



ARE “CARBS” DRIVING YOU CRAZY?

There is so much “hype” about carbohydrates right now that it’s difficult to separate fact from fiction. But, the quick fixes out there for weight loss are not necessarily the best choices for your health.

While it may seem that some people are successful in the short term with low-carb diets such as “Atkin’s” and “South Beach”, there is no good, long-term evidence that people can fit either of these diets into a manageable life-long commitment. The statistics about many diets are clear - 95% of people that go on diets will eventually gain the weight back.

What are carbohydrates?

Carbohydrates are natural and essential sources of fuel for the body that break down into glucose (blood sugar), which is used by the brain and other body tissues for energy.

Simple carbohydrates - foods that contain lots of sugar that taste very sweet such as candy and regular soft drinks.

Complex carbohydrates with no fibre - foods that are mostly made of starch such as peeled potatoes, pasta, and white rice.

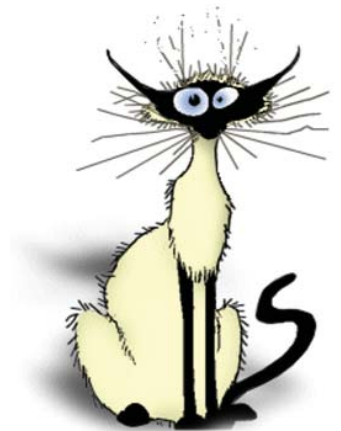
Complex carbohydrates with fibre - foods such as whole grain breads and cereals, beans and legumes, whole wheat pasta, and many vegetables and fruit.

What happens when I cut out carbohydrates?

If the body is restricted of carbohydrates, a fuel source has to be found in other ways. This causes the breakdown of body fat and muscle for energy. In the short term, you can expect rapid weight loss mainly because the body is losing body fluid (water) by breaking down muscle tissue. In the long term, a person puts their body at increased risk for several health conditions such as cardiovascular disease and kidney stones due to high intakes of fat (mostly saturated) and protein. In addition, several key nutrients will be missing from the diet, including many vitamins and minerals, anti-oxidants and dietary fibre that can lead to a variety of health problems.

South Beach vs. Atkin’s

Both diets restrict your total intake of food, and are based on the principle of limiting almost all carbohydrates, especially in the early phases of the diets. Compared to the Atkin’s Diet, the South Beach Diet includes more lower-fat protein choices, “good fats” from nuts and oils, and more whole grain products and fruits and vegetables. While some people perceive that South Beach is a healthier option, the reality is that the best option for the long term is to follow a sensible eating plan based on Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating.



no carbs
 good carbs
 bad carbs
 carb addicts
 Atkin's diet
 the Zone diet
 South Beach diet
 and more...

“CARB” CRAZY

How Can I Reach A Healthy Weight And Eat For Good Health?

In addition to using Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating as a guide, you should focus on reducing your intake of saturated and trans fat; not necessarily by eliminating fat, but by substituting healthier fats (e.g. olive and canola oil) and choosing to eat less fat overall. Focus on eating more vegetables and fruits. Most of us are nowhere near eating the minimum recommended number of servings of fruits and vegetables each day (5 to 10 per day). For the fun of it, think of how many servings of vegetables and fruit you had today. Yesterday? Get the picture?

You also need to look at your energy balance. Are you taking in more food energy than you are burning through physical activity? Chances are that if you have a weight problem, your intake is not in balance with your output. As a start, limit your portion sizes and increase your physical activity level. Try to be physically active in a purposeful way for at least 30 minutes each day.

In addition, consider your eating patterns. Do you skip meals (e.g. breakfast and lunch)? Do you find yourself continuing to eat in the evening once you've had dinner, or late at night? Small changes to these unhealthy patterns of eating can make a big difference in your efforts to reach and keep a healthy weight.

How to be successful with losing weight the healthy way

1. Know your Body Mass Index and Waist Circumference. That way you can set realistic goals and track your progress.
2. Make sure you have the right attitude. Don't judge your self-worth based on the numbers on the scale. Commit to, and work toward, a healthy weight.
3. Aim for a slow weight loss of 1-2 pounds per week.
4. Watch your portion sizes.
5. Don't skip meals.
6. Listen to your hunger cues to tell you when you are truly hungry.
7. Increase your intake of fibre.
8. Move your body every day.
9. Stick to it - don't be too critical of yourself if you have an “off” day. Instead, get back to your plan and stick to it!

For More Information On Healthy Weight Loss, Visit These Websites

Dietitians of Canada

www.dietitians.ca

Includes lots of interactive tools.

Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living

www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/paguide/

Includes resources and ideas to get people of all ages moving.

National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute

http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt/index.htm

Check your Body Mass Index and Waist Circumference and other healthy weight loss tips.