

NUTRITION TO GO

Caring about Carbohydrates

What are Carbohydrates?

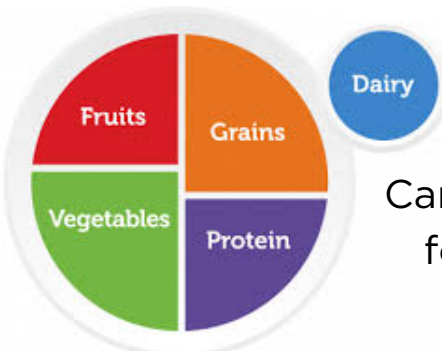
Carbohydrates (or carbs for short) are sugars, starches and fiber that can be found in the food and drinks we have. Some carbohydrates occur naturally in food and drinks, while others are added in for flavor.

Do we Need Carbohydrates Everyday?

Yes! Carbs are our bodies main fuel source, and are very important for brain function. After we eat or drink something that has carbs, our body works to break them down into sugars which then go into our blood.

How to Choose Carbohydrates

- **Choose** carbohydrates that are naturally occurring in food. Some examples are apples, bananas, sweet potato, carrots, low-fat milk, whole wheat bread, brown rice, and beans.
- Naturally occurring carbs can provide our bodies with helpful energy and fiber. Fiber is important for gut health and to control blood sugar levels.
- **Limit** carbohydrates that come from sugary drinks, syrups, baked goods, pastries, desserts, and candy.



Carbohydrates can be found in all 5 food groups



Does soda contain carbs?

YES

Soda contains carbs that are added in the form of sugar to make it sweet. Soda does not contain fiber or important nutrients.

Do apples contain carbs?

YES

Apples contain carbs in the form of natural sugar and fiber. They also contain important nutrients.



Sweet Potato Quesdilla

Servings per recipe: 2

Serving size: 1/2

Prep time: 5 minutes

Cook time: 15 minutes

Cost \$1.80 per recipe / \$0.90 per serving

Ingredients

- ½ cup mashed, cooked sweet potato* or canned (yams)
- ¼ cup canned low-sodium black beans, drained & rinsed
- Nonstick cooking spray
- 2 whole wheat tortillas, 8 inch size
- 2 tablespoons chunky salsa
- 2 tablespoons reduced fat shredded cheddar cheese

Directions

1. In a medium size bowl, mash the sweet potato with the beans.
2. Coat a skillet with cooking spray on medium heat.
3. Place one tortilla in skillet. Spread the sweet potato and black bean mixture onto it. Top with salsa and shredded cheese. Cover with the other tortilla.
4. Cook for 2-3 minutes then flip with a wide spatula and cook for another 2-3 minutes. Remove from pan to a cutting board and slice into quarters.

*1 fresh sweet potato = about 1 cup
Be sure to rinse and drain canned sweet potatoes (yams).
15 ounce can = 1½ cups

In this recipe, natural carbs are found in the sweet potato, black beans and whole wheat tortillas.

More recipes can be found at: <https://web.uri.edu/community-nutrition/recipes/>