

WEEK 1 NUTRITION CARBOHYDRATES GAME PLAN



Avoid the Roller Coaster with “Slow” Carbs

Slow-Digesting Carbs help keep our blood sugar steady by letting digested glucose enter our blood stream as a trickle rather than a flood. Unlike fast digesting carbs, they don't trigger an insulin spike and the associated fat storage and other problems.

Fiber in slow carbs slows the digestive process and helps stabilize our blood sugar level. It also helps cleanse our digestive tract. The foods in the table below are all high in fiber in their natural states. With processed foods, such as bread and cereal, the amount of fiber in a serving of the product will generally indicate how healthy it is. For instance, a good “whole grain” bread should have 3 or more grams of fiber per slice. Look for whole grain as the first ingredient listed on the food ingredient label on the package.

Vegetables, fruits and other slow-carb foods not only have fiber but significant amounts of vitamins plus powerful phytonutrients with antioxidant properties that help protect our cells from damage and disease.

Here are the types of slow carbs that we recommend incorporating more frequently into our diets:

Slow Carbs

- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Nuts
- Beans
- Whole Grain Breads (min. 3 grams fiber per slice)
- Brown or Wild Rice
- Sweet Potatoes
- Oatmeal (not instant)
- High Fiber Cereals

Serving Size

- 1 cup leafy/raw; cup chopped
- 1 piece (apple, etc.); cup pieces
- 1/4 cup (small handful)
- 1/2 cup cooked
- 1 slice (1 oz.)
- 1/2 cup cooked
- 1 small baked; 1/2 cup mashed
- 1/2 cup
- 1/2 - 3/4 cup

Limit Fast Carbs

- Also known as simple or refined carbs
- Found in sugary and processed refined foods:

“White” Foods – Bread, Rice, Pasta, White Potatoes

Soda • Sweetened Drinks • Juices • Candy • Cakes • Cookies • Donuts • Sweetened Cereals • Desserts
Pretzels • Chips • Sugars • Syrups • Jams

Eat Fast Carbs with Protein and/or Fat

One way to moderate the blood sugar/insulin effect of fast carbs is to eat them with a protein and/or a fat source, both of which take far longer to digest. Having a piece of chicken or salmon with a (smaller) portion of pasta slows the digestion of the entire meal. Also, always try to have some protein for breakfast. Even just a spoonful of peanut butter on your whole grain toast will “jump start” your metabolic furnace first thing in the morning. Protein burns 20% of its calories just through digestion! And it can help keep hunger pangs away until lunch.

Avoid Added Sugar

In packaged foods and beverages, “sugars” are listed in grams in the Nutritional Facts label under Carbohydrates. Because grams don’t mean much to most of us, use this simple equation: 4 grams of sugars = 1 teaspoon of sugar.

A 12-ounce can of soda contains the equivalent of at least 10 teaspoons of sugar (about 40 grams). It also contains about 150 nutritionally “empty” calories! The USDA suggests limiting added sugars – both from packaged foods and the sugar bowl – to about 40 grams per day on a 2,000-calorie diet. That’s just one soda or sweetened drink!

Where else is sugar hiding? How about in that little 6 oz. container of strawberry yogurt which has 28 grams, or 7 teaspoons of sugars? Or is it in that tiny half-cup of low-fat frozen yogurt which can be packed with as much as 30 grams of sugars. There is a wide range of sugar content among many different products and brands, so check your labels.

Tips for Reducing Added Sugar

- READ LABELS!
- Limit candy, cookies, cakes, pies, doughnuts, granola bars, pastries, and other sweet baked goods.
- Drink water or flavored club soda/seltzer rather than regular soda.
- Look for breakfast cereals with 10 grams of sugar or less per serving.
- Be careful with reduced fat and fat-free products. Often the fat is replaced with sugars so the products may have as many calories as the full-fat versions.
- Watch out for smoothies and coffee drinks. These are often loaded with sugar and calories.
- Buy plain yogurt and add your own fresh, frozen, or dried fruit.
- Rather than juice or juice drinks (which tend to contain as much sugar as soda), have some “Nature’s Candy” – fresh fruit! Fruit contains far less sugar than juice, and it’s packed with vitamins, minerals, and fiber.
- “Energy” drinks and bars are often loaded with sugars. Check labels carefully and look for less than 15 grams of sugars per serving.

Nature’s Candy!

Want something sweet to eat? Try some delicious seasonal fresh fruit. You’ll be doing your blood sugar and your waistline a big favor. (Remember, the fiber in the fruit slows down the digestion of the sugar and helps keep blood sugar steady.)

Fruit (serving)	Calories	Fiber (grams)
Apple (1 medium)	49	2.3
Blueberries (1/2 cup)	48	8.4
Cantaloupe (1/2)	65	2.5
Grapes (about 10)	35	1.1
Orange (1 medium)	47	3.0
Peach (1 medium)	36	1.4

versus

Snickers (2 oz. bar)	270	1.0
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Your challenge this week is to eat more complex slow carbs and fewer sugary and processed fast carbs – make them a treat instead of a staple.