

# Living and Loving Low-Carb



Making a change in your eating habits to lose weight, become more healthy, and live a better life is a good decision. If you've chosen to use a low carbohydrate diet to make those goals a reality, then you've picked the easiest, most fulfilling, and effective solution. A healthy low carb diet can help reverse type 2 diabetes, build muscle, and promote fat burning while keeping you from suffering from deprivation and hunger.

## What are Carbohydrates?

Scientifically, a carbohydrate is one of the four classes, and the most abundant of biomolecular compounds consisting of carbohydrates, proteins, nucleotides and lipids. Carbohydrates transport energy through the blood to the cells. They play an important part in life for all living creatures.

Even when you eat a low carb diet, it's important to understand the difference between good carbs and bad carbs. Good carbs come in the form of plant matter such as vegetables, legumes, low sugar fruit and 100 percent, high-fiber whole grains. Bad carbs come in the form of white sugar, some grains like white bread, and high sugar fruits.

## Net Effective Carbs

Net Carbs, sometimes called net effective carbs, are the number of grams of carbohydrate that significantly impact your blood sugar level and therefore are the ones you want to watch.

How many carbs you eat each day depends on your goals, your current weight, and how much fiber you ingest. You may want to lose weight, maintain your weight or even gain weight on a low carb diet. Balancing your carbohydrate intake will control your appetite, improve energy levels, keep you satisfied and help you avoid over eating.

To figure out how many net carbs you're eating simply subtract the fiber grams from the total carbs to get the net carb grams. This is the number you count. For example on the label of a brand of rye bread it says there are 15 grams of total carbohydrates in each serving with 2 grams of dietary fiber. Subtract the fiber from the total grams of carbohydrate to get your effective net carb count (13 per serving). You can do this for everything that you eat that has carbohydrate and fiber in it. Fiber does not add calories to your diet, nor actual digestible carbs so in essence they don't count. (about.com)

Everyone will have a different level of net effective carbs they can eat that allows them to lose or maintain weight and avoid cravings while keeping energy levels high. You may need to start with one number, and move to another depending upon your personal experience and reaction. It's important when embarking on a healthy low carb diet that you pay close attention to the signs your body gives you.





Most people can get weight loss results by starting at around 60 grams of net effective carbs and moving down to as low as 40. To maintain or gain weight, they can gradually increase to up to as much as 120 grams of effective carbs per day. Listen to your body to determine the exact right amount for you. It's not really healthy to go as low as 20 grams of carbs a day long-term even though some low carb diet books do suggest starting at 20 grams per day. You'll find that you experience greater success eating as many healthy carbs as your body allows while checking cravings, losing or maintaining weight, and having plenty of energy and mental clarity.

## Ketones and Ketosis

Ketones are molecules generated during fat metabolism. Many people who are on low carb diets try to make sure their body is "in ketosis" in order to ensure that they are in fat burning mode. In reality, what is being excreted when your body is in ketosis is acetone. Many people will suffer from bad breath when in ketosis. There is no reason to put your body into ketosis to lose weight or to be healthy on the low carb diet. But, don't confuse ketosis with a dangerous



medical condition called ketoacidosis that many people with type 1 diabetes suffer from. Being in ketosis due to a low carb diet is very different. However, due to the side effects caused, such as smelly breath, bad body odor, and even worse smelling bowel movements and flatulence that can be produced, many people prefer to avoid ketosis when on a low carb diet.

However, some people want to put their body into ketosis in order to lose a lot of weight quickly, or to avoid certain conditions such as certain types of epilepsy. In addition, some people believe that the benefits of a Ketogenic diet, lower

blood pressure, balanced cholesterol levels, improved blood sugar levels, increased energy, less joint stiffness and pain, clear mind, weight loss and better sleep, are worth the issues with bad breath and body odor which can be overcome.

It will depend on your body and how it reacts to a healthy low carb diet, and your goals as to whether or not you decide to try to put your body into super fat burning ketosis. Some people like to and some people prefer not to. Usually you'll need to go down below 30 net effective carbs a day to achieve ketosis.

## The Benefits of a Healthy Low Carb Diet

There are many benefits of a healthy low carb diet. Most people won't stick to any diet long term without seeing some excellent results. Luckily, a low carb lifestyle comes with huge results. You'll experience less sweet and junk cravings while still enjoying the food on the plan. There are so many good things about a healthy low carb diet it's hard to ignore the fact that it works for many people. With proper planning and dedication it can work for you too.

## **Experience Effortless Weight Loss**

Due to the fact that you'll eat a large amount of nutrient dense foods, reducing cravings for foods void of nutrients, and thus the possibility of binge eating, you'll lose weight effortlessly. You won't feel hungry, deprived, or left out in social situations. There will always be good choices to be made no matter where you eat.

