

SHOW NOTES:

For today's episode of RecoverMe podcast, Warren Willey, doctor of Osteopathic medicine and director of medical weight loss will answer the question, Are Carbs Bad for You? Listen as Warren discuss the reasons why carbs are not really bad for us but not essential also.

TRANSCRIPTION:

[00:41](#)

Hello. Warren Willey here again with RecoverMe podcast. RecoverMe is a medicine that meets you where you are. Remember, we can't change your stressors, but we can certainly help your body in mind deal with it better. That's the RecoverMe philosophy. Looking at life, not through skewed eyes, but with open eyes and really trying to understand what's the best thing for me as an individual to keep me healthy. We really focus on individual based studies. Study of one, the n of one if you will, versus population based studies to give you some general ideas on how to treat numbers but totally missed the boat when it comes to you. So today's podcast is going to be short because it's kind of an introduction to some rather lengthy ones that I've already recorded, but we're doing this one out first because I want to clarify some stuff.

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It seems that Ketogenic diets are so popular now that I can't keep up with the emails I'm getting about Ketogenic supplements, the importance of Ketosis. Facebook seems to be covered with all these wonderful weight loss before and after pictures when people doing Ketogenic diets and in general. Again, these are nothing new and I covered this in great detail in a podcast called Ketosis. There, Ketosis Ketogenetic diets had been around since the 1800. We knew about them treating childhood epilepsy disorders for years. I have a diet book dated 1901 that talks about low carb dieting and the importance in how to help you. So it's not necessarily a new thing. It's comes in fads. There's a lot of research on it, but what it does bring it up and what I do hear way too much of and that is carbohydrates are bad and that's a problem because anytime anyone outlaws or criminalizes a macronutrient, we have issues. Now, the American dietetics association and all of our wonderful artists out there, they're awesome.

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They do different people, but really their training, they've been taught to criminalize fat and to keep protein minimum and really focus on carbohydrates, so I thought we'd do a brief and quick little podcast on our carbohydrates bad. Are they? Are they needed for energy? Are they the cause of fatness out there and then we're going to answer a very important question at the end and that is are they the best tasting

macronutrient? So we'll cover that in some detail in a minute here, but why don't we dive in to understanding are carbohydrates bad? Well first we need a lot of history behind that. It seems that carbohydrates are the center of the world for the standard dietetic people out there. Their diets are, if you look at the old food pyramid or now the food plate or all these ridiculous symbols on how much and what you should eat, it's all based on agricultural based financing in Washington, and that is the majority of your food should be carbohydrate based.

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That is a money issue, not necessarily a physiological issue. This is back to why I mentioned earlier these broad base public recommendations do not necessarily apply to you. I tell people all the time when they read a study, "Hey doc, this says this could be bad for me." The first thing I asked him, "were you in that study? Did they account for genetics in that study? Did they account for your activity level? Did they account for your stressors? Did they account for your emotions? Do they account for your physical well being? Do they account for your mental health? Did they account for the rotten day you had at work because your boss is a jerk? No." So you gotta look at this, and this is the whole purpose of the RecoverMe medicine philosophy is how does this affect me? What do I do?

[04:30](#)

Do I need 55 to 60 percent of my diet to be carbohydrate based? There's interesting, and I won't get into great detail on this because again, I cover it in more and other podcasts, but if you look at a lot of the nutritional research, pre World War II, they were really focusing on macronutrients. They weren't focusing on fat loss and fat being the bad guy. Fat didn't get criminalized until the 60s and 70s starting by one guy named Ancel Keys. He was an Md that published the six country followed by the seven country study. And really, really that was the start of fat causing heart disease and all these other problems. It was terrible studies. They would never pass today's mustard. But they really did a lot to criminalize fat and carbohydrates at the same time in the 50s and 60s, we have the 05:21 [inaudible] really growing and becoming a powerful money-based influence in Washington and we're starting to push out fat bad, carbs good, have more carbohydrates, have less fat, and you won't have heart disease and you won't get that.

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When we know by the mid 70s when they're using high fructose corn syrup due to a number of sugar tariffs, fat had been officially criminalized by then look at our obesity curve in America. It skyrocketed. Now I'm not blaming just on carbohydrates or that. I'm just telling you why some people are so convinced that carbohydrates are bad, they're not, and

we're going to talk about that. There's no such thing as a bad food. There is no such thing as a bad macronutrient. There's just bad diets and bad lifestyles and there's bad stressors and there's bad hormonal responses to food based on the individual. There's so many variables involved that just blaming a macronutrient is not only not very scientific, but it's flat out stupid. So we shouldn't do that, so carbohydrates were really professed and push forward back in those timeframes. Now let's talk about the macronutrients real quick.

