

What are some low-carb foods that every house should have as a staple?

The staples on the low-carb menu are easy: meat, fish, poultry, eggs, cheese, butter, natural fats, colorful vegetables, salad greens, and low-sugar fruits. But most of us long to be able to buy convenience foods—breads, pasta, sweets, snacks, and baked goods and we don't want to have to make everything from scratch. There are some very encouraging signs that good low-carb products are making a comeback, although many companies still shy away from the term. They are often called high fiber, high protein, low glycemic, or low calorie instead.

Several new sugar replacements made of erythritol, xylitol, and stevia are becoming widely available and the major soft drink companies are developing stevia-sweetened versions of their most popular beverages. Splenda® continues to sell well and several liquid sucralose products are now available. Most of them must be ordered on-line, but one, EZ-Sweetz™, is making an effort to go mainstream. (Liquid sucralose has an advantage over the dry forms in that it contains no bulking agents. Splenda packets and Splenda Granular use real sugars to add volume, which adds a significant number of unnecessary carbs.)

The King Arthur Flour Company is selling a high-fiber, low-carb cornstarch (Hi-Maize) that can be used as a partial replacement for wheat flour and they have added a new barley to their product line, called Sustagrain, which has been bred to contain less starch, more fiber, and more protein than any of the common cereal grains. They have it in two forms—barley flour and barley flakes, which can be used like oat flour and rolled oats. (Several recipes using these will be featured in my new book.)

Dreamfields® pasta has added an angel hair pasta to the five varieties they currently sell. All have only 5 digestible grams of carbohydrate per serving (compared to 44 in regular pasta). The president of the company told Jimmy Moore in a recent interview on Jimmy's blog (www.livinlavidalowcarb.com) that they are now working on a low-carb rice replacement.

Low carb tortillas have been constantly available for at least the past 10 years (I know because that's how long I've been buying them) and most stores sell at least one low-carb bread. Some good breads can also be ordered. The shipping is not cheap, since bread is perishable, but I think it is worth the expense. I love the bread (and the pizza crusts!) from the Francis Simun Bakery in Texas.

Hood makes a low-carb milk called Calorie Countdown®. (It is the same one that was originally called Carb Countdown. They discontinued the full-fat version when low-carb fell out of favor, but perhaps they will reconsider.) I recently noticed that a brand of coconut milk called So Delicious sells an unsweetened one that is very low in carbs. I like to add it to a protein shake for the good fats it contains. Some of my favorite ice creams have disappeared, but Safeway stores in my area still sell a very good one called Watch'n Carbs™.

Change is coming. New research continues to show that low-carb diets are effective and safe and, contrary to conventional wisdom, they actually improve blood lipid profiles and reduce the risk of heart disease, cancer, diabetes, obesity, and many other conditions and diseases. There is always a lag in supply and demand, but if we want it, it will come.