

## 2. Carbohydrates

- The term 'Carbohydrate' refers to a wide range of sugars and starches that are found in many different foods.

### *Why are Carbohydrates important?*

- Carbohydrates provide the fuel that keeps your body going.
- Carbohydrates provide the body with energy. Energy is needed to work the muscles that you use for breathing, to keep your heart pumping and to keep you warm.

### *Food Sources of Carbohydrates*

Carbohydrates are found in foods made from cereals (wheat, grain, oats, barley). These foods include bread, pasta and other flour based foods.

### *Types of Carbohydrates*

1. **Simple Carbohydrates:** Simple carbohydrates are simple sugars that have very little nutritional value to the body, and therefore, it's advisable that their consumption be limited to small quantities. Simple carbohydrates are digested by the body more quickly because they have a simple chemical structure. These carbohydrates are also sweet in taste.

## *Simple Carbohydrates*

Simple Carbohydrates are found in foods such as fruits, milk and vegetables



Cake, candy and other refined sugars are simple sugars which lack vitamins, minerals and fiber

2. **Complex Carbohydrates:** Complex carbohydrates are those carbohydrates that are made of three or more sugar molecules linked together. These carbohydrates are found vegetables, nuts, fruits, seeds and grains. Complex carbohydrates take longer for your body to break down than simple ones, which helps to maintain a steady blood sugar level and they keep you fuller for longer.



### ***How much do we need?***

According to the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating (AGHE), teenagers need 6-11 serves of carbohydrates a day. The bulk of this should come from complex carbohydrates.