

Carbohydrates are needed for your child's good health.

Carbohydrates are needed for our body to provide energy and important vitamins and minerals. Many fad diets have recommended that carbohydrates be reduced or even eliminated from daily eating. While reducing certain types of carbohydrates, such as those with sugars can be beneficial to one's health, removing too many or all carbohydrates is not recommended.

Children need carbohydrates from a variety of food to for muscle growth, and health, active brains. Milk, yogurt, apples, berries, potatoes, beans, rice, and cereal all contain carbohydrates. Also sweetened beverages, cakes, cookies, and candies.

The best carbohydrate choices provide a variety of nutrients to help fuel growing bodies and promote good health. They provide vitamins, minerals, and dietary fiber. Some examples of nutrient-rich carbohydrates include whole grains, vegetables, fruits, beans, and peas.

Low-fat and fat-free milk is another nutrient rich carbohydrate that provides calcium, potassium and is fortified with vitamin D.

Foods and drinks with added sugars are better saved as sometimes foods since they offer mostly a source of quick energy and very little nutrition. These treats include sweetened beverages, candy, cakes, and cookies. The USDA Dietary Guidelines recommend limiting added sugars to no more than 10 percent of total calories per day starting at age 2.

Many carbohydrate foods are a good source of fiber. Make half of the grains for your family is a healthier lifestyle choice for you and your family. There are many delicious whole grain choices including bread, pasta, cereals, tortillas, and many others.

Other ways to get more dietary fiber for your family is by choices whole fruits and vegetables instead of juice.

Children have different dietary fiber needs depending on their age.

- Children 1 to 3 years: 19 grams per day
- Children 4 to 8 years: 25 grams per day
- Females 9 to 18 years: 26 grams per day
- Males 9 to 19 years: 31 grams per day
- Males 14 to 18: 38 grams per day.

Check the Nutrition Facts sheet for fiber per serving. A good source of fiber has at least 3 grams of fiber. An excellent source of dietary fiber has at least 6 grams per serving.

Source: <https://eatright.org>