

Get REAL Nutrition Option 3: Carb-Sensitive Method

Some people fall into a group dubbed as “carbohydrate sensitive,” or CS for short. These people face very real chemical and hormonal changes upon eating carbohydrates. Often they are called “sugar addicts” because of this sensitivity. For CS people, one bite of a simple carbohydrate sets off a series of real reactions in the body. In a nutshell, the carb consumption increases hunger and decreases the sense of fullness that non-CS people feel. It actually produces a compulsion to eat.

Eating carbs initially produces a pleasurable feeling by activating pleasure centers in the brain. But this is followed by an uneasy feeling, weariness, and an urge to snack more due to the body’s attempt to recreate the pleasurable feeling. For some unknown reason, CS people accumulate an excess of insulin that signals the body to conserve energy. They actually become hungrier with each carb-rich meal or snack they consume. The body will then begin to store the excess insulin in the form of fat.

Get REAL Note: For CS people, the carbohydrate-insulin/carbohydrate-serotonin connection has malfunctioned. That connection is the basis for Nutrition Option 3.

Have you ever wondered how some people seem to have such restraint? They can eat a little bit of some tasty dish and then feel full and push away from the table. If you are like me, this seems like some kind of magical witchcraft! But in reality, it is less magical, more chemical. Brain chemistry is affected when signals are not sent and received normally.

For CS people, serotonin levels do not rise sufficiently. As a result, the feeling of being satisfied is never delivered. This leads the CS person to overeat and begins a cycle of craving more carbohydrates. The constant “needing something more” feeling can never quite be squelched. This contributes to weight gain and continued feelings of hunger.

The production of insulin will continue to rise with each subsequent consumption of carbohydrates. Larger quantities of carbs may be consumed more frequently without any increase in satisfaction. For people facing this situation, food becomes the enemy. They become frustrated with their efforts and this can lead to feelings of self loathing for not being able to control hunger. Often they would rather not eat at all than start to eat and then not want to stop.

Get REAL Note: The body burns carbohydrates for energy. Take in more than you can burn, and it will be stored as fat.

Eating numerous high-carbohydrate foods by themselves often leads people to feel unsatisfied. Much of this has to do with blood sugar. Carbohydrates will spike your blood sugar, giving you a temporary boost. What goes up must come down, though, and that means the fast spike will result in a fast crash.

When we are feeling low and sluggish from a sugar crash, what do we crave? We tend to crave more carbohydrates or sugars to recreate the high. This causes a cycle of mood swings and overindulgence.

Carbohydrates stimulate insulin secretion. Insulin is the body’s means of lowering blood sugar. Too much insulin causes you to crave more carbs in an attempt to elevate blood sugar to a therapeutic level. Insulin turns excess carbohydrates into fat! By monitoring carbohydrate consumption, you can better control your insulin production. Maintaining insulin at a balanced level improves your ability to burn excess body fat.

Whether what you just ate will be used for immediate energy or stored as body fat depends on the timing and amount of your intake. Dietary fat and protein, on the other hand, do not stimulate insulin secretion. Protein is an important component in any eating plan. Your body uses protein for essential daily functioning. It helps you build muscle and sustains your blood sugar and insulin levels. Protein consumption can reduce your cravings and increase fullness.

The body releases insulin in two phases:

- **The preload phase** begins within minutes of eating carbohydrates. During this phase, the pancreas releases a fixed amount of insulin, no matter how many carbs are consumed. This is determined by the amount of carbs consumed in earlier meals.
- **The second phase** takes place about seventy-five to ninety minutes after eating. It is dependent on the number of carbs consumed during that eating episode. The body recognizes whether the first phase was sufficient to handle the current consumption. It will adjust insulin production to meet the current need.

CS people tend to sustain a higher insulin level in the blood. The reason for this is not fully understood. It seems to coincide with a decreased number and sensitivity of insulin receptor sites. Too much insulin in the blood for too long causes the cells to change in such a way that less insulin is able to enter, and there is a decrease in the actual number of receptor sites. Subsequently, this causes your body to stop responding to insulin (insulin resistance) and instead grab every calorie it can and deposit it as fat.

