

## Carb Crazy

**By: Robert Notter**

Much attention has been given to carbohydrates in recent years. We hear about whole grains, sugar, insulin, the glycemic index, etc. For most of us, this is about as understandable and enjoyable as high school calculus (unless you had a really hunky teacher like I did). Some good has come from the carbohydrate craze in terms of increasing our awareness, but it's also made a small fortune for the manufacturers of food products and the publishers of diet books.

Basically, carbohydrates provide energy, and our bodies are machines that need fuel. Carbs come from sources like flour and grain products (bread, pasta, couscous), rice, vegetables, beans, fruit, sugar, honey, syrup and milk. When you eat carbs, digestion begins in the mouth and then continues in the stomach and small intestine, where the food turns into sugar. This sugar either fuels your body and you burn it off, or -- if you are inactive and/or stressed -- it gets stored as fat.

Carbs come in two forms: simple and complex. Complex carbs are those that break down more slowly in the body, releasing sugar gradually into the bloodstream for sustained energy. They are also a good source of fiber. Complex carbs include brown rice, oats, vegetables and grains (quinoa, spelt, polenta, barley, etc.). Simple carbs, on the other hand, quickly turn into sugar and give you a rush of energy, often followed by a big crash (making you fall asleep at your desk at 2 p.m.). Simple carbs include white bread and pasta, soda, ice cream, chips, juice, fries, cereals, desserts and candy.

It's not always easy, given our busy schedules, to increase complex carbs and reduce our intake of simple carbs, but it's truly important for our physical and mental health. So, if you look at a label and the first few ingredients are white flour, sugar, corn syrup, fructose, sucrose or cane sugar, chances are that food won't provide the long term fuel you need to get through the day.

And just because a snack food says it's healthy on the box doesn't necessarily mean it is. It's funny to see a breakfast cereal being promoted with the words "whole grain" while it's loaded with sugar. Take some time to investigate what you buy. Consider having brown rice, substitute seven-grain for white bread, have whole grain pasta, skip the bun on the burger, and be conscious of what you eat.

**Robert C. Notter, HHC**, is a certified Lifestyle & Health Coach. He works with individual and group clients, and additionally facilitates corporate workshops and educational seminars. The focus of his work is on stress reduction, healthier nutrition, and happier living. He coaches clients on how lifestyle, thought patterns, motivation and food choices affect how they feel and look. His clients learn to identify their specific life and health goals, and receive the tools and support to actually realize these goals.



Additionally, he leads the Marketing Education Program at the Institute for Integrative Nutrition in New York City, and the “Building A Practice” Course at the New York Open Center. He has lectured to over 6000 people nationwide about how to create the life of your dreams.

If you are interested in learning more about life coaching, and how to take steps to improve your life, please contact Robert.

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