

Carbohydrates

Our body is a marvelous and complex organism created by God. It is usually a mistake to think of our body as a mechanism or a machine, but to simplify our discussion, let us use some mechanical language when talking about nutrition. In the simplest terms, in order to operate, our body needs fuel. If we do not have enough fuel in our body, then the body slows its metabolism—the rate at which it burns fuel—and begins to shut down non-essential work, making one feel tired and sluggish. Carbohydrates, such as oatmeal, buckwheat, or rice, serve as a good source of this fuel. But most people who are following a fast do not typically have a problem with getting enough oatmeal or buckwheat. Some people, of course, do have a problem with eating too much highly processed and refined starch, such as white bread, white pasta, etc., and not enough of the good complex carbs like oatmeal or buckwheat; but, just as with vitamins, this is not related to the fasting rules, as such people may have a poor diet whether or not they are fasting. In fact, some people have complained to me that they gain weight during Lent. And by looking at their diet, which contains huge amounts of pasta, white bread with slabs of margarine, and salads drowning in fatty dressing—it is easy to see why they do. Add to this a regular helping of “Lenten” desserts overloaded with sugar, and your Lent becomes a dangerous experiment in trying to see how much junk your body can endure before it begins to break down.