This insulin-resistant state means that no matter how little you eat, you will gradually gain weight. At the same time, your cells cannot absorb the glucose they need, so they signal your brain that you need more carbohydrates or sugars. The result is persistent food cravings. The challenge is to determine whether you are carbohydrate sensitive.

Common CS symptoms:

- ✓ You feel tired or fatigued in the middle of the day.
- ✓ You start to have cravings during midafternoon, between lunch and dinner.
- ✓ You crave sweets about an hour or two after eating a full meal, including dessert.
- ✓ You find it more difficult to control eating after a carb-rich breakfast than after having only coffee or nothing at all.
- ✓ You find it is easier to not eat most of the day than to eat small meals throughout the day.
- ✓ You find it hard to stop eating sweets, starches, or snack foods once you start.
- ✓ You often feel like you could eat another whole meal after you have just finished one.
- ✓ When feeling down, a sugary snack makes you feel better.
- ✓ If potatoes, bread, pasta, or dessert are offered, you often skip the vegetables and salad.
- ✓ You become sleepy and lethargic after a large, starchy meal.
- ✓ You experience unexplained feelings of anxiety or anger.
- ✓ You have an unusually heightened emotional state.

These are just a few of the things that many CS people experience. If you relate to only a few of them, then it is likely not CS. But if almost every one of these characteristics seems like you, there is a good chance CS is the problem. For you, eating three average meals and two snacks with unbalanced carbs can cause more harm than good. It would constantly trigger your insulin load to be activated, making you feel hungry all the time and never satisfied.

If you are carb sensitive, you need to eat in a way that stops the cycle of excess insulin production. When carbs are eaten less frequently, less insulin will be produced. The body will have a decreased tendency to store the excess calories in its fat cells and will be more capable of breaking down stored fat.

Get REAL Point: Carbohydrate sensitivity seems to have two main issues: the *frequency* and *duration* of carbohydrate eating episodes.

Consuming carbohydrates during a limited period of time appears to decrease the usual overproduction of insulin. When carbs are consumed within a single hour, the CS person experiences less hunger. This is because of the body's limited ability to produce insulin at any one time. If the consumption time is limited, the insulin production time is too. This allows the body to break the excess insulin cycle.

CS Eating Solution A: Low-Carb

- Eat two low-carb (LC) meals daily. (Carbs trigger cravings, remember?) Forgo any food or beverage that contains more than 4 grams of carbs per serving. Save fruit for your other meal.
- Eat one “anything goes” (AG) meal daily. (Really—anything!) Remember, be sensible and don't binge. Allow yourself those carbs you have been craving, while also rounding out your daily nutritional needs.

Get REAL Note: The AG meal must be consumed within sixty consecutive minutes to avoid the excess insulin production cycle.

- Whatever meal you choose for your AG meal, it should consistently stay at the same time of day. The meals could occasionally be switched for special occasions, but then go back to your normal meal times.
- Have one LC snack. Forgo any food or beverage that contains more than 4 grams of carbs per serving. Save fruit for your AG meal.

If you are carb sensitive, this way of eating will help you control your constant cravings without feeling deprived. You will have to be disciplined for two meals. With a little planning, you can do it! You have the AG meal to keep you from feeling deprived.

Remember, you are human—you will have deviations from your plan. Make a point of getting back to your routine as soon as you can, always keeping in mind that your cravings are directly related to your last carb consumption. Give yourself an advantage. Eat to control your CS food feelings.

CS Eating Solution B: Pair-to-Balance (P2B)

No matter how effective a plan is, if you won't stick to it, it is worthless. If Solution A seems too restrictive or too difficult to maintain in your REAL situation, I recommend a kinder, softer version. Keeping in mind the goal of controlling cravings caused by a hyperinsulin state, you will use protein to balance meals.

1. Eat a breakfast that includes a balanced protein serving.

2. Eat at least three regularly timed meals with a balanced protein serving (maintain as close to regularly timed as possible, with three to four hours in between).
3. Choose a protein snack or protein/complex carbohydrate combination snack. You have the option to either snack *or* not snack—just maintain the idea of a balanced protein serving every three to four hours. Plan to have available sources on hand.
4. Consider your P2B ratio (7 grams protein to balance 15 grams of carbs).

