Wellness Wednesday

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The Surprising Carb That Could Help You Live Longer

Yes—some carbs are actually good for you. Here's what to know.

For years, carbohydrates have been blamed for everything from weight gain to sluggish energy. But new research is challenging that reputation—and it turns out that the right kinds of carbs may actually help you live a longer, healthier life.

A recent study published in JAMA Network Open followed more than 47,000 women over 30 years. The big takeaway? Women who ate more high-quality carbohydrates—especially those rich in dietary fiber—were more likely to enjoy what researchers called "healthy aging."

So, what does that really mean—and how can you eat for better health and longevity? Let's break it down.

Not All Carbs Are Created Equal

Carbohydrates are a key source of energy for your body and brain. But there's a big difference between refined carbs and high-quality carbs:

Refined Carbs

These are processed and stripped of nutrients and fiber.
Common sources include:

- White bread
- Sugary snacks
- Soda
- Pastries

Refined carbs are quickly digested, leading to blood sugar spikes and crashes. Over time, they've been linked to chronic health issues like diabetes, heart disease, and obesity.

High-Quality Carbs

These come from whole foods and are packed with nutrients and fiber.

Examples include:

- Whole grains (quinoa, brown rice, oats)
- Fruits (apples, berries, bananas)
- Vegetables (leafy greens, carrots, broccoli)
- Legumes (beans, lentils, chickpeas)

These types of carbs support long-term health, help regulate digestion, and keep you feeling fuller, longer.

What the Study Found

In the study, only 7.8% of participants met the criteria for "healthy aging"—which meant they lived to at least age 70 with no major chronic illnesses, good mental health, and full physical function.

But those who ate more high-fiber, whole-food carbs had significantly better outcomes. According to lead author Dr. Andres Ardisson Korat, it wasn't just about eating carbs—it was about choosing the right ones.

Key finding: The quality of carbohydrates matters more than the quantity. Fiber was the standout nutrient linked to healthy aging.

Why Fiber Is So Powerful

Dietary fiber is a type of carbohydrate your body can't digest—but your gut loves it. Here's what fiber-rich foods can do for your health:

- **Promote digestion:** Helps keep things moving and supports a healthy gut microbiome.
- **Reduce disease risk:** Linked to lower risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers.
- **Support weight management:** Helps you feel fuller for longer and may reduce calorie intake.
- **Boost mental well-being:** A healthy gut may support brain health, mood, and focus.

Simple Ways to Add More Fiber to Your Day

Adding more fiber-rich carbs doesn't have to mean a big diet overhaul. Small changes can make a big impact:

- **Start your day smart:** Choose oatmeal, whole-grain toast, or a high-fiber cereal.
- **Snack wisely:** Grab fruit, veggies, or a handful of nuts instead of chips or sweets.
- **Upgrade your meals:** Add beans to salads, lentils to soups, or quinoa as a side dish.
- **Check labels:** Look for breads and snacks with whole grains listed first and at least 3g of fiber per serving.

Healthy Aging Is About the Long Game

Choosing high-quality carbs is just one piece of the puzzle. Pair your fiber-rich diet with other healthy habits for best results:

- **Stay active:** Regular movement supports metabolism, heart health, and energy.
- **Manage stress:** Mindfulness, sleep and self-care all support healthy aging.
- **Balance your plate:** Include lean proteins, healthy fats, and lots of colorful fruits and veggies.

It's time to move past the fear of carbs and focus on what really matters: carb quality. Whole, fiber-rich carbs can fuel your body, support your gut, and may even help you live longer.

So there is no need to cut carbs, just choose them wisely. With a few simple swaps, you can enjoy delicious food while boosting your fiber intake and supporting your long-term health.

