

SUMMARY

KETO

ANSWERS

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Simplifying Everything You Need to Know About the
World’s Most Confusing Diet

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Introduction

Health recommendations constantly bombard our televisions, social media feeds, and even your Google searches. The worst part, however, is that all these recommendations tend to contradict one another. One day you're exercising to stay healthy and the next day drinking a glass of wine is replacing your daily gym session! How do you know what to believe? Well, one reason we are so confused about how to improve our health is because of the abundance of outdated and misinformed recommendations. History shows that research has largely driven nutritional recommendations, and a major player in those recommendations is a man named Ancel Keys. Keys is a successful scientist who is responsible for linking fat to heart disease. In reality, the data Keys used to support his findings have since been debunked. Unfortunately, the damage had already been done and Keys sparked the movement of low-fat diets to improve our overall health and reduce our risk of heart disease. Decades later, the American Heart Association still uses Keys' recommendations to shape our dietary recommendations. The worst part is that in today's society, sharing misinterpreted research is as easy as clicking the "share" button. False health recommendations and click-baiting articles are constantly being shared on social media platforms, spewing misinformed recommendations. I mean, take a look at the rise of IIFYM, or If It Fits Your Macros, which promotes a type of eating focused solely on hitting your recommended macronutrients to achieve a specific body goal. IIFYM is all over social media as fitness influencers stuff their faces with foods like pizza and Pop-Tarts. It's no wonder that we are so confused about health and nutrition! It's time to be like Hippocrates and follow the "Let food be thy medicine and let medicine be thy food" lifestyle. You see, what you put in your body matters! Therefore, it's time to take back control of the foods you eat and use food as a medicine to heal your body from the inside out.

What is Ketosis and How Does it Work?

Over the past few years, the keto diet has become mainstream. There are countless social media accounts dedicated to spreading awareness of the diet; you can learn everything you need to know on Instagram, through books, or from a family member who heard all about the diet on the 7 o'clock news! But what information is accurate? Therefore, before we begin, it's important to understand exactly what the keto diet is. The short answer is this: "The ketogenic diet is a very low-carbohydrate, adequate protein and fat diet that transitions your body to using fat and producing ketones for energy in replacement of glucose coming from carbohydrates."

Don't worry, we'll explain this short answer further. You see, most diets promote consuming few carbohydrates as high-carb consumption can lead to many health impairments like obesity, insulin resistance, and even progress to numerous diseases. While the keto diet is similar to others in that regard, there is a significant difference. The keto diet also encourages you to put your body through a process called ketosis. So how does ketosis work? Let's begin with explaining how carbohydrates affect your body. When you consume carbs, those carbs are then broken down into glucose and released into the bloodstream. Glucose, a type of sugar, is what we know as blood sugar.

When you have an increase in blood sugar in the body, the pancreas begins to secrete a hormone known as insulin. Insulin binds to cells in the body and allows glucose to enter the cell and go through the process of glycolysis. Glycolysis further breaks down the glucose and produces energy for the body. Carbohydrates break down quickly and are the body's primary source of fuel. But when we restrict our carb intake, our blood sugar decreases and our body's production of insulin begins to lessen. As a result, our pancreas begins to secrete another hormone called glucagon.

Glucagon has many functions, like delivering energy to the body; however, the brain cannot receive that same energy. This leads to the "brain fog" that

many people experience on low-carb diets. Fortunately, the keto diet is superior to those other diets in that it meets the needs of both the body *and* the brain. When the body enters ketosis, the body releases ketones, which are energy molecules that are produced in the liver from the breakdown of fat. Once produced, ketones can leave the liver and travel to places like the brain to be used for energy. So while the keto diet promotes limiting carbohydrates, it also recommends ingesting a higher amount of healthy fats. These fats become key in ensuring the liver produces the ketones your body needs to enter and sustain ketosis.

The Many Benefits of Keto

How many diets have you tried? If you're like most people, you've likely tried a variety of diets that restrict the types of food that you consume. But how does your body feel? After a while, you probably start to become hungry, irritable, and maybe even tired. Luckily, with the keto diet, you'll not only experience weight loss, but you'll also begin to feel better overall. But why is that? Before we answer that question, it's important to note that the keto diet was invented in the 1920s by Dr. Russell Morse Wilder, but it was never intended for the sole purpose of weight loss. Instead, the diet was designed to help combat insulin resistance.

