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# Low Carb Diets Explained

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## Why is the Population Becoming Fat?

Weight gain and obesity have become causes of health concerns in the western world. Obesity in particular is one of the leading causes of preventable death in the world today. Studies have been conducted to establish the reasons why the world population seems to be gaining weight. Research has shown, for instance, that the general weight of the population today, is much higher than it was in the 1960s.

What are the factors that have contributed to this turn of events and what are the intervention measures that can be instituted to control it? Studies have shown that although our children still engage in physical exercises, just like the children of yester years, they still add weight and in some cases get obese. For the older people, lack of exercise, among other issues has been cited a reason for weight gain or becoming fat.

Obesity and weight gain have been attributed to the foods we eat. Research shows that we have increased our food intake which unfortunately contains a higher percentage of sugar than what the world population used to ingest about fifty years ago. Also, the amount of fat that we eat has considerably increased. This coupled with lack of exercise have been cited as the leading causes of weight gain. It's an established fact that when we get large portions of fatty foods, creamy desserts, alcohol and soft drinks full of sugar, our calorie intake gets higher. With a higher calorie intake, we are expected to do a lot of exercises to burn the excess calories. If this is not done, there is a calorie pile up that leads to weight gain.

The solution to these problems lies in the ability to change our eating habits. One way of controlling unnecessary weight gain is the eating low carb foods. This way, the amount of calories in the food is closely controlled and helps in making one healthier.

Low Carb diets have been defined differently depending on whether the point of discussion is centred on the amount of calories derived from carbohydrates or the percentage of carbohydrates in a diet. Generally though, low carb diets can be described as those diets that help the body to derive between 5% to 45 % of calories from Carbohydrates. The normal percentage of calories that is supposed to be derived from Carbohydrates, according to the U.S. guidelines on health is between 50% to 65%. Therefore, a low carb diet refers to a conscious effort to try and limit the intake of foods with high carbohydrate levels, especially those that cause a significant rise in blood sugar.

Although the debate on the advantages of a low carb diet is still going on, it's true that the tolerance of carbohydrates in the body varies from person to person. This type of diet, then, will suit or benefit those who are sensitive or whose tolerance to carbohydrates is low. The approach is to encourage the reduction of the intake of carbohydrates to levels that the body can tolerate. This approach targets the reduction or elimination from our diets foods like potatoes, white rice, white flour and sugar from the diet.

The reduction of carbohydrates intake has been known to cause weight loss in people. To control this, a low carb diet should be closely monitored so that immediately signs of weight loss are noticed; the intake of carbohydrates is slowly increased until the body can control blood glucose. It's also advisable to embrace the ketogenic diet where the body generates energy from body fats instead of glucose. This leads the body into what is called fat adaptation or ket adaptation. This adaptation encourages body metabolism which leads to improvement of stamina. Energy from fat is long lasting unlike energy from glucose which quickly diminishes..

## What Is A Low Carb Diet?

We often hear about low carb diets and how successful they prove to be in losing weight, but what is a low Carb diet exactly?

The term "low-carb" means low in carbohydrate. Carbohydrates are usually found in foods like pasta, potatoes, fruit, bread and rice. A low carb diet does not entail any specific diet nor does it include well-defined steps to losing weight.

It is a rather loose term that varies according to the person who uses it. Some common features though, include consuming foods that are low in carbohydrate and glycemic. The consumption of carbohydrates leads the body to excrete insulin.

As carbohydrates get digested, glucose -the effect of insulin excretion- either gets burned by our body if it we need immediate energy or else gets stored as fat. More seriously, after consuming a meal that consists mainly of carbohydrates, the level of insulin in our body goes suddenly up and after a short time suddenly down. This effect causes us to be hungry only after 2 or 4 hours from our last meal, leading us to a vicious circle of being hungry, then eating and finally storing fat.

The main ways to define a low carb diet, following the initial question "What Is A Low Carb Diet?", is to clarify whether you are talking about the actual carbohydrate that an adult consumes daily or about the percentage of the calories in a person's diet that comes from carbohydrates.

