

## Nutrition Tip of the Week: Carbohydrates



### Hello CSUSM Athletes!

This week we are simplifying **carbohydrates- the body's main source for energy**. Carbohydrates are types of sugar, fiber and starch molecules that are found in a variety of foods. When broken down in the body, carbohydrates turn into glucose- which is what the body uses for immediate energy. Glucose helps the body maintain healthy blood sugar regulation by increasing our blood sugar levels when we eat. Depending on the TYPE and QUALITY of carbohydrates (& meal balance) determines whether blood sugar levels will spike back down or gradually fall. Even when our bodies don't use glucose immediately, it gets stored in our liver and muscle cells as glycogen- only to be used during longer periods of physical activity, or if you haven't eaten in a few hours.

Carbohydrates come in two main forms: simple and complex. The difference between the two is how quickly they are digested and absorbed-this is what impacts blood sugar spikes. **Simple carbohydrates** are small sugar chains or singular molecules that are broken down and raise blood sugar quickly. They don't keep you satiated for long periods of time and are usually found in fruits, juices, vegetables, table sugar, milk and processed foods. Simple carbohydrates found in whole food sources (vegetables and fruit) are good for your health because they are good sources of fiber and unprocessed.

**Complex carbohydrates** are longer and more complex sugar chains, which means they are broken down and absorbed more slowly, gradually increase blood sugar levels, and make you feel satisfied for longer. Complex carbohydrates are commonly starchy and are good sources of fiber. Good sources of complex carbohydrates include whole grain foods and starchy vegetables. Examples of starchy vegetables include: beets, cassava, parsnips, peas, potatoes, sweet potatoes and sweet corn. Whole grain products such as quinoa, lentils, buckwheat, brown rice, oats, beans, and whole wheat/whole grain products are healthy options to choose from. The terms "whole wheat" and "whole grain" are not regulated, so make sure to look at the nutrition label to ensure the product has 3-5 grams of fiber.

Refined carbohydrates are a type of simple carbohydrate. These should be limited in the diet because they are processed, high in sugar, low in nutrients, low in fiber and spike blood sugar levels. Examples include breakfast cereal, white bread, white rice, white pastas, pastries, cookies, baked goods, soda, chips and other highly processed foods. Many, but not all refined and processed foods contain high fructose corn syrup as an ingredient. Remember, it's all about the quality of carbohydrate sources and an easy way to navigate this is to choose whole foods, whole grains, and limit processed and refined foods. Check out the infographics below for more tips on choosing healthy carbohydrates.

# TIPS TO EATING HEALTHIER CARBOHYDRATES



**CHOOSE WHOLE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES INSTEAD OF JUICE**



**INSTEAD OF WHITE RICE, SWITCH TO BROWN RICE, WILD RICE, FARRO, BUCKWHEAT, AND QUINOA**



**CONSUME TORTILLAS, BREAD, AND PASTA THAT ARE WHOLE WHEAT**



**EAT MORE LEGUMES. THIS INCLUDES PEAS, CHICKPEAS, LENTILS, AND BEANS.**



**EAT MORE NUTS AND SEEDS**

**These types of carbohydrates have fiber, which helps lower cholesterol, promotes healthy digestion, and reduces the risk of colon cancer.**

## **Recipe of the Week: Cauliflower Chickpea Nourishing Bowl**

This nourishing bowl is high in carbohydrates, which gives you energy to help fuel your training. The best time to consume this bowl is about 2-3 hours before training or competition. This meal is packed with fiber, which helps reduce inflammation in the gut and promote a healthy digestive system. Cauliflower contains antioxidants that can help reduce the risk of developing heart disease and certain cancers. Sweet potatoes also have these cancer-fighting properties, as well as enhancing brain function and supporting a healthy vision.

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 45 minutes

Servings : 4

### **Ingredients for bowl:**

- ½ head of cauliflower, cut into florets
- 1 sweet potato, diced
- ½ red onion, sliced
- 2 tablespoons of olive oil
- 1 cup brown rice
- 2 cups water
- 1 can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- Spinach, to serve
- Hummus of choice, to serve
- Salt and pepper, to taste

### **Directions:**

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.
2. Start the rice. Bring water to a boil in a medium saucepan. Add the rice, and cover with a lid. Reduce heat to a simmer and cook for 45 minutes.
3. Place vegetables and chickpeas in a large bowl, drizzle with olive oil, and toss well.
4. Line the pan with olive oil or parchment paper. Pour vegetables and chickpeas on the pan and sprinkle with desired amount of salt and pepper. Bake for 40 minutes, stirring once or twice in between.
5. Serve with ½ cup of brown rice and the desired amount of vegetable-chickpea mix.  
You may add spinach, hummus, and salt and pepper, to taste.



Adapted from: <https://simple-veganista.com/roasted-vegetable-bowl-turmeric-tahini-dressing/>



The Cougar Pantry serves free food to all CSUSM students. Each Student may visit once per week, in addition to attending Fresh Market Mondays (every Monday in Chavez Plaza from 10am - 1pm) and Produce Truck Tuesdays (first tuesday of every month in front of Markstein Hall from 12-1 pm) for fresh produce.

Cougar Pantry is located in **USU 3100A** and the hours are as follows:

**Mondays: closed for Fresh Market**

**Mondays; Tuesday - Thursday: 9 AM - 5 PM**

**Friday: 9 AM - 1 PM**

*Don't forget your reusable bag and student ID!*

**Thank you Cougars and have a wonderful week!**

