Good Carbs vs. Bad Carbs – What's the Difference?

You have probably heard that carbs are bad for both your health and your figure. Most weight loss diets advocate reducing carb intake, but since carbohydrates are important for seamless functioning of the human body, their role as a primary energy source should not be overlooked even if you have a good few extra waistline inches. That is why knowing the difference between good carbs and bad carbs is essential for good health – and a sexy shape as well. Here are some major differences between the two types of carbohydrates to help you structure your diet in order to maximize the health benefits of every single bite.

Structure of Simple vs. Complex Carbs

The main difference between good and bad carbs is found in their chemical makeup. Bad carbs are also known as simple sugars, and the name itself points to their less complex molecular structure and therefore, easier and faster digestion. Unlike simple carbs, good carbohydrates consist of longer chains of sugar molecules that take more time for the human organism to digest.

Sources of Good vs. Bad Carbs

Simple carbs are usually found in processed food such as refined sugar, sodas, artificial syrups, candies, pastries, white bread, white rice, pies, cookies, cakes and other additionally sweetened foods. Complex carbs, on the other hand, have a lower glycemic load, which points to their lower but more consistent energy release. They are normally found

in natural, fiber-packed food such as brown rice, whole grain bread, oatmeal, peas, beans, lentils, fruit, seeds and nuts, soybeans, skimmed milk, and low-fat yoghurt.

Effects of Intake of Simple vs. Complex Carbs

Due to their faster molecular breakdown, simple carbs lead to quick energy boosts and improved focus, but these positive effects are short-lived and wear off within an hour or so. Not so with complex carbs. Due to their slower digestion, good carbs may not produce an instant energy spike, but they do provide lasting energy and keep you full for longer periods of time.

Vitamin and Mineral Content Makes a Difference

Unlike complex carbs, simple sugars have low or no nutritive value because they do not contain vitamins, minerals or phytochemicals necessary for normal bodily functioning. That is why simple sugars are often termed “empty calories” – they have nothing except fast energy that your body could use. Complex carbs normally go hand in hand with fiber, vitamins, minerals and other vital nutrients, so their effect is twofold: they provide energy and other aspects of nourishment that living cells need to function.

Simple Carbs Can Contribute To Development of Health Problems

Since simple sugars contain few or no nutrients other than instantly available energy, a diet high in simple carbs can play a significant role in the development of various health problems such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, weight gain,

and obesity. On the other hand, complex carbs contain both energy and beneficial nutrients, which is why diets focusing on complex carbs accompanied by high fiber, minerals and vitamins are considered healthier than those that rely on refined sugar and products with added sugar.

Simple Sugars Can Be Good in Some Circumstances

Although most nutritionists swear by complex carbs, there are certain times when simple sugars can be extremely useful. For instance, foods high in simple carbs can be a great post-workout meal for professional athletes as the muscles require extra energy for repair and recovery after periods of intense physical activity. Most runners and other endurance athletes use industrial-made snacks during matches and marathons. The body needs more easily digestible fuel to function during intervals of added physical strain, so an energy bar with high quantities of simple sugar will produce positive effects on overall performance.

Desserts Can Contain Complex Carbs, Too

Do not write off all desserts as bad for your health just because they have a sugary taste. In fact, various homemade sweets can pack good carbohydrates, too. For example, protein gingersnaps, baked oatmeal cups, and chocolate-coated desserts packed with fiber and fresh fruit are a healthier alternative to donuts, regular ice cream, and cheese cake. To maximize health benefits of your sweet snacks, prepare desserts with sweet, fiber-packed natural ingredients such as fruit, pumpkin, squash, or potato, without the use of processed sugar. Carbohydrates are a necessary part of the human diet and the body uses them to generate energy, repair, grow, and

recover from periods of strain.

A diet low in carbohydrates can result in fatigue, weakness, and susceptibility to infections and viruses as well as prolonged healing and recuperation. That is why you should not write off all carbs as an enemy, rather, restrict intake of simple sugars, make sure your energy comes from raw or at least natural and not industrial sources, and enrich your diet with ingredients that pack complex carbs, fiber, vitamins, and minerals instead of monosaccharides, and you will stay healthy, slim, happy and well-nourished in the long run.

Recommended Reading:

- *Detox Cheap and Easy Without Fasting – Recipes Included*
- *Total Nutrition – Make your own Homemade Multivitamin and Mineral Formula*
- *Understand Hypothyroidism – Prevention and Natural Remedies*
- *Heal Cavities, Gum Disease, Naturally with Organic Oral Care – Toothpaste recipes included*

Sources:

- *Excellent Sources of Complex Carbohydrates* – Weight Loss For All
- *Proper Nutrition – Carbohydrates* – Body Building
- *A Complete Guide to Complex Carbohydrates* – Live Strong
- *What Is the Role of Carbohydrates?* – Healthy Eating
- *The Importance of Carbohydrates: Functions & Impact of Deficiency* – Study
- *Good Carbs, Bad Carbs: Why Carbohydrates Matter to You* – WebMD
- *Your Guide to Eating Healthy Carbs* – WebMD
- *8 Carbs You Should Be Eating* – Huffington Post
- *10 Things You Don't Know About Sugar (And What You Don't Know Could Hurt You)* – Huffington Post
- *Carbohydrates and Blood Sugar* – Harvard School of Public Health

- *20 Healthy Dessert Recipes That Won’t Blow Your Diet* – Legion Athletics
- *Eating too much added sugar increases the risk of dying with heart disease* – Harvard Health Publications