

# Eating whole grains could help lower diabetes risk

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A new analysis of more than 200,000 people found that eating high-quality carbohydrates, such as whole grains, was associated with a lower risk for type 2 diabetes.

"High intake of carbohydrates has been suggested to be associated with a

higher risk of type 2 diabetes," said research team leader Kim Braun, Ph.D., from Erasmus University Medical Center and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. "We looked at whether this effect is different for high-quality carbohydrates and low-quality carbohydrates, which include refined grains, sugary foods and potatoes."

Braun will present the new findings as part of [Nutrition 2020 Live Online](#), a virtual conference hosted by the American Society for Nutrition (ASN).

Braun and colleagues analyzed data from three studies that followed [health professionals](#) in the U.S. over time. These included 69,949 women from the Nurses' Health Study, 90,239 women from the Nurses' Health Study 2 and 40,539 men from the Health Professionals Follow-up Study. Collectively, the studies represented over 4 million years of follow-up, during which almost 12,000 cases of type 2 diabetes cases were documented.

The researchers observed a [lower risk](#) of type 2 diabetes when high-quality carbohydrates replaced calories from saturated [fatty acids](#), [monounsaturated fats](#), polyunsaturated fats, animal protein and vegetable protein. They also found that replacing low-quality carbohydrates with saturated fats, but not with other nutrients, was associated with a lower risk of type 2 diabetes.

"These results highlight the importance of distinguishing between carbohydrates from high- and low- quality sources when examining diabetes risk," said Braun. "Conducting similar studies in people with various socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities and age will provide insight into how applicable these findings are for other groups."

Provided by American Society for Nutrition

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