The usual amount of calories that are allowed in an adult's diet is about 50-60%. So any percentage of calories coming from carbohydrates that is below that, can be thought of as low carb.

The most common misconception about low carb diets is that people who follow this kind of eating plan are actually striving to consume a zero amount of carb. That is not only untrue but it is also near to impossible considering that carbohydrates are hidden in most of the food we consume, especially processed food.

A diet low in carbs, as the name itself demonstrates, tries to reduce the carbohydrates in a low level, not eliminate them completely.

Another common myth is that a low carb diet forbids you from eating fruits and vegetables. The truth is that this food category is rich in carbohydrate, but that does not mean one should eliminate them from their diet. Fruits and veggies are the carbohydrates one should consume in a diet that is low of, but not deprived of carbs.

Among the benefits one could gain from following a low carb diet, is first and foremost the loss of weight and the increase of energy. People find themselves to be less sleepy and have better concentration and some cases have shown that people are experiencing a better mood.

Bad thoughts and feelings seem to be seriously reduced or lifted away. One cannot overstate the beneficial results of low carb eating habits. People have noticed improvements in their metabolism, a benefit that is considered to be a kick start for a diet focused on losing weight, even if the weight loss is initially insignificant. A shift in the metabolism is indispensable on the road to a healthy way of life and weight loss process.

## **The Benefits Of A Low Carb Diet**

When you choose a diet, you want to make sure there are plenty of positive benefits beyond losing weight. You want to be healthier overall by eating in the manner the diet instructs you to eat on a daily basis. You also want to be able to follow the plan for life instead of just a few weeks or months. The benefits of a low carb diet will provide the healthy daily plan you can implement for life.

You may not realize that eating carbs can increase the chance of negative health issues. By reducing the volume of carbs daily that you eat, some medical conditions you often experience may occur less often. The frequency of headaches, joint pain, and trouble concentrating will diminish when you reduce the intake of carbs. This may help you reduce the amount of pain medicine you take when the pain of headaches and joints go away. So you will feel healthier and save money on medicine by the benefits of a low carb diet.

Often when you diet mood swings can cause the process to be difficult. The highs and lows of mood and energy can cause you to binge eat. Another benefit of the low carb diet is the balancing of mood and energy. Actually the body gets more consistent energy from protein and other nutrients than from carbs. Carbs bring on short term energy spurts that will drop your energy level quickly once the carbs are digested. By lowering the volume of carbs you eat, your energy will come from other nutrients that are more consistent energy reducing mood and energy swings.

If you enjoy exercise and want to tone and build muscle tissue which helps fight fat in your body, a low carb diet can help. After a workout your muscles are very sensitive to insulin and do not need as many carbs as some people may think. By eating a low carb diet, your muscles after a workout will draw in more amino acids from your meal. The amino acids will help the muscles heal from the workout quicker and burn more fat.

The impact or prevention of diabetes can be helped by a low carb diet. If you have diabetes a low carb diet may help balance your insulin level more throughout the day. If you have family members with diabetes and want to avoid getting the disease yourself, a low carb diet is a good healthy way to naturally balance your insulin.

So as you can see, there are many benefits to a low carb diet beyond just losing weight. You will see an improvement in your weight but you will also have more energy and feel healthier. That is the goal of losing weight as well; to be healthier.

Eating more vegetables and proteins as well as fruits and nuts can be a good start to a low carb diet. Gradually reduce your intake of breads, sweets, and items made from white flour and white sugar. You can find many low carb diet recipes for free on blogs, websites, and food preparing television shows.

## **Are Low Carb Diets Safe?**

Obesity must be the most widely spread issue worldwide irrespective of demographic or geographic differences. It has gained so much attention lately that the concept of weight loss

has opened up thousands of lucrative business opportunities. Ironically this commercialization seems to have a negative impact on actual weight loss.

Calorie intake and burning calories, the two main variables of the weight loss equation have been exaggerated so much in the commercial world that in some cases some weight loss programs are a threat to good health.

Low carb diet came in to the existence as a solution for maintaining the calorie intake variable in precise levels. How it helps you to lose weight is simple logic. Once the intake drops the body starts to make use of the stored fat which leads to weight loss. Of course it will lead to weight loss but will it be a safe process?

