

What are the different types of nutrients and why do we need them?

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Nutrients

**Carbohydrates** are a fantastic source of energy, and our bodies main source of fuel, this is usually in the form of glucose. Carbs are divided into ‘simple’ - which can be easily utilised by our bodies, such as sugars, milk products, and glucose syrups - and ‘complex’ - which must be broken down into simple sugars to be utilised within our bodies, such as, starches, including bread, pasta, and rice, and non-starches, including vegetables, fruits, pulses, and wholegrain cereals.

**Lipids** is the scientific tern for fats, they are a source of energy for the body and are essential to our body’s health, they are divided into four types:

* Monounsaturated: they are usually liquid at room temperature and are healthy fats. Such as, olive oil and avocados.
* Polyunsaturated: they are usually liquid at room temperature and are healthy fats. Such as, oily fish, nuts, and sunflower oil.
* Saturated: they are usually solid at room temperature, and eating too much is bad for our health. Such as dairy and fatty meats
* Trans fats: they are usually solid at room temperature, and eating too much is bad for our health. Such as margarine and ready meals

**Macronutrients:** they need to be consumed in larger quantities. They are called both energy-giving foods, which are those high in carbohydrates and fats, and growing foods, which are high in protein.

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**Proteins** are vital for tissue growth and repair, immune functioning, and they supply energy when carbs are not available. Protein is found within animal products, such as meat, fish, and dairy products, and plant products, such as, lentils, nuts, beans, and seeds.



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**Minerals** are essential for bone growth and strength, as well as maintenance of the immune system, and nervous system. Some examples include:

* Calcium - found in milk, canned fish, and broccoli
* Iron - found in brown rice, meat, and watercress
* Zinc - found in cheese, and shellfish
* Potassium - found in fruit, pulses, and meat
* Iodine - found in yoghurt, eggs, fish, and sea vegetables

**Vitamins** are essential for bone growth, the immune system and metabolism. They best sources of vitamins are fruits and vegetables. Some examples include:

* Vitamin A - found in, dairy, oily fish, and yellow fruit
* Vitamin B - found in, vegetables, and wholegrain cereals
* Vitamin C - found in, citrus fruits, and broccoli
* Vitamin D - found in, oily fish, eggs, and fortified cereal

**Micronutrients**: they need to be eaten in smaller quantities, but are essential to health, because of this they are called protective foods. They include vitamins and minerals.