



The good news: carbs are here to stay. The bad: we need to update our attitude if we want to heal ourselves and our progeny.

Sugar is the worst addiction. When rats were given the choice of morphine and sugar, they went for the sugar. Sugar hits our dopamine receptors, which are feel-good and rewarding. Sugar is the first addiction—it is present in mothers’ milk; and most childhoods are about sugar. Sugar is added and abused to balance out the bitter and sour—in food and in life. Unlike alcohol or drugs it is a part of the healthy foods we require for optimal health.

Starches are chains of sugars, and require more digestion than the simpler sugars found in many foods. As will be seen, their relationship to each other and to time may be an important missing factor in many chronic diseases.

Evolution, Genes and Science

There is huge disagreement between the various camps on the role of carbs in our diet. The Vegan camp argues that with proper preparation, fruits, roots, grains, legumes, nuts and seeds (in somewhat decreasing order of carb content) are an excellent source of nutrients and are safer for the individual and the environment. The Paleo or Caveman school argues that the large consumption of carbs began with agriculture only 10,000 years ago, and that we have not evolved sufficiently to handle this change. The vegans counter that the modern brain and its advances began with this change, and that epigenetic⁴ modulation enables us to change our diet this way. The Paleo camp redirects by citing the world-wide obesity epidemic, its consequences and cost, and the power of the food, beverage and pharmaceutical industries to sway research and policy, protecting their huge profits from cheap foods, drinks and chronic medications. The optimal meal plan for an individual may vary from their identical twin, let alone other members of their family or species. No amount of population research can determine an individual’s optimal plan, nor are there tests that can accurately predict which foods an individual can or cannot eat. The high false positive and negative rate of “allergy” testing for foods render such findings suggestive at best. Fortunately, the sciences of nutrition and physiology enable us to formulate an approach that can satisfy many camps (see below).

Good Carbs, Bad Carbs, Ratios, Substitutes

Robert Atkins gets the credit for first identifying the risk of excessive carbohydrates as early as the 1950’s, during the dawn of “fat and cholesterol phobia.” His methods worked, but were overshadowed by the excesses that his diet recommended, such as huge amounts of meat and cheese. Recent views emphasize the importance of certain fats. These include the essential omega oils and even the fats in eggs which carry essential vitamins. Likewise, certain carbs, such as ribose and the sugars in proteo-glycans are necessary for signaling, structure and optimal health.

There is growing awareness of the toxicity of fructose (fruit sugar), especially the type chemically created from corn. However, excess fruit such as juice and morning smoothies have similar negative effects. The fruits of today are not those of 100, 1000, or 10,000 years ago. Robert Lustig MD is a pioneer in this area.

The Zone diet of the 1990’s promoted a maximum of 30-40% carbs in the diet. It made sense in its moderation, but did not quell the tide of obesity. High protein diets brought the ratio of carbs as low as 20% without sustainable benefit.

Sugar substitutes from saccharin to aspartame to stevia and

xylitol create a “sweet deficit” when the brain doesn’t see the sugar in the blood it has been promised by the tongue. Some research shows long-term weight gain; none show weight loss.

Time-of-Day and Seasonal Variations

If we look at food as a set of signals to the brain, what and when we eat can be seen as a computer program. For example an abundance of carbs might signal summer and encourage fat storage. Affluent countries don’t vary foods by season, which may confuse the metabolism. Artificial lighting and other manmade electromagnetic fields have only been around for 100 years; which are affecting our bio-rhythms³.

When we eat can have a major effect on digestion and health.

As a simple example, most people experience trouble sleeping after a large meal. The typical carby breakfast of cereal, orange juice and sweetened coffee with pastry or fruit smoothie are known to cause problems with brain and energy functions. Schools are slowly limiting soda and candy for lunch, giving up blood money to enable learning in the afternoon.

Modern Carbohydrate Issues
1. Too many or too few (wrong percentage of diet)
2. Wrong types (such as fructose) due to breeding, processing and GMO’s.
3. Wrong times of day
4. Not varied with season
5. Combined with proteins and fats
6. Artificial sweeteners that confuse the brain and signaling

Food Combining

“Natural hygiene” of the 1800’s argues that the digestion of fruits, starches, proteins and fat require different tools (enzymes), and pH. Fruit digestion is quick and can precede a meal by 1 hr or follow by 4 hours. Fat, protein and starch digestion are slow. A sweet dessert following a protein meal can cause improper digestion, with downstream results of malabsorption, deficiencies, allergy, inflammation (gut and elsewhere), and therefore chronic diseases. In clinical experience, up to 80% of patients will have some sort of food combining problem. Typical problematic meals include steak and potatoes, burger on a bun with fries and shake, chicken and rice, or corn, bread or pasta with protein meals.

Moving Forward

Individuals can determine their optimal meal plan by altering the types and timing of foods using an organized strategy. The participation of an experienced practitioner can be helpful, or may be required when certain conditions exist, such as diabetes, yeast/candida infection and past addictions. Related changes including nutraceuticals, sleep-wake cycle, exercise, and stress reduction may be a pre-requisite or coexisting part of an overall plan to achieve optimal health.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

1. This educational material may not be used to influence medical care without supervision by a licensed practitioner.
2. These contents are ©2015 by Michael Cheikin MD and may not be reproduced in any form without express written permission.
3. Dr. Cheikin’s website has related articles on bio-rhythms, biological clocks, weight loss resistance, fatigue and many others.
4. Epigenes are the software of the genes and modulate gene expression based on lifestyle and experience of the grandparents and parents.

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