## **Thrill Your Doctor with Improved Blood Tests**

Low carb dieters enjoy improved blood sugar levels, balanced cholesterol numbers, and as a result end up taking fewer medications. Any time you can stop taking medications for preventable diseases then you're ahead of the game. When you can reverse food borne illnesses by eating more nutrient dense foods you're essentially doubling your money. First, you avoid overly processed foods, then you avoid medications, and finally, you avoid illness. All of which adds up to a huge savings.



## **Be Happier Due to an Elevated Mood**

Simply eating more nutritious and satisfying foods that keep you from being deprived will help elevate your mood. Many people report fewer mood swings on a low carb diet. It's likely due to not being hungry, losing weight and feeling healthier allowing you to get a better night's sleep. Deprived people can be moody and unpredictable due to fluctuating blood sugar. On a healthy low carb diet your blood sugar is more stabilized thus your moods will be more stable.

## **Enjoy More Radiant Skin**

Eating a diet low in carbs, rich in healthy fats and proteins causes your skin to glow with health. By eliminating (as much as possible) artificial ingredients, sugar, and nutrient void starches and gut destroying gluten your skin will benefit. Your skin will be smooth and less puffy due to the anti inflammatory benefits a low carb diet provides. You will be feeding the largest organ in your body, your skin; exactly what it needs like omega-3 fatty acids to literally glow with health.

## **Experience Increased Energy Levels**

Eat a healthy low carb diet that lowers blood pressure, balances blood sugar levels, and helps you drop excess fluid and weight fast. Eating this way also improves your night time sleep, which enables you to have more energy throughout the day. Imagine falling asleep the moment your head hits the pillow, and waking up in the morning feeling well-rested and ready for the day.

## **Finally Get Rid of Junk Food Cravings**

While some people disagree, most food cravings occur due to hunger, and inadequate nutrition. People who are satisfied with their diets don't get very many inappropriate cravings. Cravings are also caused by dips and spikes in blood sugar levels. A healthy low carb diet helps keep your blood sugar level, which helps avoid out of control food cravings. In addition, there is enough variety in the food that you can eat on a low carb diet that you can actually healthfully indulge cravings on occasion with healthy substitutes.

Due to all the factors mentioned above, you will benefit from better overall health. Your need for various medications like antacids, insulin for type 2 diabetes, erectile dysfunction drugs, and even drugs for pain will diminish the longer you are living a healthy low carb lifestyle. You can truly be the picture of health inside and out by practicing a healthy low carb way of living.

## How to Start Your Healthy Low Carb Lifestyle

Getting started living a healthy low carb lifestyle is simple. There aren't many ways of eating healthy that are easier than a low carb lifestyle.



How much you eat depends on your body composition and your health goals. If you want to lose weight you'll need to eat fewer calories than you burn. If you want to gain muscle you'll need to eat enough protein, plus perform resistance exercises. Cardio never hurt anyone either.

The actual diet doesn't really change much. You'll eat protein, healthy high-fiber carbohydrates, healthy fats, vegetables and occasionally low sugar fruit. The only thing that will vary is the amount. If you're an athlete you'll eat more than if you're not. If you're a small female you'll eat less than a large male. Calories do count. You can use a website like FitDay.com, or the

Cronometer.com, to count your calories as well as your nutrition levels and carbohydrate count.

Once you identify how many calories you need per day to reach your weight loss goals, you'll incorporate that number with also counting carb grams. If you have a lot of weight to lose, set yourself up for success by starting with a small goal first, such as losing 10 percent of your current body weight. [Web MD](#) has a great chart that helps you determine how many calories you need.

## Drink Enough Water

You need to remember to drink plenty of water, at least 8, 8 oz glasses of water each day, if not more. Some studies show that drinking your weight x 2/3 in ounces each day. So if you weight 150 lbs,  $(150 \times 2/3) = 100$  oz of water per day which is more than the average number of ounces most health professionals recommend you drink.

How much water you drink really depends on several factors, weight, health status, medications that you're taking and your thirst level. Other studies show that you should drink 1/2 ounce of water for each pound of body weight. So, if you are 100 lbs you should drink 50 ounces. The

important factor is to drink water for hydration and not other liquids, and to avoid getting too thirsty. (US News Health & Wellness)

## **Plan Ahead**

For any diet to do well the best way to ensure success is to plan ahead. Don't leave something as important as your health to chance. Create a weekly menu and a grocery list based upon the menu. Be realistic about your menu. If you like to eat out, plan it into your week. There are a lot of restaurants that offers healthy low carb meals. That's one really good point about a low carb lifestyle is that you'll never be deprived or have to give up your social life.