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Let's talk about essential versus nonessential and then bring in semi essential, which is so important. An essential nutrient is a nutrient you need for survival. Okay? You need protein to survive. You need fat to survive. You can live without carbohydrates. Carbohydrates are not an essential nutrient and that doesn't make them bad. Your body doesn't need them. It can make sugar out of protein sources. It's a process called Gluconeogenesis, Gluco for sugar, Glucose, Neo, new genesis or production of from a non original source. So Gluconeogenesis takes protein, turns into sugar, feeds the brain, feeds the kidneys, feeds red blood cells. Those are the three arrogance. Absolutely have to have sugar and you're okay. You don't need carbohydrates. There's plenty of a historical documents as well as communities throughout the world that had no carbohydrates. They ate, I like to think of the Alaskans, I think they're into an Indians.

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Forgive me if I said that wrong or I got the wrong name there, but they lived on whale and seal, blubber and meat and were fine. Healthy, no heart disease and cancers. Lean mean fighting machines until Mcdonald's came in. We won't go down that road. But fat and protein are essential. Carbs are not essential. Now I could argue carbs may be essential as long as protein requirements aren't met, but if you're eating adequate protein, that's why we start in the RecoverMe philosophy when we help people develop eating plans, we start with, okay, how much protein do you need? Then we go to, okay, what's your activity level so we can determine carbohydrates and then the rest we put in fat as fat. So carbohydrates are semi essential, so you don't need them to survive, but they certainly improve your quality of life if you're doing various activities, which we'll cover in a minute here.

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Let me cover just some of the popular diets out there as to how many grams of carbohydrates they suggest, and I always use grams. I'm not a big percentage guy and that's not because a percentage is ticked me off when I'm helping my sixth grader do his math homework. It's because it's harder to understand. If you really look, if I tell you to do a 70 percent, if

I'm telling you to do a Ketogenic diet, for example, I tell you, do 70 to 80 percent fat and 20 to 30 percent protein. That really doesn't tell you much. Oh, well it doesn't tell you enough. So I use grams. So talking in terms of grams, a Ketogenic Diet has less than 0, 0.5 grams per pound or one gram per kilogram recommended. That's a rough estimate. For a moderate, or what we call low carb diet. Not a ketogenic diet, but a low carb diet. We may be at one gram of carbohydrates per pound or two grams per kilogram. For a typical diet, the typical western RDAs suggested diet there at two to three grams per pound or up to four grams per kilogram of carbohydrates a day. An endurance athlete, which is someone who needs carbohydrates as they are definitely a population where carbohydrates are semi essential, need anywhere between three to four grams per pound or six to eight grams per kilogram. And then in activities like carbohydrate loading, like I discussed in my book [Better Than Steroids](#), when we're doing a dietary super compensations. We may get as high as five to eight grams per pound or 10 to 16 grams per kilogram of carbohydrates during that short term. So again, carbohydrates aren't bad, they're utilized. And those are the different diet percentages.

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There's question, why then? How do we determine how many carbohydrates do we need now that we can be an agreement, they're not bad. Well, early studies show that as little as 15 grams of carbohydrates a day can limit nitrogen loss, and that's utilization of your biceps for energy for your brain. So just a little bit of carbohydrates keeps sugar high enough to where the body's not going to tear down your muscle to make sugar. Now everyone's a little different. They're rising carbon hydrated and take to around 50 to 100 grams really limits the body's use of amino acids for Gluconeogenesis or like I like to tell people, bicep food for your brain. That limits it by going a little higher. And that occurs via two mechanisms. One, the increased carbon take maintains blood sugar and insulin at a slightly higher level there by suppressing cortisol. Now remember insulin, I talk about this a lot in [Better Than Steroids](#).

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Cortisol, your breakdown or what we call a catabolic hormone when you're hungry, is high or you're stressed or it's high or you're exercising too hard is high and insulin combat set, so having a good pre workout meal, keep in sugars, at least somewhat present throughout the day will inhibit cortisol. They're antagonistic, they're like kinda teeter totter. If cortisol's too high, insulin is low. If insulin gets higher, cortisol comes down. So that's very important. The other thing that small amount of carbohydrates in the diet provides glucose for the brain 11:53 [inaudible], the bodies need to break down protein. So remember I've talked about this before, basically the entire job of your neck down is to keep the neck

up alive and so the brain, if it starts to get hungry, if it needs nutrients, it will start breaking the neck down, down. It's going to survive.

