



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

Andrew Weil Center for Integrative Medicine

Choosing Healthy Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are a vital dietary component. The quality, of carbohydrate in the diet is a most important consideration.

Here are some general guidelines for eating carbohydrates:

- ❑ Focus on eating a variety of naturally colorful foods daily.
- ❑ Emphasize eating whole foods—fruits, vegetables, legumes, and unprocessed grains—which are rich sources of phytochemicals found to play a vital role in promoting health and lowering the risk of disease.
- ❑ Unprocessed grains and foods rich in fiber help you feel more full on fewer calories—thus, they can help you control your caloric intake, if weight loss or maintenance is a concern for you.

BEST FRUITS

Choose colorful fruits like berries, peaches, nectarines, oranges, pink grapefruit, red grapes, plums, pomegranates,

cherries, apples, and pears for antioxidant and anti-inflammatory flavonoids and carotenoids.

BEST VEGETABLES

Select dark leafy greens, broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, carrots, beets, onions, peas, squashes, and sea vegetables: all are rich in antioxidants and anti-inflammatory components.

BEST GRAINS

Pick oats, kamut, quinoa, wheat berries, and wild, brown and forbidden rice.

BEST FIBER-RICH FOODS

Add legumes (beans and whole soy foods), nuts, seeds, avocados, berries, artichoke, and popcorn

INSTEAD OF THIS... TRY THIS..

Chips & Pretzels	Red Bell Pepper, Celery, Jicama, Carrots These fresh, raw vegetables offer crunch without the calories, fat or glycemic load.
Cookies & Candy	Unsweetened Dried Fruit, Dark Chocolate, Fresh Fruit All of these offer healthy compounds, but eat chocolate sparingly.
Ice Cream & Other Desserts	Dark Chocolate, Fruit Sorbets, Fresh Fruit, Fruit Yogurt All offer healthy compounds or ingredients without unhealthy butterfat, flour, or oils.
Pasta	Whole Grain Pasta, Bean Thread, Soba, Udon or Rice Noodles The glycemic index of pasta increases as it cooks, so eat it al dente (still a bit firm, with some “tooth” to it).
Potatoes	Sweet Potatoes and Yams Both are actually sweet potatoes and both are healthier and carry lower glycemic loads.
Soda & Diet Soda	Seltzer Water If you crave a carbonated drink, try cold seltzer with fresh fruit and a touch of natural sweetener.
Sugar	Maple Syrup, Stevia Maple syrup is a less processed sugar and contains more nutrients, especially manganese and zinc—use in moderation. Stevia has no sugar (and no calories). Keep in mind, if you’ve been using sugar appropriately, there is no reason to reach for substitutes.