## **The Low Carb Pantry**

Keep your pantry, fridge and freezer loaded with food that you can eat. Clear out anything that is not appropriate. This is a lifestyle that your entire family can benefit from. The truth is no one needs high carb snacks like potato chips, sugary cakes, and candy on a regular basis. Treats like this have their place, but with practice you'll create low carb treats that are just as decadent without the punishment of poor health and weight gain.

When you stock your pantry choose low sugar and no sugar added items. Read labels. It's also best not to choose items with added salt or unhealthy oils. If you need to watch your calorie level more, choose no added oil options over oil added options. Use processed ingredients like sugar substitutes and newfangled low carb snacks in moderation.



## **Canned & Bottled Items**

- Beans
- Chicken
- Condiments
- Fruit in Juice
- Olives
- Organic Peanut Butter
- Pickles
- Relish
- Roasted Bell Pepper
- Salmon
- Salsa
- Sardines
- Tomatoes
- Tuna



Veggies  
Wine  
Healthy Oils

### **Dried Items**

Bouillon  
Salt-free seasonings  
Spices  
Sugar Substitutes  
Sun-dried Tomatoes

### **Grains**

Cornmeal  
Granola  
High Fiber Cereal  
Nuts & Seeds  
Oatmeal  
Quinoa  
Whole Grain Flour  
Whole Grain Pasta

### **Frozen Items**

Fish  
Fruits  
Lean Meats  
Seafood  
Veggies

### **Dairy**

Cheese  
Cream  
Eggs  
Milk

### **Fresh Items**

Fish  
Low Sugar Fruits  
Meat  
Veggies



Keeping a well stocked pantry with plenty of easy to prepare items, along with your menu and plan of action for the week will make your new healthy low carb lifestyle easy to follow. Preparation will keep you from getting tripped up and help you get healthy and stay healthy.

## Sample Healthy Low Carb Two Week Meal Plan

Week One							
Meal	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Breakfast	Frittata	Oatmeal With Fruit and Cream	Soft Poached Eggs & Rye Bread	Strawberries & Cream	Low Carb Yogurt	Low Carb Cereal	Leftovers
Lunch	Chicken & Cheese Salad	Cabbage Wrap	Grilled Chicken Salad	Tuna Salad in Lettuce Wrap	Steak Salad	Lunch Out	Leftovers
Dinner	Steak & Mashed Cauliflower with sliced Tomatoes	Poached Salmon & Asparagus with Cucumber Salad	Pan Burgers, Caramelized onion Cheese Straws, Steamed Broccoli	Asian Style Short Ribs, Bok Choy & Cauliflower Rice	Baked Salmon, Dark Greens & Sweet Potatoes	Date Night, Dinner out	Leftovers
Snack	Peanut butter & Celery	Fried Green Tomatoes	String Cheese	Hard Boiled Egg	Berries with Cottage Cheese	Raw Nuts	Pepperoni Chips
Dessert	Chocolate Mouse	Leftovers	Low carb Yogurt	Leftovers	Leftovers	Dinner out	Leftovers
Week Two							
Meal	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Breakfast	Easy One Skillet Breakfast	Oatmeal with Fruit and Cream	Oven Omelet	Fruit and Cottage Cheese	Low Carb Cereal	Boiled Eggs & Canadian Bacon	Leftovers
Lunch	Portobello Pizzas	Egg Salad Wraps	Creamy & Cheesy Squash Soup	Chicken & Avocado Salad	Pan Burgers with Mushrooms and Onion	Lunch Out	Leftovers
Dinner	Meatloaf, Cauliflower Mash & Gravy with Fried Green Beans & Red Onion	Leftovers	Pork chops & Apple Sauce, With Spinach Pecan Salad and Mashed Turnips	Lettuce Tacos (put all the taco stuff inside the lettuce or use cabbage for more crunch)	Squash Spaghetti & Meatballs	Leftovers	Dinner out
Snack	Fried Cheese	Low Carb Yogurt	Pimento Cheese & Celery	Nuts	Jerky	Cheese & Apples	Sunflower Seeds
Dessert	Berries & Cream	Leftovers	Apples & Peanut butter	Leftovers	Cheese Cake Bites	leftovers	Dinner out

To cut down on the net effective carbs in any of these meals, simply ditch the bread or fruit by adding more low and carb free snacks over fruit desserts, and adding more lean proteins and



veggies instead of bread. When menu planning always add in days for eating out, and leftovers because you know you'll need them.

## Tips & Tricks for Making Living Low Carb Easy

When first starting a low carb diet it can be difficult to get used to eating this way. The food tastes great, but you may suffer from some cravings at first, as well as struggle with figuring out what to cook.

