

## **The importance of carbohydrates**

Carbohydrates (or carbs) play just as important a role as protein does as they are anabolic in their own right. Once carbohydrates are ingested your body releases insulin from the pancreas, insulin is one of, if not, the most anabolic hormone in the body (learn more about insulin in the glycemic index section).

In short insulin is a carrier hormone, so if you ingest some protein make sure you have some carbohydrates to go with it as the carbs act as a transporter to shuttle protein, glycogen and fats into muscle tissue and vital organs.

The amount of carbohydrates you will need on a daily basis depends on your metabolism. If you are young or possess a fast metabolic rate then you will need substantial amounts of this nutrient as your body is like a furnace - as soon as you put some food into your mouth your body will metabolise those nutrients and burn them up very quickly. If you are slightly overweight or think you might be carrying too much bodyfat then you may want to watch your intake of carbohydrates. Although carbs are stored and used for energy expenditure, an excess will convert to adipose tissue (fat). At the end of the day all fat is, is stored calories, food that hasn't been utilised for fuel or other functions.

There are no rules when it comes to saying this or that person needs 'x' amount of calories, a lot of it comes down to trial and error as I have found out myself when dieting for bodybuilding competitions. It's down to individual needs. Too little carbs and you will feel lethargic and your muscles will look flat and your strength will be lacking as a result. An excess of carbs will just be converted to bodyfat so it's all about balance.

## **How much carbs?**

There are three different types of metabolism - ectomorph, mesomorph and endomorph - although few people belong solely to one category, instead being a mixture of two or more. To assess your carbohydrate intake from these categories simply select which one you feel defines your body category most accurately.

For the ectomorph I would suggest in the region of 60 - 80 grams of carbs per meal six times daily. For the mesomorph I would suggest 40 - 60 grams per meal and the endomorph around 15 - 30 grams per meal 4 to 5 times daily. Like I said earlier it is all about trial and error so adjust accordingly, give any changes you have made at least a couple of weeks to determine what's happening before making any further adjustments.