



NUTRITION FACT SHEET



CARBOHYDRATES - FRIEND OR FOE?

Carbohydrate is a nutrient that often gets a lot of bad press, but is it justified?

Carbohydrates are 1 of the 3 macronutrients found in food. There are 3 different types of carbohydrate; starch, sugar and fibre. Although it's often suggested that carbohydrates are fattening, each gram of carbohydrate provides less than half as many calories as a gram of fat.

Starchy carbohydrates play an important role in our diets, providing us with energy as well as some key nutrients such as B vitamins and iron. They include potatoes, pasta, rice, cereals and bread.

Sugars can be found naturally in fruit, vegetables and milk or

can be added to foods like cakes, biscuits and confectionery.

'Free sugars', those added to our food, should be limited as too many can be damaging to dental health.

Dietary fibre is important for our health and for reducing the risk of some diseases (e.g. heart disease, type 2 diabetes and colon cancer). It also helps our digestive health and reduces the risk of constipation. It is found in wholemeal bread, pasta and brown rice. It is recommended that we eat at least 30g of fibre per day.

Although starchy carbohydrates are an important part of our diet, providing us with key nutrients, it is important to make the right choices.

Often what makes carbohydrates less healthy is the way they have been cooked or what has been added to them.

Top tips for including starchy carbohydrates in a healthy diet:

- Choose wholegrain varieties for fibre and nutrients such as iron
- Steam, boil, grill or bake using as little oil as possible
- Use unsaturated margarine (such as olive oil spread) and use sparingly on toast and in sandwiches.

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How do Mellors support students to include healthy carbohydrates in their diets?

- Provide a wholegrain starchy food at least once per week at lunch in line with the school food standards
- Offer a choice of wholemeal bread for sandwiches or toast at breakfast and mid-morning break.
- Use pizza bases with wholemeal flour
- Do not provide sugary drinks
- Follow recommended serving sizes for cakes and biscuits
- Limit the amount of sugar used in baking and sweeten with fruit where possible.