

## Macronutrients – Understanding Carbohydrates, Proteins and Fats.

We have all heard the terms carbohydrates, proteins and fats but how many of us really know what they are and what foods fit into each category. In order to have a good understanding of our dietary intake we need to know what each of the three macronutrients are;

Carbohydrates: These are the most important and readily used source of energy for our bodies and also help to digest proteins. Most people think of breads, rice and pasta when they hear the word Carbohydrates without realising that other foods fit into this category such as, fruits, vegetables and sugars.

Proteins: Protein is generally derived from the meat we eat. All forms of meat will have a percentage of protein and some are better than others. Protein is used to build, maintain and repair muscle tissue and is especially important when trying to build lean muscle. Good sources of protein include; eggs, fish, chicken, turkey and lean beef.

Fats (or oils): Fat is most energy dense nutrient of the three macronutrients. A pound of fat contains approximately 4000 calories, while a pound of carbohydrates or proteins contains only about 1800. Fat is, saturated (bad), unsaturated (better) or polyunsaturated (best). Saturated fat is the most likely to stay in the system and can lead to high cholesterol levels. Experts suggest that of the fat intake, about two thirds be polyunsaturated.

A diet containing 50-60% carbohydrates, 20-30% proteins and 20-30% fats is sufficient to meet the average person's needs. Further to this, if you follow the Australian Governments guidelines of eating a variety of the five main food groups and leading an active lifestyle you should find that you will feel more energetic and may even lose a few kilos.

The Five Main Food Groups

Breads, Cereals, Rice, Pasta, Noodles	Vegetables, Legumes	Fruit	Milk, Yogurt, Cheese	Meat, Fish, Poultry, Eggs, NutsL
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Finally, don't be lured into thinking that you can consume as much 99% fat free food as you want. It is a common mistake for people to believe that if they eat little or no fat, that they won't put on weight. At the end of the day, weight loss/gain is about calories consumed vs. calories burned and many of the low fat foods contain just as many calories via sugar as their full fat counterparts. Enjoy Fitness!

The information contained in this article is to be used as a guide only. If you plan to undertake an exercise program you should first consult your medical practitioner and fitness professional.