The answer is not a simple yes or a no. Even though the weight loss gurus emphasize the importance over and over again the nutritionists and the medical community bear a different opinion. The established opinion is that no matter how effective the results are unless cutting the carbohydrates are done at moderate levels the side effects will lead to disorders in bodily functions. Not only moderate but also it has to be properly chosen.

For example if you reduce the fat intake without paying attention to the type of fat it might even lead to elevated blood cholesterol levels. You should have the adequate knowledge to determine what should be included and what shouldn't be. Here according to the example, a properly designed diet plan would have included polyunsaturated fats and mono-unsaturated fats which are considered safe.

Same theory applies to all the nutrients just like to fats. Some diet plans even advise to refrain from fruits and vegetables. Such plans do more harm than good. A restriction on fruits like banana or watermelon that have a high glycaemic level might at least have logic to support it. But limiting all the fruits and vegetables is a baseless advice that will deteriorate your health. Reduced intake of calcium rich food like whole grain could even cause serious conditions like osteoporosis. Women with calcium deficiencies tend to suffer from menstrual issues. Most low carb diet plans focus more on protein intake. Unnecessary amounts of protein makes the kidneys work harder in order to remove the excess waste produced by proteins. Accumulation of harmful waste products might cause kidney stones.

Most importantly before selecting a diet plan one should understand his or her body well. A kidney patient should pay attention to the proteins while a heart patient should concentrate more on the fats. Likewise there are numerous factors that should be taken in to account before following a low carb diet.

Changes in your lifestyle will require changes in diet plans too. If you start working out or bodybuilding the energy demand of the body is different from what it used to be. Or if you got pregnant changes should come immediately. In cases like these consulting a professional is a must.

Extremely "low carb" diets might not be safe. But make them "correct carb" diets and get the lean body you always dreamed while being in good health.

## A Low Carb Sample Meal Plan

While there is an endless supply of different variations to a low carb diet plan one can find and learn about online, it is imperative to at least start off knowing a few basic meal plan ideas to kick start your low carb dieting efforts. So while the following meal plan ideas are enough to start off with, it is important to note that as with anything “variety is the spice of life” So make sure to learn about and expand your low carb dieting meal variations.

### Breakfast

#### Option 1:

7 Egg White Omelet – allow 2 yolks only  
1 cup veges eg. Mushrooms/capsicums  
2 Plain Corn Thins (as alternative to bread)

#### Option 2:

1 cup Oats (cooked 2 cups) – (place ½ cup water in oats then cook in microwave or eat cold (alternative is special K flakes or plain muesli with no dried fruit)  
1 heaped tablespoon Natural Pineapple or 2 Kiwi fruit or ½ cup frozen berries

### Lunch

#### Option 1:

3 hard-boiled eggs  
A large green leaf salad of your choice  
2 Tablespoons of low carb commercial or homemade dressing  
Optional: Sprinkle with Spicy Sweet Pecans

#### Option 2:

200g Cooked Lean Meat: chicken breast, Fish of any kind, Rump Steak, Eggs (10 egg white) (230g raw)  
1 full cup greens (coleslaw, herbslaw packs at supermarkets, frozen vege is fine)  
Tablespoon of lite oil dressing (Italian, french or olive oil)  
1 full cup Basmati Rice (1 cup raw = 1.5 cup cooked). Or medium sweet potato (fist size)

### Afternoon Snack

#### Option 1:

1 oz string cheese

#### Option 2:

20 Plain Nuts = cashews/almonds or walnuts (inside palm size)

### Dinner



Option 1:

6 Egg Omlette with 6 slices smoked salmon with salad on side

Option 2:

200g Grilled Chicken

2 full cup greens (coleslaw packs as mentioned)

2 Tablespoon Lite Cottage Cheese - OPTIONAL

Dessert

Option 1:

8-10 strawberries, dipped in

¼ cup sugar-free chocolate sauce (ganache)

Option 2:

½ cup of low sugar jell-o

## **Shopping Advice For Low Carb Dieters**

Watching carbs to lose weight, or stay healthy, should not cost you a fortune. Which is why including high-priced foods in your diet is not necessary, for sure. There are countless less costly, yet delicious, options that are low in carbs. So let's get started saving money on the most delicious, low carb foods.

