

Sources of Energy – Carbohydrates, Fats and Protein–Q&A

- **Q: Is it healthy to eat ground beef...or should I switch to ground turkey?**

- A: Really, you can eat both, but let me give you some guidance in this department. Whether you're putting ground beef or turkey in your grocery cart, for your heart health you're going to want to go at least 90% lean. The typical 80/20 means that a fifth of the package weight is fat...primarily saturated fat. So if you were to cut the package into fifths, 1 of the 5 pieces would be all fat. That's a lot of LDL raising potential and a lot of calories. So, with ground beef and ground turkey, go at least 90% lean. And then with ground turkey specifically, it's important to know that not all ground turkey is lean. If the butcher just grinds up the turkey muscle, it's nice and lean, but if they grind up the muscle and the skin, it's not as lean. So whether you're buying ground beef or turkey, be sure to check out how lean it is.

- **Q: How can I go about increasing my fiber intake?**

- A: The first thing to do is compare the fiber content of similar products. Looking at the food label, it's fairly simple to look at the grams of fiber in a few similar foods and switch to higher fiber options. In addition to comparing grams of fiber on food labels, another idea is switching to eating primarily whole grains instead of enriched grains. Whole grain cereal, rice, pasta, bread, crackers, etc. will provide you with more fiber. Also, increasing your fruit and vegetable intake...and eating the skin on the fruit or vegetable when appropriate...is a great idea. One method for achieving this is trying to make a few more of your snacks fruits or vegetables instead of other foods. And finally, beans (like garbanzo beans) are high in fiber and striving to eat them more often will help with this goal.

- **Q: Because of the glycemic index, I'm wondering if all fruits and veggies are healthy?**

- A: Well, first, the glycemic index is a number that corresponds how quickly 50g of carbohydrate of a food is digested and how much it impacts your blood sugar. The glycemic index isn't a great tool because it doesn't factor in 2 things. 1) That a typical portion of a food might not contain 50g of carbohydrate...and 2) That people often eat their carbohydrate with other foods that will slow the pace of digestion. So because of this, I wouldn't put too much emphasis on the glycemic index. Even if you have blood sugar concerns, I would put much more emphasis on controlling the number of grams of carbohydrate you consume at a meal/snack, and much less emphasis on the glycemic index of a food.