Don't think of this as a high-protein plan. It is an adequate protein plan. Most CS people do not get enough protein in their natural diet. They tend to not choose those sources when given starchy or sugary options.

Mindful addition of protein to each eating episode is a great place to start. Be extremely cautious of eating a sweet treat alone. This will seem pleasurable at first, but remember that you are carb-sensitive and realize the destructive journey it will lead you on.

Save sweet treats to consume with your meal. Remember, you can eat them—just think about when to eat them and what to eat them with so that you do not begin the cascading spiral of craving and pleasure-food seeking. Understanding how you react differently to carb consumption will make choosing food combinations less difficult and easier to accept. There is REAL chemistry behind those cravings!

CS “Go-To” Snacks and Add-Ins:

- Nuts (any)
- Cheese sticks
- Eggs—hard boiled
- Cottage cheese
- Peanut butter and whole wheat crackers
- Ham/cream cheese rollups
- Meat rollups using low-carb wraps
- Cheese and whole wheat crackers
- V-8 juice
- Meat and cheese on whole wheat crackers
- Protein shakes or bars
- Yogurt
- Peanut butter and apple slices
- Summer sausage
- Milk
- Peanut butter, raisins, and celery
- Beef jerky
- Meat sticks
- Tuna
- Chicken chunks
- Nonstarchy vegetables
- Flax meal (ground flaxseed) as an add-in

Foods That Enhance Total Wellness

Some whole and natural foods can actually promote better health. Our bodies were designed to utilize natural food sources for specific functioning. The body will readily recognize these foods and begin to use them for body functioning. Each food listed below has natural health enhancing properties and benefits. Adding any of them to your diet would be beneficial. For more specific information you can go to: www.mypyramid.gov

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| Whole wheat | Nuts, non-roasted |
| Garlic | Dairy, low-fat |
| Yogurt | Dark Chocolate |
| Butter | Cottage cheese |
| Pomegranate juice | Fish Baked/Boiled |
| Tomato sauce | Salmon |
| Brown rice | Spinach |
| Berries | Beans and Lentils |
| Oatmeal-not cut | Prunes |
| Lean cuts of meat | Egg whites |
| Cheyenne Pepper | Cinnamon |
| Green Tea | Water, non-carbonated |
| Red Wine | Vinegar |
| Tomato juice | Vegetable juice |
| Natural Honey | Lemon |
| Fruit—better fresh | Olive oil-better uncooked |
| Vegetables raw/steamed—better fresh (Choose a variety and those that are brightly colored or deep green) | |

Get REAL Tip: Look at first five ingredients of any nutritional label to see the items *main* value.

Nutrition labels usually list the highest percentage ingredients first. When you see any of the above items you can feel good about the nutritional content. When you see any of ingredients on the next page, you may begin to question its relative nutritional value.

Common Problem Foods and Additives

Foods and additives are metabolized by the body in different ways. Ingesting some of these can cause people to not sense true fullness which can lead to overindulgence. Some foods or additives can also aggravate certain health conditions or do not promote health in general, when taken beyond moderation. Avoiding or greatly limiting foods containing the following is recommended.

- Partially hydrogenated oil
- Hydrogenated oil
- High fructose corn syrup
- Trans fat
- Saturated fat
- Sugars (often ending in ...ose)
- Salt/Sodium
- Artificial Sweeteners
- Margarine
- “Enriched” foods
- “Bleached” foods
- White Flour
- Caffeine
- Artificial colors and dyes
- Carbonation
- Phosphoric acid
- Preservatives/MSG

Get REAL Tip: Take each day as a whole and try to avoid days that your diet is made up of too many substances from the problem list.

By balancing your consumption throughout the day you will feel better about your wellness efforts. By looking at **each day as a whole** you can choose foods to balance what was consumed at earlier eating episodes. Consider the ratio of problem foods and additives to foods that enhance total wellness in your daily diet. In general try to add more enhancers and limit or avoid the potential problem causers. Make your goal to fill in any nutritional gaps at other eating episodes. This is where planning can be very beneficial.