First things first; we all know packaged food is costly. Swap it out with home-cooked dishes made from tender meat and fresh vegetables. Pre-packaged junk foods will only drain money off of your wallet while it won't do good to your waistline, either.

You, next, might want to consider purchasing food in season. Of course, wouldn't you dress heavily in winter, and lightly in summer? Likewise, you'd like to order fruits and veggies when they are in season - that's when they are cheapest. Otherwise, it costs a lot more when produce is flown in from other countries. But by purchasing in-season vegetables, and even freezing them, you can get yourself your favorites year-round, yet cheaply.

It's also possible to spend less on meat. While the expensive beef tenderloin is a tasty cut of meat, the chuck and sirloin cuts make a delicious taste at a much reduced price. They contain streaks of fat running throughout the meat, a thing that makes them tender, juicer and super delicious. They are best suitable to slow cooking - no wonder you should think soups, stews, braises and roasts.

In the same respect, protein that is priced right helps stretch your dollar, as well. There is more to controlling carbs than meat - do not fall in to a supper slump. Break the monotony of your dinner meat by including some eggs. Besides, you can prepare them in any way you like: poached, scrambled, omelette, crustless quiche, etc. Moreover, tofu and other soy foods could replace the usual sources of chicken and turkey protein, yet give you a variety of nutrients. You can save on snacks, too. Get low-carb snacks, including shakes and nutrition bars, cheaply at store specials. Buy in bulk. Understand websites that offer items that you regard as your

favorites, and sign up for their newsletters to catch a heads up on sales. Don't fail to check for coupons in newspapers circulars, as well.

Furthermore, make dishes that can serve double recipes, so you can have dinner for one or two other nights. Likewise, make meals that can serve double-duty, like lunch the next day. Use your low carb leftovers to stretch your dollar.

And perhaps you have of this before: planning. But by planning your recipes and meals for the week, you help make yourself prepared, always. You won't have to take that extra trip to the vending machine, or order take-out for your dinner. Wait, do you want to get all that that junk in your tummy?

Among other things, get to know some smart shopping strategies. Regarding pork, for instance, get less costly cuts like shoulder and rib chops, which should be tastier when well prepared. Also, purchasing whole chicken should see you save some bucks.

I hope the aforementioned tips help you save while you shop delicious, low carb foods. Like I said, a low carb diet should not cost a fortune. Happy shopping.

## **Eating Out On A Low Carb Diet**

Dieting can be stressful if you are constantly worried about which foods you can and can't eat. Eating out while dieting can sometimes be a nightmare. However, eating out on a low carb diet is just the opposite. It is very easy to adapt food from almost any cuisine at any restaurant to suit a low carb way of eating.

Just remembering three things will keep you on track when you eat out:

1. Know what you can eat, and what to avoid!
2. Plan ahead!
3. Stick to your guns!

Eating low carb means you actually have a lot of flexibility with your diet. Knowing which foods to avoid makes it easier to eat out without trying to guess what is acceptable. Great choices to look for when eating out include meats that are not breaded or battered, vegetables, salads, and fish that is not battered. Potatoes are generally off the menu, but why not try extra veggies instead? Consider eating 'outside the box'. If you want a juicy burger, go ahead and have it, without the bun. Replace the fries with carrot sticks to round out your meal. Salads offer unlimited options, as almost any meats and vegetables can be thrown in, and many restaurants offer some type of salad on their menu. Steak and mixed vegetables are always a great choice, and tasty, too!

Perhaps the most overlooked key to successfully eating out on a low carb diet is planning ahead. This simple step can save a lot of stress and worry. You'll already know what you can eat, so the next step is finding out what is on offer at the place you want to eat at. Go online to view menus ahead of time. You can even call the restaurant and ask questions about food preparation and ingredients. This way, you will be armed with the info needed to make good food choices. This step eliminates the stress and worry over what you'll order once you arrive, so you will be able to focus on enjoying your meal!