You've probably heard of insulin as it relates to type 1 or type 2 diabetes. However, insulin is a vital hormone for all healthy humans. It is secreted by the pancreas and its main job is to manage the nutrients you digest and absorb from food. You see, when you eat carbs, they are broken down into glucose, or blood sugar, and are released into your bloodstream. When you have an increase in blood sugar, the pancreas begins to secrete insulin. That insulin then "opens the door" for glucose to enter the bloodstream, where it is either used for energy right away or stored as fat. The problem is that many people overeat carbs and/or don't exercise enough, which results in blood sugar converting into fat. Even worse, continuing this pattern can lead to insulin resistance.

Insulin resistance occurs when your pancreas continues to release insulin in an attempt to decrease blood sugar levels. Over time, your body becomes less responsive to insulin. Eventually, this can lead to type 2 diabetes and other chronic illnesses. Additionally, insulin prevents the burning of stored fat which leads to obesity, inflammation, and overall poor health and disease. Of course, this doesn't mean that carbs are out to kill you. The problem is that the American diet promotes consuming *too much*. On the keto diet, however, the idea is to cut carbs and allow your body to transition to a different fuel source: fat and ketones.

When your body taps into these sources for fuel, you begin to experience an increase in energy and a decrease in hunger. The perfect combination! Even better, your brain will improve too. As your liver produces ketones, you begin to supply energy to your brain; however, you can only tap into this supply when your body is in ketosis. Lastly, the keto diet will improve your mood. When you eat non-keto foods, you are more likely to experience inflammation and poor gut health. But did you know that the neurotransmitters that regulate your mood live in your gut? In other words, good gut health leads to being in a good mood.

All these benefits seem too good to be true, but you can begin to experience these benefits by adopting the keto diet. So if you're ready, keep reading to find out about the many keto-friendly foods.

Foods You Should Consume and Avoid on the Keto Diet

So what can you eat on keto? Technically, as long as you limit your carbohydrates, your body can enter ketosis; however, that won't help your health in the long run. To stay healthy and in ketosis, you'll need to eat a low-carb, high-fat, and high-protein diet. Additionally, the key is to consume your nutrients through a variety of foods. For instance, steak is certainly high in protein, but eating steak every day would not provide you with a balanced diet. Of course, steak is high in iron, but salmon has essential Omega-3 amino acids. Therefore, you must consume a variety of beef, pork, poultry, eggs, seafood, and offal.

Let's talk about fat. Ever since Ancel Keys' research that demonized the consumption of fat, society has struggled to mend the relationship with fat. The truth is that fat is much more efficient for the body to metabolize than carbs. Simply put, when your body is using fat and ketones as its primary source of fuel, you produce less oxidative stress which results in reduced inflammation and improved cellular health. When your body is metabolizing primarily carbs for fuel, the opposite occurs. So when ordering that burger and fries, remove the bun and swap the fries for some greens. Now, you have a meal that promotes good health versus a cheat meal!

Unfortunately, many people still think that consuming fat makes you fat. However, this is not the case. Instead, you should consume fats through the many oils that you prepare your protein with. Keto-friendly oils like coconut oil, avocado oil, and olive oil are rich in fatty acids. When cooking with these oils, it's important to not heat them past their smoking point. If the oil begins to smoke, then the good acids begin to oxidize and they no longer have any nutritional value. When it comes to vegetables, eating leafy greens is best. You see, some veggies like tomatoes and onions can be high in carbs. Of course, you can still consume these, but only occasionally.

Additionally, many nuts can be high in carbohydrates as well; therefore, it's best to stick with Brazil nuts and almonds for a tasty low-carb snack.

So what foods should you avoid? As we've already mentioned, carbs should be limited, but what other foods can keep your body from entering ketosis? Foods with processed sugars and vegetable oils or canola oils can cause inflammation; therefore, it's best to stick with fresh foods and local produce. It's also important to limit your consumption of fruit. You may be thinking, "But I thought fruit was good for you." Well, while fruit may contain some vitamins and minerals, fruit also contains a lot of sugar in the form of fructose, which should be limited or avoided on the keto diet. The sugar in fruit causes an increase in blood sugar followed by a crash, which leaves you both hungry and tired.

Additionally, fructose can cause inflammation in the body that can wreak havoc on your health. However, there are a few keto-approved fruits, like berries and avocados. These are lower glycemic fruits, which means they don't cause a blood sugar spike. Avocados are rich in quality fat, high in fiber, low in net carbs, and contain many essential micronutrients. In fact, avocados contain more potassium than a banana! All this and more make avocados a crucial component to a successful keto diet. Lastly, dairy products should be limited to high-quality fermented products like yogurt and kefir. Butter is also a popular dairy product among the keto community. If you scroll through social media, you'll likely see people putting butter in their coffee or spreading thick layers of butter on whatever keto food they are eating. However, just because you *can* have butter doesn't mean you should consume it with absolutely no regard. Dairy can be a common inflammatory trigger, so it's best to limit its consumption to keep your body in ketosis.

