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Pros and Cons of the Ketogenic Diet



The obesity epidemic is overwhelming, to say the least. With so many diets circulating around, it can be tough to keep track of which is best. One minute it's recommended that you cut fat out of your diet — while the next minute, carbs are the enemy. Although frustrating, maintaining a healthy weight does not need to be this complicated.

If you have been trying to lose the same 20 pounds for the last five years, it's time that you take your weight loss journey to the next level — starting with your diet. Today, the ketogenic diet is on my radar. I'm going to break down the ways you can benefit, but also what you should be weary of.

Why try the ketogenic diet?

For those of you who have not yet heard of the ketogenic diet, it was actually created in order to potentially treat epilepsy in children. Focusing on a high-fat, adequate protein and low-carb intake, this diet forces your body to burn fats instead of available carbohydrates.

As overall carb intake is reduced, your body goes into a metabolic state, known as ketosis. Forcing your body to burn fat for energy, you experience reduced blood sugar and insulin levels. Sounds pretty good, right? Well, in many ways it is — you can adopt some good habits through the “rules” of this diet.

I'm forever an optimist, so we'll start with the pros, as the ketogenic diet more than makes some valid points.

Benefits of the ketogenic diet

Researchers have extensively studied this diet, and this surprising to have been recommended low-fat diet. As mentioned, once your body has reached a metabolic state of ketosis, you will be able to utilize fat for fuel. Since this diet is mainly fat and protein, with just a small intake of carbs, you significantly reduce your intake of sugar — which in many ways, is the enemy.

Within one study, published in *Nutrition & Metabolism*, this found that a low-carbohydrate ketogenic diet led to greater improvements in body weight and cardiovascular factors compared to a low-glycemic index diet. While on this diet, of those with type 2 diabetes, 95.2 percent of participants eliminated their intake of medication after 24 weeks.

You may be thinking, how can all this

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I'm forever an optimist, so we'll start with the pros, as the ketogenic diet most certainly makes some valid points.

Benefits of the ketogenic diet

Researchers have extensively studied this diet, stating that it is superior to the overly recommended low-fat diet. As mentioned, once your body has reached a metabolic state of ketosis, you will be able to utilize fat for fuel. Since this diet is mainly fat and protein, with just a small intake of carbs, you significantly reduce your intake of sugar — which in many ways, is the enemy.

Within one study, published in *Nutrition & Metabolism*, it was found that a low-carbohydrate ketogenic diet led to greater improvements in body weight and cardiovascular factors, in comparison to a low-glycemic index diet. While on this diet, of those with type 2 diabetes, 95.2 percent of participants reduced or eliminated their intake of medication after 24 weeks.

You may be thinking, how can all that fat be good for you? Isn't fat the enemy?

Like any diet, you need to approach it in the right way. If you're thinking you can live off of bacon, cheese, margarine and steak, you're not really doing your body justice. You need to consume foods such as fish, nuts, pastured butter, coconut oil, organic free-range eggs and avocado.

Reasons to be cautious

If this diet was all it's made out to be, more people would be transforming their lives, right? Like any diet, there is no simple fix — it's not that black and white. Healthy, sustainable weight loss requires you to work hard and truly change your habits. Cutting out bread isn't going to cut it, you need to change your mind frame so that you can change your life.

Overall, for those aiming to lose weight, they are better ways to do so. At the end of the day, the ketogenic diet has been turned into another fad diet. Although it is beneficial for people with type 2 diabetes, it may be harmful for others. Instead of focusing on a list of foods you can and cannot eat, consume a balanced, whole food diet.

While on the ketogenic diet, you cannot consume legumes, root vegetables and most fruit, which are known to promote positive health. It's not about giving yourself such strict guidelines — it is about changing your attitude and approach towards the foods you eat.

Once you cut out fast and processed foods, you are already doing yourself a world of good. Throw a regular cardio and strength training regimen into the mix, and you're on your way to true, long-term results. To get you started in becoming more motivated, try the following recipes:

Here's the takeaway: new diets will always emerge. Although there will generally be positive aspects of that diet in terms of weight loss, it won't be the magical solution you've been waiting for. We already have the tools we need to maintain positive health. So get in the kitchen, hit the gym and take care of yourself. Only you can do that, not any trendy diet.

— Krista Hillis

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