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That's its job. So very important now, so people bring up the fact, okay, I'm not going to have carbohydrates because I think they're bad. I'm in Ketogenic diet. You want Ketogenesis, don't you? Well, studies show that in some people that I can tell you this 35 years of writing diets for people that if I can keep them around 100 grams of carbohydrates a day, they can still get a little ketonic. Now they won't necessarily be able to test that with a urine strip or a lot of the modalities out there. Possibly the breathalyzer you could do it. And the blood tests definitely I can show if you're a Ketosis or not, but your over the counter Ketogenic strips that you pin probably aren't going to be activated if you're eating at least 50 to 100 grams of carbohydrates a day. And that's important now.

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But I bring that up for a couple of reasons. Back to carbs being good or bad. If you've tried Ketogenic diet, you may have lost weight or not. There's always a huge water shift when you cut out carbs, but if you feel like dog poo poo doing no carbohydrate diets and you probably have an insulin sensitivity issue, some people do wonderful on Ketogenic diets and feel great. Some people do horrible on them. There's actually genetic testing we can look at. Are you a better carbohydrate metabolizers or you better fat metabolizer, but really you don't need to spend your money. You know it. If you are someone who feels awful on low carb diets, you probably have very good insulin sensitivity, so you need them. If you're insulin resistant or have what we call a hyper insulin secretion phenomenon or any insulin related illness, polycystic ovarian syndrome, diabetes, any of those, you probably do okay and feel okay on a low carb diet. Again, back to the whole RecoverMe philosophy of it's an individual thing. It shouldn't be based on population studies. It should be done on the individual. How do you feel? So just repeat that one more time. If you do well on low carb diets, you probably have an insulin issue. If you feel like dog poo poo those, that is an official medical term, you can look it up on a low carb diet, then you probably are super insulin sensitive and you need your carbohydrates. So simple way to determine how to do that. Now, energy is another issue. I'd take carbohydrates, student energy. So I'm not showing this on my screen, but I want you to picture a graph. So on the bottom line, we have time on our y axis, we have the amount of energy needed.

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If you look at a time thing, our body uses ATP, Adenosine triphosphate immediately one to two seconds worth. That's where our energy comes from. Over about two or three seconds, we use ATP PC system. So that's

why people take creatine. That's why creatine in studies has shown the supplement, creatine has been shown to help sprinters and people that do fast activity like power lifters, or Olympic lifters, that burst activity creates, intends to help that because that extends the energy pathways. After that, we have our last acted based system which takes our body actually utilizes up to one minute and that's lactic acid. We've always been told as bad as what causes your muscles to burn when you're working out hard, yes, but your body is also using that lactic acid as an energy source for up to one minute during exercise. And then over time, we slip into the aerobic system where our body starts or turns to oxygen for energy, so that's the basic pathways of energy if we're looking on a graph, and this is where carbohydrates come in because now we're going to talk about the semi essential need of carbohydrates and that particularly comes up with exercise. You remember I talked about the way we ideally right a person's eating plan is start with what's your protein requirements based on you, your disease state, what you do in life, all those things, your age, your lean mass, all those things. Then what your activity level and based on that I'm going to help you determine the amount of carbs and the remainder is going to be fat. That's how an ideal eating plan is written, so if you're doing low intensity aerobic cardiovascular work, someone that goes to the gym and walks on the treadmill and watch this Oprah in the afternoon. Then you really don't need that much any carbohydrates. You can do that quite well without that. That's not needed and if you feel okay on a low carb diet, and that's the type of exercise you do, you probably should keep your carbs low.

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For weight training, you may need a little more. Carb requirements are still actually quite small. Years and years was when I was staying in Ketosis just kind of as an experiment and I feel pretty good with it. I would train heavy and hard with zero sugar in my body and did fine. Now, so there's some out there that say you need anywhere between five to seven grams per kilogram or two to three grams per pound of carbohydrates for exercise. And giving a rough calculation that's roughly one set of, let's say 20 bench presses to failure requires roughly five grams of carbohydrates to replenish that glycogen store. There's a number of calculations out there you can do if you're super 17:26 [inaudible] and like it or you just enjoy Math, that's fine. But carbohydrates can be utilized in weightlifting and exercise, but not essential. But now we get into our, excuse me, our endurance athletes, people that like to do more intense activity, our crossfitters, which I would put in that term.