The Three Stages of Ketosis

So you've decided to "go keto." Now what? It's time to go grocery shopping! You know all the foods you need, but how to put all those foods together can be quite the challenge. Therefore, if you want success on the keto diet, it's best to plan ahead. Planning a keto meal begins with imagining your plate. When you look at your plate, 40 percent of it should be a high-quality protein. Ten percent should be fat, and the remaining 50 percent should be salad and low-carb vegetables.

As you may remember from the previous chapter, carbohydrates are *bad*, right? Well, eating between 20 and 30 grams of carbohydrates is perfectly okay. If you eat more than 30 g, however, then your body will not go into ketosis. Speaking of ketosis, what happens inside your body during it? Your body will adapt to ketosis in three stages. The first stage is ketogenesis, also known as glucose withdrawal. This stage can begin as early as one to two hours after you've begun. Glucose withdrawal is not exactly pleasant, with it comes side effects like fatigue, brain fog, and dehydration. Two to four days later, you'll begin to reach the next stage: ketosis.

During this stage, you may notice the unpleasant side effects even more. But don't panic, these side effects are only temporary. As your insulin levels drop, your kidneys produce less water. However, ketosis has many incredible benefits as well. Not only will your metabolism begin to kick in, but your body will also begin using stored fat for energy, and your liver will start producing ketones. Within two to eight weeks, you'll experience the third stage: keto-adapted. Keto-adapted means that your body has fully adapted to ketosis. Once you've entered this stage, you'll no longer experience the negative side-effects but experience all the benefits!

Of course, the negative side-effects will make the first few weeks a bit rough. Luckily, there are many steps you can take to minimize them. First, begin by scheduling time for sleep. You'll want to get a good night's sleep to help fight fatigue. Additionally, you'll need to drink plenty of water to

combat dehydration. You can fight the side-effects even more with supplements, like potassium, magnesium, and exogenous ketones. Exogenous ketones are supplements that help increase the level of ketones in your bloodstream. These supplements can keep you energized during the difficult first weeks.

Combine Keto and Fasting for Best Results

Now that you know about the foods you need to consume to enter ketosis, it's time to discuss a critical element to help boost the many health benefits. You see, the keto diet is more than just eating the right foods, it's also about adopting a key dietary strategy: fasting. Think about the human diet in our prehistoric days. Since food was not as abundant, our prehistoric ancestors ate whenever they had the chance, fasting for long periods in between. Therefore, a key element of the keto diet is following this same strategy.

Fasting means abstaining from food for a set amount of time. When you fast, as our ancestors did, your body begins to use alternative energy sources like stored fats to survive. Today, you can mimic the same process to experience hormesis. Hormesis is a certain kind of stress that is ironically *good* for the body. It encourages the body to become stronger, resilient, and more efficient. You see, when you begin to limit the amount of food you consume, your body is forced to adapt and find fuel from another source. When the body experiences hormesis, that stored energy becomes activated, and the body's overall physical function improves.

When you combine ketosis and fasting, your body experiences a similar metabolic state. Similar to ketosis, fasting allows your body to burn stored fat, decrease the level of insulin in your bloodstream, and allows your liver to begin producing ketones. The difference is that fasting isn't sustainable in the long run whereas keto is. So why should you fast anyway? Well, the occasional fasting can jump-start your body into ketosis. The best way to do this is through intermittent fasting.

Intermittent fasting means that during an eight or sixteen-hour window, you only consume water or electrolyte supplements. Typically, many keto dieters skip breakfast and eat during the afternoon and evening hours. However, fasting, even just intermittently, is not meant for everyone. Children under the age of eighteen, the elderly, or pregnant women should not fast. Lastly, fasting is not necessary to keep your body in ketosis. If you

find that going without food is too difficult, you can simply keep eating your keto-friendly foods!

Keto Can Improve the Health of Everyone and Be Tailored For Your Unique Needs

Unlike other diets, the keto diet is one that can improve your health significantly no matter your unique body type and lifestyle. In fact, the keto diet is proven to help people of all shapes and sizes with all kinds of health issues. Of course, because everyone is unique, there are many ways that you can switch up your keto plan to further optimize your results. For instance, those who work out regularly might follow the cyclic keto in addition to regular keto.

So what is cyclic keto? Cyclic keto is when you follow the standard keto diet for five or six days of the week. During the remaining days, you will incorporate a higher carb intake. Under the cyclic keto diet, your body switches out of ketosis during your high-carb days and your body begins to reap the benefits of excess carb consumption for a temporary period. This particular diet is aimed to boost athletic performance while promoting muscle growth.

