



## **Carbohydrates and their role in the body.**

Carbohydrates are made up of saccharides or sugar molecules. Some carbohydrates can be as simple as a single molecule (mono-saccharides) like fructose, the sugar found in fruit. Lactose, the sugar in milk is known as a disaccharide and is made of 2 different sugar molecules. These are broken down by the body during the digestion process and provide us with our main energy source, glucose.

There are also oligosaccharides which contain 2-9 different molecules and polysaccharides which are made up of chains of thousands of molecules and are known as or “complex” carbohydrates. These are both more difficult for our gut to digest and provide us with the fibre that keeps our digestive system in good working order.

## **Carbohydrate sources**

We get carbohydrates from the following food groups:

Grains like rice, wheat, barley, rye, oats and corn as well as their products such as pasta, bread, breakfast cereals.

Fruit and vegetables – the list is endless here but anything like potato, sweet potato, bananas which are all starchy carbohydrates that are more easily digested into glucose than things like cabbage, broccoli and fruit with skin on that provides us with the fibre as mentioned above.

Dairy – milk and yoghurt contain lactose but also are considered sources of protein and fats.

Some believe that a low carb diet is the key to success for fat loss but in fact providing that you are consistent with your calories and consume adequate protein, you can be flexible with your carbohydrate and fat intake according to your own preference. Carbohydrates are particularly important when fuelling training as your body needs a readily available fuel source to be able to keep up the intensity throughout your entire session.