

[IMAGE]

Quality Carbs: The Secret to Health?

By Editorial Staff

Sometimes it seems as if we've become so obsessed with weight loss that we've forgotten *health* is what truly matters. Yes, maintaining a healthy weight can reduce your disease burden significantly, but *what we eat* is consistently shown to be a leading, if not the leading, determinant of how long we live and how healthy we are while we're doing it, regardless of its impact on our overall weight.

Enter carbs, in particular fiber-rich carbs, and their ability to reduce disease risk. While carbs in general often get a bad rap when it comes to weight loss, in terms of our health, the proper carbs can literally be life savers. According to a recent research review published in *The Lancet* and providing data from more than 200 studies and nearly 5,000 participants, intake of quality carbohydrates rich in fiber reduce all-cause and cardiovascular-related mortality, coronary heart disease, stroke (incidence and mortality), type 2 diabetes and colorectal cancer. Researchers' findings are based on a comparison of the highest dietary fiber intake compared with the lowest, and risk reductions were lowest when daily fiber intake equaled or exceeded 25-29 grams.

Strike one (at least) for low carbs came earlier last year, when a study in another *Lancet* research journal, *The Lancet Public Health*, found people who consumed fewer carbohydrates had a 20 percent increased risk of death compared to people who ate more carbohydrates. Researchers suggested a simple reason for their findings: Many people pursuing a low-carb diet tend to replace carbohydrates with more protein (and often fats) from animal sources, rather than higher-quality carbs from fruits and vegetables.

If you're trying to lose weight and have chosen to reduce carbohydrate intake to do so, talk to your doctor about how to ensure you get enough daily fiber in your diet; and which carbs you can still eat that will promote weight loss and good health.

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