

health: wellbeing



FEELGOOD CARBS

Vanessa Schuldt shares her views on our love and hate tug-o-war with carbs

If a witch cast a spell on me to never eat one more “carb”, I’d probably shrivel up and die. The reason isn’t purely attributed to the pleasure aspects of carbohydrate-rich foods. It is the nutritional qualities of many of these foods that gravitates me to them.

Nutrient-dense carbohydrate foods – that is those in good company with vitamins and minerals, include grain-based foods (such as bread, breakfast cereals, crispbreads, rice, pasta, noodles and couscous), fruits, some vegetables (for example potatoes, sweet potatoes and corn) and dairy products (for example milk, yoghurt and custard).

The less desirable examples of carb-rich foods include lollies, sweet biscuits, pastries, chocolates, soft drinks and the like, which ideally should be put aside for occasional eating only.

Carbohydrate is metabolised in the body to glucose, which is used by all cells as the primary energy source. The working muscles, active brain and body organs all use glucose to function at their peak. In fact, glucose is the only source of fuel to the brain, which explains why skipping meals and fad diets can trigger concentration lags and lethargy.

Many “anti-carb” diets have reared their ugly heads over the last few decades, putting a smear on carb-rich diets. But the evidence that supports the regular consumption of

carbohydrate foods as part of a healthy diet has stood the test of time.

For most healthy people, the right amount of carbohydrate is just over one-half of the day’s total kilojoule intake (that is 55 percent of daily energy needs).

What does this all mean in “food” terms? Well, to get good quality carbohydrate foods in your diet, what you’re looking at eating each day is:

- Four or more serves of grain-based foods
- Two serves of fruit
- Five serves of vegetables or legumes
- Two to three serves of low-fat dairy food.

With grain-based foods, special attention should be given to choosing wholegrain varieties. Scientific literature suggests that wholegrains reduce the risk of developing heart disease and diabetes by between 20 to 40 percent and colon cancer by up to 40 percent. Research also shows energy controlled diets that are high in cereals, particularly of the wholegrain variety, can produce significant weight loss.

The recommendation is to make at least half of your grain-based food choices wholegrain – so that’s at least two serves a day. Try to include a variety of wholegrain foods like wholemeal bread, porridge, wholegrain breakfast cereals, brown rice, wholemeal pasta and popcorn in your day.

Vanessa is an accredited practising dietician, visit nutritionpeak.com.au.



GET ORGANISED

New parents often have enough on their hands dealing with the challenges of their lives with young children. So when it comes to your home or office, trying to get organised can at times feel a little too much to deal with.

Enter the professional organiser, or PO. The PO’s main goal is to assist you in getting the most out of your day. With a variety of services, ranging from time management and storage design to event management and even system development, it’s something that a busy mum could get used to.

The POs help you find that balance you need, restoring order back into your chaotic life. Providing everything from ideas and information to tools and systems, their aim is to increase your productivity and get you back on your feet. They typically provide packages that can be tailored to meet your individual needs, whether you want personal visits, or occasional distance support.

Tracey Campbell of breastfeeding and maternity wear site nursingwear.com.au, who trialled three Sydney-based POs, suggests that when choosing your PO it’s important that you enjoy their company and feel comfortable allowing them into your private space. She adds, ‘It’s also essential to find out just what’s included in your package and to ensure that your PO will be available at the times of the day you find convenient.’

If you’re feeling the pressure of post-baby life, try alwaysorganised.com.au, lessmess.com.au and mumscoach.com.au to find your own PO. Also check out the Association of Professional Organisers at aapo.org.au.

STUFFED UP?

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