

MYTH BUSTERS

Experts weigh in on the dietary myths responsible for causing more health problems than they solve.

GOOD CARBS

Myth Carbs are unhealthy.

Most people don't know what carbs actually are. So, what are carbs? Carbohydrate refers to the sugars, starches, and fiber found in grains, vegetables, fruits, milk products, candy, and junk food. It is one of the three essential macronutrients, along with fat and protein.

Vegetables and fruits are made up mostly of carbohydrates, so we can easily bust the myth that carbs are inherently unhealthy. The most health-promoting foods (veggies, fruits, beans, whole grains) contain mostly carbs, but so do some very unhealthy ones (candy, soda, white bread). Instead of focusing on individual nutrients, it's more important to focus on the food itself.

Fact The healthiest foods are made mostly of carbs.

Whole plant foods such as whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and beans are rich in vitamins, minerals, fiber, and other disease-fighting antioxidants. They are protective against diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and some cancers.

PLANT-BASED DIETS ARE GOOD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, YOUR HEART, YOUR WEIGHT, AND YOUR OVERALL HEALTH.

—U.S. News and World Report

Myth You'll get weak and frail on a plant-based diet.

Fact Studies show plant-based eaters report increased energy and better overall health.

There are plant-based NFL players, MLS players, parkour athletes, and world-champion powerlifters who perform at the highest levels. Elephants and gorillas, some of the strongest animals on the planet, don't need meat to bulk up.

CHOOSE CARBOHYDRATES THAT STILL HAVE THEIR FIBER, LIKE BROWN RICE OR BROWN BREAD, RATHER THAN WHITE RICE OR WHITE BREAD, WHICH HAVE HAD THEIR FIBER STRIPPED AWAY. —Dr. Neal Barnard

Myth Diabetes is caused by sugar or carbs.

Fact Fat, not carbs, is most important when managing diabetes. A top nutrition expert explains the reason.

Eating sweets is not a direct cause of type 2 diabetes. People develop type 2 diabetes over time by slowly developing a resistance to insulin, the hormone that escorts glucose out of your blood and into tissues like your muscles and liver. Glucose remains trapped in your blood because your body cannot use insulin properly. Elevated blood glucose is a symptom of diabetes and NOT the root cause.

The real cause of insulin resistance is dietary fat. People with both type 1 and type 2 diabetes are told to eat foods that are low in carbohydrates and high in fat and protein simply because they don't create an immediate need

for insulin. But that creates new problems.

In the hours and days after a person eats a meal high in fat and protein, the body's need for insulin increases significantly. This is because both fat and protein make insulin less powerful over time.

The more fat there is in the diet, the harder it is for insulin to get glucose into your cells and out of your bloodstream. Considerable scientific evidence shows that eating a medium-fat or high-fat diet (more than 30 grams of fat per day) causes large blood glucose swings after eating foods containing carbohydrates.

People who adopt a truly low-fat diet (less than 30 grams of fat per day) are able to eat significantly more carbohydrates without blood glucose spikes, because the amount of fat in their muscles, liver, and blood is very low.

—Dr. Cyrus Khambatta, Ph.D., nutritional biochemist and cofounder of masteringdiabetes.org

BAD CARBS