

## CARBOHYDRATES AND SUGARS

### AHA Scientific Position

Our dietary guidelines place increased emphasis on foods and on overall eating pattern and the need for all Americans to achieve and maintain a healthy weight. For weight loss, a fat intake of no more than 30 percent is often helpful.

### AHA Recommendation

**Carbohydrate intake should come mainly from complex carbohydrates –** vegetables, fruits and grains – rather than the simple carbohydrates found in sugars. Complex carbohydrates add more fiber, vitamins and minerals to the diet than foods high in refined sugars. Foods high in complex carbohydrates are usually lower in calories, saturated fat and cholesterol. The American Heart Association recommends 25-30 grams of fiber per day.

Substituting carbohydrates for fats may increase triglyceride (tri-GLIS'er-id) levels and lower HDL (good) cholesterol in some people. But this isn't always the case. Population groups such as vegetarians who eat a high-carbohydrate, high-fiber diet usually have normal triglyceride levels. Diets high in fiber don't seem to lower HDL as much.

### Which foods are sources of complex carbohydrates?

- Starches – Flour, bread, rice, corn, oats, barley, potatoes, legumes, fruits and vegetables
- Fiber – Insoluble: whole-wheat breads and cereals, wheat bran, cabbage, beets, carrots, Brussels sprouts, turnips, cauliflower and apple skin (pectin)
- Fiber – Soluble: oat bran, oats, legumes, citrus fruits, strawberries, apple pulp, psyllium, rice bran and barley

### **Which foods are sources of simple carbohydrates?**

- Sucrose – Table sugar, brown sugar, confectioners sugar, raw sugar and turbinado
- Glucose – Dextrose, corn syrup and glucose syrup
- Fructose – Fruits, vegetables and honey
- High fructose corn syrup – Liquid sweetener that contains 42-90 percent fructose
- Honey – Made up of glucose, fructose and water
- Sugar alcohols – Sorbitol, mannitol, xybitol
- Lactose – milk and milk products
- Maltose, dextrose – cereals and some baked goods

### **How much complex carbohydrates should I eat?**

People should eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day and six servings of grains and cereals.