While the sample eating plan above is helpful, these tips and tricks to make living low carb easy



will also come in handy by providing ideas for quick and easy substitutes and ways to stay motivated.

**Rice Replacement** -- This is something most low carbers miss eventually. Thankfully, there are other foods you can substitute for rice such as cauliflower. Simply steam the cauliflower and then break it up to "rice" like pieces. Since cauliflower doesn't have much of its own flavor you can dress it

up just like rice and it will be delicious.



**Avoiding Potatoes** -- If you are missing recipes like hash browns, try using summer squash instead. Shred the summer squash, mix with eggs, make a patty and fry in olive oil or coconut oil. They are delicious and you'll save a lot of carbs and won't miss the potatoes. You can also mash cauliflower to create mashed mock potatoes that are really delicious. Puree them with cream, butter, salt and pepper. Enjoy.



**Skipping the Traditional Noodles** -- Instead of using high carb noodles, eggplant, zucchini and other veggies can be used as noodles. You can use a [spiral vegetable slicer](#) to create zucchini spaghetti noodles, and you can also slice egg plant into long noodles for subbing as noodles in your lasagna recipe. You may not believe it, but you really won't miss the noodles. While there are low carb noodles you can buy today, you can't sub for the extra nutrition that using more veggies add to your day.



**Mac & Cheese** -- This needs its own space even though it's a noodle dish. We all love Mac & Cheese but why not just create a substitute by using a lot of veggies instead of noodles. Try [low carb egg noodles](#), with a lot of frozen veggies, egg and cheese to remake mom's Mac & Cheese to a healthier lower carb version that is just as satisfying.

**Use Beans** -- Anytime you can use beans instead of a higher carb item such as noodles you'll cut your carbohydrate load in half. Just throw in some cooked beans to sub some of the pasta, keep some of the pasta in so that you get that feeling of eating a full pasta meal. You'll have more nutrition and less carbs in every bite.

**Chips** -- Did you know that you can use cheese in your microwave to create cheese chips? Well you can. Grate some parmesan with some less salty cheese and place in rounds on parchment paper. Microwave for 45 seconds at a time on high, letting set between rounds until crisp but not burnt. You can also try it in the oven baking until the cheese turns golden brown at 375 degrees. Usually takes 4 to 8 minutes, so keep an eye on it.

**Pizza** -- We all love pizza and you don't have to give up the flavor of pizza. You can make a very good pizza crust out of portabella mushrooms. There are also some wonderful recipes with almond flour. Experiment. Remember to try to repeat the flavors without the carbs. Bread really doesn't have much of a flavor on its own; it's the toppings that make the difference.

**Sandwiches** -- Just use lettuce, portabella mushrooms, cabbage or [jicama](#) as the wrapper to your sandwich. Load on the lean meat, onions, cheese, and veggies and enjoy. Nothing could really be easier.



**Eating Out** -- It's actually easy to eat out on a low carb diet. You can eat everything, hold the bread and potato, and you're great. You can usually plan ahead by looking at menus online first. But even a fast food place has choices. Remove the bread, the crust, have a side salad, and get apples instead of fries. You'll enjoy the crunch, with less carbs and empty calories of fries.

**Keep Stress Low** -- One thing that makes any lifestyle hard is stress. If you let stress get to you, you'll be eating that bag of chips in no time. Keep your stress level low by getting rid of negative people in your life, avoid stressful situations, and learn to look on the positive side of life.

**Eat More Eggs** -- Keep hard boiled eggs in your fridge for a fast snack whenever you are experiencing hunger. The concern about cholesterol in an egg is way overblown, and you don't need to worry about eating eggs as snacks. One or two





eggs will kill your hunger, and taste good too.



**Exercise** -- Don't forget to add exercise into your day. Exercise can actually keep you more motivated to stick to your new healthy low carb way of life. You'll also build muscle, improve your lung function and increase your energy by exercising.

**Drink More Water** -- It's been said before, but drinking water as your main beverage is a very important part of a low carb diet. You may not believe this now, but as you give up sugary drinks (including diet soda) water will start to taste sweet to you. It's okay to have a diet soda when out to dinner on occasion, but try to drink water most of the time.

Use the idea of substitution instead of deprivation in all aspects of your life. If there is something you really love, you can include it in your diet if you count the carbs, trade off when possible, and find new flavors to excite your taste buds while staying active.

## Conclusion

Starting any new way of life can be fun and exciting but also difficult. That's why it's important to identify your goals, then create an actionable plan toward reaching your goals. Enjoying a healthy low carb lifestyle is one of the easier ways toward reaching the goals of good health, weight loss, and more energy but it still requires advanced planning, education, and support. Seek out others who share your goals and you will be successful.

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