WHITE VS. SWEET POTATOES: WHICH ARE REALLY HEALTHIER?

Think sweet potatoes are healthier than white potatoes? Or that you should avoid both because of carbs? Here’s how these tubers compare — and why they both deserve a place in your diet.

CLAIM: AVOID POTATOES BECAUSE OF GLYCEMIC LOAD

 Worried potatoes will make your blood sugar and appetite spike? Here’s what the evidence says.

Both potatoes and sweet potatoes fall in the middle to high range on the glycemic load (GL) scale.

But overall, the scientific evidence doesn’t support glycemic load strongly affecting:

- Appetite
- Body weight
- Blood glucose control

Total carbohydrate and calorie intake has a much bigger impact on these health markers.

Plus, GL is generally irrelevant to health and leanness because your blood sugar’s response to food varies depending on:

- Time of day
- Medications
- Cooking method
- Sleep quantity and quality
- Genetics
- Cut bacteria
- How much protein, fiber, and healthy fat you eat
- Activity level

CLAIM: AVOID ALL TUBERS BECAUSE OF CARBS

Think the carbs will cause weight gain? Actually, the carbs in potatoes and sweet potatoes are mostly starch and fiber, which help you stay lean and healthy.

CLAIM: SWEET POTATOES ARE THE ‘SUPERFOOD’

If all you want is Vitamin A, then sure, sweet potatoes win. But when you pit them against white potatoes for overall nutritional value, it’s a virtual tie.

OTHER CARBS

2.2 G

FIBER

1.2 G

SUGARS

0

FAMILY

SOLANACEAE

CONVOLVULACEAE

PLANT

POTATOES

SWEET POTATOES

SOLANUM TUBEROSEUM

IPOMOEA BATATAS

TYPES OF CARBOHYDRATES IN POTATOES AND SWEET POTATOES

Potatoes and sweet potatoes share a name, but botanically they’re unrelated.

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WHICH ARE REALLY HEALTHIER?

TYPES OF CARBOHYDRATES IN POTATOES AND SWEET POTATOES

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Types of carbohydrates in potatoes and sweet potatoes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carbohydrates</th>
<th>Potatoes</th>
<th>Sweet Potatoes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugars</td>
<td>4.0 G</td>
<td>3.9 G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiber</td>
<td>0.5 G</td>
<td>0.5 G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Carbs</td>
<td>1.2 G</td>
<td>1.2 G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starch</td>
<td>3.7 G</td>
<td>6.5 G</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Resistant starch and fiber get fermented in the gut, producing short-chain fatty acids.

Resistant starch and fiber:

- Inhibit pathogenic bacteria and mucosal cells
- Act as fuel for healthy gut
- Keep you fuller longer
- Decrease risk of colon cancer
- Decrease inflammation
- Prevent absorption of toxins and nutrient circulation
- Increase mineral absorption
- Stimulate blood flow to the colon

Benefits of eating potatoes and sweet potatoes:

- Helps you achieve health and fitness goals
- Helps you feel psychologically satisfied
- Helps you avoid high-calorie, fast food
- Ensures that your diet has “carb variety” and keeps colorful food on your plate
- Helps you get beyond “good foods” or “bad foods”
- Helps you feel psychologically satisfied
- Helps you avoid high-calorie, fast food
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HOW MUCH TO EAT

Start with 1 to 2 cupped handfuls of carbohydrate foods per meal. This can be potatoes, sweet potatoes, beans, lentils, fruit, or whole grains. Then adjust portion sizes up or down based on:

- Individual goals such as fat loss, mass gain, and fuel for athletic performance
- Body size (smaller people need less; larger people need more)
- Individual carb needs (higher for active, fast people)
- Individual preferences

How to eat potatoes and sweet potatoes:

Tubers go a bad rap because they’re often used for high-calorie dishes. In reality, there’s a range of ways in which potatoes and sweet potatoes fit into a healthy diet.

How to eat potatoes and sweet potatoes:

- Include potatoes and sweet potatoes in a balanced diet:
- Helps you feel psychologically satisfied and physically satiated
- Ensures that your diet has “carb variety” and keeps colorful food on your plate
- Helps you get beyond “good foods” or “bad foods”
- Helps you achieve health and fitness goals

For the full article explaining this infographic:
http://www.precisionnutrition.com/regular-vs-sweet-potatoes