Next, there's the targeted keto diet which is considered a "compromise" between the standard keto diet and the cyclical keto diet. It's aimed for those who wish to perform high-intensity activities without putting their body out of ketosis for a long period of time. On targeted keto, you would increase your carb consumption around a targeted time, like a major competition or sporting event. This is because consuming carbs can temporarily enhance physical performance and lessen your recovery time. On both diets, you should avoid over-consuming carbs simply because it's a non-keto day. Just because you need carbs doesn't mean you should eat an entire bowl of pasta with unlimited breadsticks. Instead, carbs should be consumed from high-quality, nutrient-dense sources like sweet potatoes or plantains.

When following targeted or cyclic keto diets, sacrificing ketosis for higher athletic performance means you will pay the price. Falling out of ketosis

means your body will need to go through the stages again to re-adapt to keto. Luckily, the longer you stay in the keto-adapted phase, the less time it will take for you to switch in and out of ketosis. Those who have followed the keto diet for a long time can easily move between the different keto diets, as needed. In fact, moving in and out ketosis can even help you if you ever experience a weight-loss plateau. Of course, this doesn't mean that you should begin eating whatever you want again. Instead, it means you should take a break from the keto diet and try a new one, like the Modified Atkins Diet, which is a low-carb, high-quality protein diet. The main difference is that you'll be consuming far less fat than you would on keto.

As mentioned previously, everyone is different but can experience success on the keto diet. This also goes for men and women who will experience varied benefits from the diet. For example, women report decreased PMS symptoms and more regular periods after starting keto. This is due to ketones which act as signaling molecules that regulate hormone production. Additionally, women who suffer from Polycystic Ovary Syndrome, or PCOS have experienced benefits as well. PCOS occurs when the body produces too much luteinizing hormone, resulting in weight gain, hair loss, and irregular periods. In 2005, Duke University completed a study that placed women who suffered from PCOS on a keto diet for 24 weeks. The study found that after 24 weeks, participants experienced a 36 percent decrease in the luteinizing hormone.

Lastly, following the proper keto diet can help women boost fertility as well. That's because sex hormones and the uterus need saturated fats if they want to function at an optimal level. A keto diet is filled with good fats that the sex hormones and uterus need for successful conception. So while men and women can both see dramatic weight loss results from the keto diet, women will experience other benefits as well.

The Keto Lifestyle

Throughout this summary, we've been discussing the keto diet. However, keto isn't a diet. It's a lifestyle. This means that if you want to experience the full benefits of ketosis, you'll need to commit to the lifestyle for the long haul. To do this, you'll need to plan and make lifestyle changes to help you anticipate the many problems people face when going keto.

For instance, traveling makes it tough to maintain a healthy diet. As you spend time in airports and restrict your access to your usual foods, it makes staying in ketosis much more difficult. Plan ahead by trying to rent a vacation home with a kitchen so that you can prepare keto meals just like you would at home. Additionally, you should pack keto-friendly snacks to eat while you travel instead of relying on roadside restaurants and airport food. Another thing you can do is try fasting during transit, not only will you keep your body in ketosis, but you'll also help offset the unpleasant symptoms of jetlag.

Next, you may be wondering how to stick to keto-friendly foods when going on dates or going to dinner with friends. Luckily, all it takes to keep your social life active is a bit of planning. For example, try finding restaurants that prepare organic foods or advertise as farm-to-table. These types of restaurants likely have high-quality foods that are perfect for your keto lifestyle. Then, don't be afraid to substitute items on the menu. Instead of eating the starch and carbs that come with many meals, switch them out for veggies or a salad. Just be aware of the dressings that may cause inflammation!

It's also important to know that cheating every once in a while is okay. Beating yourself up for indulging in a wedding cake or a brownie is unhealthy. It's better to indulge and quickly get back to keto as soon as possible. You can also plan keto breaks throughout the year to help you indulge in the foods you enjoy. For example, say you have a family wedding or a trip overseas, then you can plan to come out of ketosis during those

times. Taking breaks can help you experience better long-term results and maintain your keto lifestyle. While going keto takes commitment and a significant lifestyle change, the benefits you'll experience will make all the planning and commitment worth it!

Final Summary

While there are many fad diets in today's societies, the keto diet is no fad. The lifestyle change of going keto will allow you to experience changes that you never thought possible. Not only will you enjoy the weight-loss benefits, but you'll also enjoy the many benefits that happen inside the body. When you put your body through ketosis, you'll experience increased energy, better focus, and women can experience an improvement and regulation in their hormones. Of course, going keto is not enough. It's important to stay in ketosis as well; however, going out of ketosis at times can have many benefits too. Overall, the keto lifestyle takes commitment and discipline, but you'll find that you are a healthier, more energetic person when you follow it properly.



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