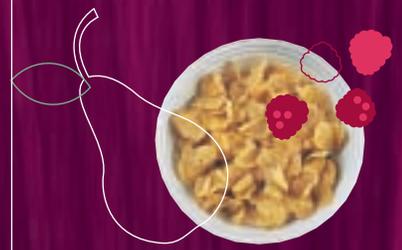




# Health Facts



## Choose Carbohydrates Wisely

Foods containing carbohydrates are part of a healthful diet because they provide dietary fiber, sugars, and starches that help the body function well. The sugars and starches in foods supply energy to the body in the form of glucose, which is the preferred fuel for your brain and nervous system.

It's important to choose *carbohydrates wisely*. Your best carbohydrate-containing foods are nutrient-packed foods in several of the basic food groups: fruits, vegetables, grains, and milk and milk products. Choosing these foods within your calorie requirements daily may help your heart stay healthy and reduce your risk for chronic disease. There are some carbohydrates you need to watch out for such as foods with carbohydrates that have added sugars—cakes, cookies, and doughnuts, to name a few.

Sugars can be naturally present in foods (such as the fructose in fruit or the lactose in milk) or added to the food. Added sugars are those added to foods during processing or preparation, not those that occur naturally, such as the sugars in milk and fruits. Foods with added sugar are often high in calories and low in nutrients—and that combination doesn't help your body.

### HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

**Choose fiber-rich fruits, vegetables, and whole grains often.**

**Focus on fruits:** Eat a variety of fruits. Make most of your fruit choices fresh, frozen, canned, or dried, rather than fruit juice.

#### Vary your veggies:

- Eat more dark green veggies, such as broccoli, kale, and other dark leafy greens. And try more orange veggies, such as carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, and winter squash.
- Legumes—such as dry beans and peas—are especially rich in dietary fiber and should be consumed several times per week.

**Make at least half your grains whole:** Eat at least 3 ounces daily of whole grains. Examples of whole grains are wholegrain cereals, breads, crackers, and pasta. Other examples are brown and wild rice. One slice (1 ounce) of whole-grain bread,

1/2 cup brown rice, and 1/2 cup of oatmeal is equivalent to 3 ounces of whole grains.

If you eat a 2,000-calorie diet, you will need approximately each day: 2 to 2 1/2 cups of fruit, 2 to 2 1/2 cups of vegetables, and 6 to 8 ounces of grains (at least 4 ounces should be whole grains). In addition, you should eat nuts, seeds, and legumes 4 to 5 times per week.

### Many packaged foods have fiber information on the front of the package.

For example, the package might say “excellent source of fiber,” “rich in fiber,” or “high in fiber.” The Nutrition Facts label will list the amount of dietary fiber in a serving and the % Daily Value (% DV). Look at the % DV column: 5% DV or less is low in dietary fiber, and 20% DV or more is high.

| Amounts per serving           | % DV*      |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Total Carbohydrate 31g</b> | <b>10%</b> |
| Dietary Fiber 5g              | 20%        |
| Sugars 5g                     |            |

\* Percent Daily Values on the Nutrition Facts label are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

### Check the product name and ingredient list.

For many, but not all “whole-grain” food products, the words “whole” or “whole grain” may appear before the name (e.g., whole-wheat bread). But, because whole-grain foods cannot necessarily be identified by their color or name (brown bread, 9-grain bread, hearty grains bread, mixed grain bread, etc. are not always “whole-grain”), you need to look at the ingredient list. The whole grain should be the first ingredient listed. The following are some examples of how whole grains could be listed:

- |                        |            |
|------------------------|------------|
| whole wheat            | brown rice |
| quinoa                 | buckwheat  |
| whole oats/oatmeal     | whole rye  |
| bulgur (cracked wheat) | sorghum    |
| whole grain            | barley     |
| popcorn                | millet     |
| wild rice              | triticale  |

## How much dietary fiber do I need?

The recommended dietary fiber intake is 14 grams per 1,000 calories consumed. For example, if you're a physically active woman who needs 2,000 calories a day, you should be aiming for 28 grams of dietary fiber a day. You could meet this goal by eating 1 cup raspberries (8 grams) and a whole-wheat English muffin (4.4 grams) for breakfast, 1/2 cup black beans (7.5 grams) with lunch, and 1 cup of mixed vegetables (8 grams) with dinner.

### What foods contain dietary fiber and how much do they contain?

Here are some examples.

| Food                                  | Grams of fiber | % DV*  |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|--------|
| 1/2 c cooked navy beans               | 9.5 g          | 38% DV |
| 1/2 c ready-to-eat 100% bran cereal   | 8.8 g          | 35% DV |
| 1/2 c cooked lentils                  | 7.8 g          | 31% DV |
| 1/2 c cooked chickpeas                | 6.2 g          | 25% DV |
| 1 medium baked sweet potato with skin | 4.8 g          | 19% DV |
| 1 small raw pear                      | 4.3 g          | 17% DV |
| 1 medium baked potato with skin       | 3.8 g          | 15% DV |
| 1/2 c frozen spinach, cooked          | 3.5 g          | 14% DV |
| 1 medium raw orange                   | 3.1 g          | 12% DV |
| 1/2 c cooked broccoli                 | 2.8 g          | 11% DV |

\* % Daily Values (DV) listed in this column are based on the food amounts listed in the table. The DV for fiber is 25 grams.

## Choose and prepare foods and beverages with little added sugars or caloric sweeteners.

Added sugars, also known as caloric sweeteners, provide calories but few or no nutrients. So, the more foods with added sugars that you eat and drink, the more difficult it becomes to get the nutrients you need without gaining weight.

## How do I know how much sugar is in a food?

Check the Nutrition Facts label to determine the amount of sugars per serving. The amount listed includes sugars that are naturally present in foods (such as fructose in fruit or lactose in milk) and sugars added to the food during processing or

preparation. Look at the % DV column—5% DV or less is low in sugar, and 20% DV or more is high. Use these conversion factors to visualize the total amount of sugar (natural and added) in one serving of a food item: 4 grams of sugar = ~1 teaspoon = ~16 calories. For example, one can (12 fluid ounces) of a sweetened carbonated beverage has 40 grams of sugar or 10 teaspoons of sugar.

On packaged foods, look on the ingredient list, where the ingredients are listed in order of amount by weight from most to least. Foods that have added sugars as one of the first few ingredients may be high in total sugars.

Added sugars can appear on the ingredient list as brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, fruit juice concentrates, glucose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, invert corn syrup, invert sugar, lactose, maltose, malt syrup, molasses, maple syrup, raw sugar, sucrose, and syrup. Below is an example of an ingredient list for a fruit yogurt.

**INGREDIENTS: CULTURED GRADE A REDUCED FAT MILK, APPLES, HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP, CINNAMON, NUTMEG, NATURAL FLAVORS, AND PECTIN. CONTAINS ACTIVE YOGURT AND L. ACIDOPHILUS CULTURES.**

Foods from restaurants, convenience stores, or other food stores may also have added sugar. The foods that contribute the most added sugar to diets of Americans are regular soft drinks; sugars and candy; cakes, cookies, and pies; fruit drinks, such as fruit punch; sweetened milk and milk products, such as ice cream, sweetened yogurt, and sweetened milk; and sweetened grains, such as cinnamon toast and honey-nut waffles.

For more information on the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, 2005, please visit [www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines](http://www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines). Appendix A has healthy eating plans that provide information about how much added sugar you may be able to include in your diet.



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