

Questioning the idea of good, bad carbs

By Anahad O'Connor, New York Times

The idea that all carbohydrates are not created equal has become the foundation of many popular diets. Some argue that foods like white bread and potatoes, which have a high so-called glycemic index because they spike blood sugar and insulin, should be avoided in favor of more healthful carbs like whole grains and non-starchy vegetables.

But rigorous new research from the National Institutes of Health suggests that for people who already follow a healthful diet, the glycemic index may not be very important.

The study, published in JAMA, found that diets containing low glycemic foods did not lower cholesterol and other heart disease risk factors compared to diets containing mostly high glycemic foods. Nutrition experts argue that low glycemic diets improve blood sugar levels and insulin sensitivity. But the new study found that low glycemic diets actually made insulin sensitivity worse.

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