[17:46](#)

Our runners, are marathoners, our triathletes are swimmers, our bicyclists. Those are people where carbohydrates are needed. That's

what we call the semi essential carbohydrate needs. They're not bad guys. It's a balance. You need to be able to provide the energy to exercise adequately and survive exercise, and then most importantly to recover from exercise. You remember that word recovery is so important and carbohydrates are part of that. Don't limit carbohydrates because you think they're going to make you fat. They don't. There's a bigger picture there. It's not just calories. It's not just carbohydrates. You cannot outlaw macronutrient and expect to do it long term. You just can't do it. It's not realistic. You have to accept all food is good. Different sources are better than others, but in the big picture, how is your body responding to this food? That's what you want to look at and understand. So let's review, are carbohydrates bad? No, they're not. They may not be essential in your particularly livelihood, but they're certainly not bad. It's a balance and understanding where are you. And that's why in the RecoverMe philosophy, that's the first thing we do. Where are you right now and how can we optimize that? I can't change your stressors were just going to make your body and mind optimal with what you're dealing with and carbohydrates are a part of that. Are carbohydrates needed for energy? Absolutely. As I just described and said a couple times based on your activity level, whether you're a desk jockey or your construction worker, your carbohydrate requirements are different and understanding that and understanding your response to carbohydrates. What is your insulin sensitivity? Are your other hormones balanced? Is your thyroid working in manage your testosterone level adequate and women, are you still menstruating and have normal hormonal cycles?

[19:35](#)

All those play a role in your overall energy, health and wellbeing. You can't just look at a macronutrient, throw it out the door. You can't just cut calories to nothing. You can't over exercise and not have any carbs in your system. It just doesn't work. It's a bigger picture. So carbohydrates are semi essential for energy based on your activity level. Are carbohydrates the cause of fatness? Absolutely not. That is a myth. Oppressed by the Ketogenic preachers out there in certain people, people do wonderful and Ketogenic diets. I just wish that all of these before and after pictures extended for years, not months. Right now my local gyms doing the biggest loser plan. No comment. If you're listening to this, my eyes just rolled to the back of my head. This is a short term plan. Your picture when you start, a picture 12 weeks later mean nothing.

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I tell you what the winner should have their picture taken in June, in September and next January, and if they're still in that, they've maintained even for one year, let's say nearly a lifetime, but if they can maintain it for one year, then I'd give them a prize. Give them a prize at 12 weeks, that's

actually useless. Means nothing, right? So carbohydrates to cause the fatness. Absolutely not. That is silly to think so. And finally to end this short, brief podcasts on carbohydrates. The question I brought up at the beginning, are carbohydrates the best tasting food out there? I would have to unanimously say most likely yes, especially when it's mixed with fat and deep fried like donuts. Now, who doesn't love donuts? That is part of the RecoverMe philosophy. You not here some proportion health professional such as myself telling you that donuts are awesome and tastes good.

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I'm telling you that because one, I'm not gonna lie to you. Everyone likes a donut. Number two, if you live the big picture, if you live the RecoverMe philosophy of health and well being and optimal living, having a donut here and there doesn't hurt you. That's the point of RecoverMe is you have to live life. It's a bigger picture. Carbs are not bad. They just might not be the best thing for you at your current stage in life. That's why it's sitting with a professional that understands that sitting with someone, getting some help and understanding the big picture so you can enjoy every day. It has a longevity to enjoy your grandchildren and their children. That's what we're after. I think that's what we're all after and that's looking at a big picture. So the first thing to do is don't criminalize any macronutrients. American Dietetic Association, shame on you for criminalizing fat. Ketogenic people, shame on you for criminalizing carbohydrates. It's an individual thing and it should be individual and that's the whole RecoverMe philosophy. Enough preaching. Go have a donut. Maybe I shouldn't record that. I should take that up, but anyway, you get my idea. Until next time, remember, RecoverMe meets you where you are. We can't change your stressors. We can just help your body, mind, spirit, and soul deal with them. Then. Until next time, take care.

HIGHLIGHTS:

[03:46](#): This is back to why I mentioned earlier these broad base public recommendations do not necessarily apply to you. I tell people all the time when they read a study, "Hey doc, this says this could be bad for me." The first thing I asked him, "were you in that study? Did they account for genetics in that study? Did they account for your activity level? Did they account for your stressors? Did they account for your emotions? Do they account for your physical well being? Do they account for your mental health? Did they account for the rotten day you had at work because your boss is a jerk? No."

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scientific, but it's flat out stupid. So we shouldn't do that, so carbohydrates were really professed and push forward back in those timeframes.

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