

Carb Confusion

By: Dr. Kim Lazarus, chiropractor & co-owner of Los Alamos Fitness Center

I grew up figure skating and by the time I was old enough to leave home I wanted to join the Ice Capades. There were conditions of course. My skating ability was one, but harder yet was the issue of body weight. In 1977, a person's physique was measured by what the scale said. Fortunately, today, body composition testing is a much truer measurement for determining a person's fitness level.

When I passed the try-out and was called to come join the show but I had to lose ten pounds. I decided to join a diet center and let them help me. The diet consisted of 1000 calories per day, B-12 shots in the rear end, and daily weigh ins. I lost the weight but I was weak.

In America weight management is so controversial. The Atkins Diet, the South Beach Diet, the Blood Type Diet, the Cabbage Soup Diet, the Zone Diet, etc. This list is so numerous that it leaves us confused. And what about those carbohydrates?

I grew up in the early era of carbo-loading. Meaning that someone gave me permission to eat a lot of carbs. I wasn't getting ready to run a marathon but someone said it was okay to eat those carbs and I did. I gained weight. Most of us could admit that we have been carb junkies at some time in our lives.

What are carbohydrates? When I think of carbohydrates I think of any foods that contain flour or sugar. These carbs are known as simple carbs and lend themselves to weight gain if managed inappropriately. Complex carbs are those that are slower releasing like whole grains and potatoes. These types of carb are less likely to be stored as fat.

The current diet obsession in America is cutting carbs. An entire section in the grocery store is dedicated to carb control foods. Many people believe that if they cut down on their carbs they can eat as much fat and calories as they want. Cutting down on simple carbs can assist with weight loss if a reduction in calories and fats occur simultaneously.

To lose weight a person needs to consume fewer calories than they burn. Along with counting carbs also be aware of the calories you are consuming.

How many carbohydrates should a person eat per day? When I was training for a bodybuilding show, my trainer suggested that I consume 40% protein, 40% carbohydrates, and 20% fats per day. If I take in 2000 calories a day, then this would be 800 calories of carbs, 800 calories of protein, and 400 calories of fat.

I ate lean proteins, complex carbohydrates, and good fats. Good fats being the unsaturated type that contain omega 3 and 6 fatty acids.

Researchers from Tufts-New England Medical Center in Boston compared four popular weight loss diets, (Atkins, Dean Ornish, Weight Watchers, and The Zone). The findings

from the study stated that there was little difference in weight loss among the four diets. The people that complied the best lost the most weight. Weight loss came down to compliance and cutting down on calories.

Calorie reduction does count when it comes to weight loss. So when you are beginning your carbohydrate reduction diet, keep in mind the amount of fat and calories you are consuming. This truly will make a difference in your success.

Losing weight is not about dieting. It is about changing your lifestyle. Don't think you can lose that weight and then go back to your bad habits. The weight won't stay off. This is referred to yo-yo dieting. Think of these new habits as healthy ones. So embrace this new lifestyle and enjoy looking and feeling healthier.

For more information on the subject matter in this article you can contact Dr. Lazarus at the Los Alamos Fitness Center at 662-5232.