The most important thing you can do when eating out low carb is to stick to it. Many are tempted by the bread basket, teased by the desert tray, and give in to the pressure to be 'normal'. Maybe you don't want to seem demanding. Whatever the reason, just remember, you deserve to feel healthy and be happy. If it helps, consider your low carb diet the same as anyone that requires a special diet for a medical condition. There will be some foods you just can't eat, but don't be afraid to ask for the ones you can!

With more people choosing to eat low carb, restaurants are adjusting many of their menu items to accommodate. There are lots of great options available if you want to eat out and enjoy low carb foods. Knowing what you can eat, planning ahead, and sticking to it will keep you on track with your low carb diet. Use these simple steps to enjoy eating out on a low carb diet anytime!

## **Maintaining A Low Carb Diet**

One great advantage of a low-carb diet is the fact that you will not have to worry about the amount of calories you take. Furthermore, you will not have to keep count and track of your calories.

This is because maintaining a low carb lifestyle is all about the amount of carbohydrate you take in your food. With this kind of diet, you need to have a plan that suggests the amount of carbohydrate you need to take in a day.

This plan will also contain other food nutrients you should take to complement your diet. The idea is to decrease your carbohydrate intake and to be able to reduce your sugar and insulin levels. Your body will then have to burn the stored fat in your body making you lose weight. To create the best diet to help you in maintaining a low carb lifestyle, you need to be aware of five simple and easy to do tips.

These are suggestions to help you make the most out of your diet. This way, you can be sure to get the effective weight lose results.

First, you need to have your health assessed by your doctor. This is the initial step you need to take before you decide to undertake your dieting plan. Consulting your physician is a good way to establish the best food types to include in your diet. The doctor will help you know what food to refrain from and get suggestions on how to plan your diet menu.

Secondly, you must have an objective for maintaining a low-carb lifestyle. The goal of any diet low in carbohydrate is to lose weight. Establishing your main goal will help you fit your diet into your lifestyle. Here, you will know what nutritional foods to introduce into your diet; one that leads to successfully achieving your long-term weight lose goal.

Thirdly, for your diet plan to work you need motivation to follow through with your plan even when faced with temptations. You need to find a way to remind yourself of your goal. Thinking about how you will feel or look when you are slimmer is a good incentive.

Additionally, you need to tune your attitude, be positive and believe you can achieve your weight loss objective.

Besides, monitor the amount of food you take and take weight often to find out how you are doing. It is best you have a journal where you can record your findings. This journal will help you find out whether your diet plan is successful or not.

Lastly, after all has been said and done you will have to be patient and be consistent in your dieting. Maintaining a low carb diet is not very easy. However, you will be successful if you maintain your plan and make it a habit. With time, it will become a lifestyle and part of you. Like any dieting plan, you may fall off track occasionally. However, you should get back up and continue with your plan. From time to time, you may have to consult your doctor to ensure you do not have health complications and to ensure your diet is working effectively.

## **Common Mistakes On A Low Carb Diet**

One does not have to attend a class to know about the common mistakes on a low Carb diet. Carb as it is referred in this context refers to food nutrient (carbohydrate) present in foods like potatoes, bread, pun cakes etc. The following are the common mistakes about low cab diet. Getting the wrong information - Some individuals assume that eating low Carb diet simply means eating meat every day. This is wrong; everybody requires knowledge on how to reduce carbohydrates, the foods that have carbohydrates and eating a low carb diet.

Surrendering in the middle of the process - There are a variety of approaches to low carb dieting and there are problems at the beginning. It is important to figure out which approach is good for you to avoid giving up in the middle of the process. Some of the complication that arises for example Carb crash scares a lot of people hence they back down at the beginning.

Lack of sufficient fat This could be mistaken for a low carb diet as a result of thinking that low carb means low fat. At the start, people can manage low fat dieting but as time goes this will lead to them using up their own body fat hence getting hungry very fast. Therefore it is important to add fat to your body while on low carb diet.

