

***Many health experts recommend cutting down or eliminating sugar and other simple carbohydrates, and increasing the servings of complex carbohydrates in the diet.***

Carbohydrates are necessary to your health, because every cell in your body uses them for energy. In fact, your brain can only use carbohydrates for energy.

Unfortunately, over-consumption of sugar, high-fructose corn syrup and other highly refined carbohydrates has been associated with a higher incidence of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and even breast cancer. And eating refined carbs can, over time, result in almost uncontrollable [sugar cravings](#).

According to the World Health Organization, sugars and other simple carbohydrates are a leading factor in the worldwide obesity epidemic.

With the popularity of low-carb diets, many people are afraid to eat any carbohydrates, but it is important to distinguish between the health-robbing effects of simple sugars and other carbs, and the health-giving properties of complex carbohydrates.

Complex carbohydrates are high-fiber foods, which improve your digestion. They help stabilize the blood sugar, keep your energy at an even level, and help you feel satisfied longer after your meal.

In contrast, sugar and other simple carbohydrates can alter your mood, lead to cravings and compulsive eating, cause wide swings in your blood-sugar levels, and cause weight gain in most people. In addition, a high consumption of sugar can lead to uncomfortable withdrawal symptoms when you finally decide to improve your diet and forgo the sweets.

**Examples: simple and complex carbohydrates**

**Some examples of healthy foods containing complex carbohydrates:**

Spinach	Whole Barley	Grapefruit
Turnip Greens	Buckwheat	Apples
Lettuce	Buckwheat bread	Prunes
Water Cress	Oat bran bread	Apricots, Dried
Zucchini	Oatmeal	Pears
Asparagus	Oat bran cereal	Plums
Artichokes	Museli	Strawberries
Okra	Wild rice	Oranges
Cabbage	Brown rice	Yams
Celery	Multi-grain bread	Carrots
Cucumbers	Pinto beans	Potatoes
Dill Pickles	Yogurt, low fat	Soybeans
Radishes	Skim milk	Lentils
Broccoli	Navy beans	Garbanzo beans
Brussels Sprouts	Cauliflower	Kidney beans

Eggplant	Soy milk	Lentils
Onions	Whole meal spelt bread	Split peas

### **Some examples of foods containing simple carbohydrates:**

Simple carbohydrates are more refined, are usually found in foods with fewer nutrients, and tend to be less satisfying and more fattening.

- Table sugar
- Corn syrup
- Fruit juice
- Candy
- Cake
- Bread made with white flour
- Pasta made with white flour
- Soda pop, such as Coke®, Pepsi®, Mountain Dew®, etc.
- Candy
- All baked goods made with white flour
- Most packaged cereals

If you are trying to eliminate simple sugars and carbohydrates from your diet, but you don't want to refer to a list all the time, here are some suggestions:

**Read the labels.** If the label lists sugar, sucrose, fructose, corn syrup, white or "wheat" flour, they contain simple carbohydrates. If these ingredients are at the top of the list, they may contain mostly simple carbohydrates, and little else. They should be avoided.