Grilled Banana Boats

INGREDIENTS

- 2 bananas, the riper the better!
- 2 tablespoons dark chocolate chips
- 2 tablespoons mini marshmallows
- 2 tablespoons chopped almonds

Optional Toppings

The beauty of grilled banana boats lies in their versatility. Here are some optional toppings to consider:

- **Nut Butters:** Drizzle with almond butter, peanut butter, or Nutella for added richness.
- **Fresh Fruits:** Add berries or sliced strawberries for a refreshing twist.
- **Spices:** A sprinkle of cinnamon or nutmeg can enhance the flavor profile.
- **Syrups:** Drizzle with chocolate syrup, caramel, or honey for extra sweetness.
- **Graham Cracker Crumbs:** For a s'mores-inspired version, add crumbled graham crackers.

Grilled banana boats are the easiest way to wow your crowd—ripe bananas stuffed with chocolate and marshmallows, melted to gooey perfection. Whether you're camping or grilling at home, this sweet treat steals the show.

The Magic of Grilled Bananas

Grilling bananas brings out their natural sweetness and transforms them into a warm, comforting dessert. When grilled, the bananas become soft and creamy, creating a perfect base for a variety of toppings. The combination of heat and the right ingredients results in a dessert that is reminiscent of both s'mores and banana splits, making it a crowd-pleaser for all ages.

Why Choose Grilled Bananas?

- **Quick Preparation:** Grilled banana boats can be ready in just 10 minutes, making them an ideal last-minute dessert.
- **Minimal Cleanup:** Cooking in foil means less mess and no need to heat up the kitchen.
- **Customizable:** You can tailor the toppings to suit your taste, making it a versatile dessert option.

Nutrition Information

Serving: 1 banana boat, Calories: 189 kcal, Carbohydrates: 36.5 g, Protein: 3.5 g, Fat: 6.5 g, Saturated Fat: 2 g, Sodium: 3.5 mg, Fiber: 7.5 g, Sugar: 16.5 g



INSTRUCTIONS

How to Make It

Making grilled banana boats is easy! Follow these simple steps to create your delicious dessert:

1. **Prepare the Bananas:**
   - Slice each banana lengthwise, being careful not to cut all the way through. Gently open the banana to create a pocket for the fillings.

2. **Stuff the Bananas:**
   - Fill the banana pocket with chocolate chips, mini marshmallows, and chopped nuts. Feel free to mix and match toppings based on your preferences.

3. **Wrap in Foil:**
   - Place each stuffed banana on a piece of aluminum foil. Fold the foil over the banana, crimping the edges to seal it tightly.

4. **Grill the Banana Boats:**
   - Preheat your grill to low heat (around 400°F). Place the foil-wrapped bananas on the grill and close the lid. Grill for about 10 minutes, or until the bananas are soft and the chocolate is melted.

5. **Serve and Enjoy:**
   - Carefully unwrap the foil (it will be hot!) and serve the grilled banana boats warm. Enjoy them as they are, or add a scoop of ice cream on top for an indulgent treat.

Reference: SkinnyTaste

https://www.mensjournal.com/health-fitness/total-body-workout-abs-core-circuit#gid=ci02b8d0a0600f2605&pid=raised-knee-pullup

Featured Exercise

Side Plank Row with Resistance Bands

HOW TO DO IT:

- **Setup:** Begin by anchoring a resistance band at a height that aligns with your shoulder when you are in a side plank position.
- **Positioning:** Lie on your side with your legs extended and stacked on top of each other. Support your body with your lower forearm, ensuring your elbow is directly beneath your shoulder.
- **Engage Your Core:** Lift your hips off the ground, creating a straight line from your head to your feet. Engage your core muscles to maintain stability.
- **Grip the Band:** With your top hand, grasp the resistance band, ensuring there is enough tension. Adjust your distance from the anchor point to modify the resistance.
- **Perform the Row:** Pull the band towards your body, keeping your elbow close to your side. Focus on squeezing your shoulder blades together as you row.
- **Return to Start:** Slowly extend your arm back to the starting position while maintaining your side plank.

THE BENEFITS:

The Side Plank Row with a resistance band is a powerhouse move that blends core control with upper body strength. It fires up your obliques while working your shoulders, back, and arms—giving you a full-body challenge in one efficient exercise.

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Regular exercise can help you control your weight, reduce your risk of heart disease, and strengthen your bones and muscles. But if it's been awhile since you've exercised and you have health issues or concerns, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise routine.

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