Lack of enough vegetables in the diet - While dieting on low Carb diet some people tend to forget including vegetables and fruits in their diet. This will be disastrous in the end because vegetables and fruits should be eaten in large quantities by one dieting on low carb especially fruits that are low in sugar.

Too much eating - It is of no use to count the amount of calories in a low carb diet. This does not mean that one has to keep on eating and eating just because he or she is eating foods that are low in carb. You are advised to only eat when one is hungry and stop when satisfied.

Poor planning - Sticking in a new eating programme sometimes might be a problem and one might find himself or herself doing what they used to do before. Therefore one is advised to plan before hand to facilitate free adoption of the new eating habit which means you will know what to eat and when to eat what.

Use of low carb packaged foods - When buying low carb foods that are packaged it is of great importance to understand the ingredients. Most of them contain maltitol which is bad sugar that

is not required by a lot of bodies. Therefore this packaged low carb foods need to undergo careful experiments.

Lack of variety - Most people might find limited variety of foods that are low carb yet there are plenty, the only thing to avoid in low carb diet is sugar and starch. Every cuisine in the planet has a low carb variety; also most dishes can be decarbed.

Insufficient fibre in the diet - Eating of vegetables and fruits help in ensuring that one eats enough quantities of fibre. But forgetting or skipping to eat vegetables and fruits reduces the level of fibre intake in the body and this can be disastrous in the long run.

## **Start A Low Carb Diet Today**

As we have learnt throughout this guide, A low-carb diet limits the intake of starchy vegetables, fruits, grains, breads and sugar. While a healthy amount of carbs in the diet provide the body with the much needed energy. The problem as we know is that an excessive intake of carbohydrates may cause your insulin and sugar levels to increase! We have learnt the basics of what is a low carb diet? We have covered the benefits of a low carb diet and also common mistakes. Now we will end with tips to get going and begin a low carb diet today!

### **Tip #1**

When you shop for groceries, pick the foods that trigger low-glucose response. Some of the foods with a very low glycemic index are apricots, apples, broccoli, asparagus, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, cherries, celery, grapefruit, cucumber, green beans, mushrooms, lettuce, plums, onions, spinach, sweet peppers, strawberries, zucchini and tomatoes. Foods in the 'moderate-glycemic index' category are oranges, orange juice, grapes, cantaloupe, peas, peaches, yams, pineapple and watermelon. Stay away from the high-glycemic index foods such as raisins, potatoes, corn, carrots, beets and bananas.

### **Tip #2**

Snack smart! Just because you're on a low-carb diet, it doesn't mean that you have to eat deli meat or cheese as snacks. Try a variety of low carb snacks such as walnuts, hard-boiled eggs, pecans, fresh veggies with low-fat dips and ricotta cheese. Watch out for the saturated fat content and the number of calories in the snack you want to eat. Go for the low-fat versions of dairy and keep the portions in control.

### **Tip #3**

Eliminate all foods that are high in carbohydrates. Have a look inside your refrigerator/pantry and remove all junk foods such as pastries, soft drinks and potato chips. After the junk, it's the easy-foods' turn! Remove all the rice, pasta, bread and grain products. If you can't do without bread, go for the whole-grain or whole-wheat variety. Make every carb count!

#### Tip #4

Drink plenty of water. Water is not only important to keep you hydrated, but it also keeps cravings and constipation at bay. Make sure you drink 8-10 glasses of clean and hygienic water every day.

#### Tip #5

Read the labels carefully! By paying attention to the labels, you can track the amount of carbs in grams in all the foods you consume. This is a good way of controlling your portion size and carb-count of your daily diet.

#### Tip #6

Stick to the real foods. Don't go for the low-carbohydrate "alternatives" such as pre-packed energy bars or snack bars. And if you find yourself craving for sweet foods, eat fat. For instance, if you want to eat eggs for breakfast then cook them in butter. Fry your own food rather than buying it from a junk-food outlet.

Remember, if you want your diet to work you must plan it properly and you must also exercise 5 days a week for 45 minutes, at least. And this applies to any diet you want to follow. Start now and drop the fat the low carb way.