

The 30 Pound Club

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Smart Carbs

There isn't a day that goes by that I don't read or see another weight loss guru talk about the evils of carbohydrates. The way they do it mystifies me. It's the "secret" that's keeping you fat. They're "hidden" in foods. Really? Hidden? Are they in disguise or something? Because it seems pretty clear to me that every food must have a Nutrition Facts Label and that label must contain the grams of total carbohydrates, fiber, and sugar contained in that food. The food's ingredients are on the label; sure it sometimes seems to be written in code, but the code's pretty easy to break. Again, hiding where?

There's no secret. There never was. We simply eat way too many carbohydrates. But all carbohydrates are not created equal. Every vegetable contains carbs. Every fruit contains carbs. Every grain and every starch from potatoes and rice have carbs.

The problem is the refined carbs because those are the ones we eat to excess. They're the ones that are processed and made into bread, pasta, bagels, cookies, and on and on. They also are made into sweeteners such as table sugar and high-fructose corn syrup. But just like I said earlier, there's nothing hidden. It's not like they're snuck into the food after the labels are printed. They were always there. So enough of lumping all carbohydrates together until the banner of evil.

If you want to give your weight loss program a boost, start your intake with smart carbs. That means eat your vegetables first—broccoli, Brussels sprouts, romaine lettuce, carrots. Then add some fruit such as apples and oranges. Then add every type of bean, but watch that too much fat hasn't been added like it is sometimes in refried beans or hummus. Then add some starches such as potatoes, rice, and yams—starches in the form nature made them. Then add some whole grains from bread, crackers, or pasta.

What you should avoid—if you have any room left—are sugars and the other heavily processed carbohydrates found in sodas, cookies, bagels, cakes, candies, and so on. That's not to say you can't have a sliver of birthday cake or an occasional cookie; just make them a rare treat that's only a tiny portion of your overall diet.

If you build your diet that way every day, you'll never overdo carbohydrates. Nothing will be hiding in your food to sabotage your weight loss plans. Keep it simple—go for carbs in their most natural form whenever possible. Check the food labels; as Jamie Oliver said on one of his shows, if the list of ingredients looks like it came from NASA, don't buy it.

Just read the labels—the information is there for all to see.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet



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