole grains; fiber-rich fruits – apples, berries; fiber-rich vegetables – broccoli, leafy greens, carrots; beans and other legumes) and moderate as much as possible the simple carbohydrates (soda; baked treats and other sweets; fruit juice concentrate; and sugar-filled breakfast cereals).