

Five types of carbohydrate

Nowadays, carbohydrates have something of a bad press. People often forget that there are lots of different carbohydrates and that they are an important part of a healthy diet. When you think of carbohydrates, pasta, pizza, bread or rice are probably the first foods that spring to mind. However, there are many more carbohydrates out there, each with their own different properties. We explain these differences below.



Mono-saccharides

Fruit, honey, soft drinks, fruit juice, smoothies, dried fruit



Di-saccharides

Bread, granulated sugar, dairy products, confectionery, malt beer



Oligo-saccharides

Soft fruit, legumes, soybeans, crispbread



Poly-saccharides

Potatoes, wholemeal bread, rice, pasta



Fibre

Wheat bran, cabbage, broccoli, beans, peas, quinoa, oats, apples



- Provide rapid energy
- Useful in treating hypoglycaemia



- Excessive consumption can lead to obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease
- Provide a short-lived energy boost



- Useful in treating short-term hypoglycaemia (dizziness) or a 'sugar crash' during sport
- Help to boost concentration for example, during an exam



- Keep you full for longer
- Contain a lot of fibre
- Keep blood sugar levels constant



- May cause bloating
- Excessive consumption is converted into fat



- A long-lasting source of energy
- Important for a balanced diet



- Important for digestion
- Helps eliminate waste from the body
- Reduces the risk of obesity
- Leaves you feeling fuller



- Cannot be digested
- Delivers small amounts of energy



- Keeps you full for longer
- Useful for healthy weight management