

KETO *Smart* THE COMPLETE GUIDE



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INTRODUCTION

Countless incorrect preconceived notions come to many of people's minds when it comes to the word "**diet**." Clearing the confusion that several people have regarding this term is crucial before we proceed any further and delve deep into the specifics.

Diet comes from an ancient Greek word, which essentially meant "*mode of living*." It alludes to the amount of food a group or organism consumes. The weight loss industry has been adamant about using the term to describe weight gain or loss, and although they are not too far off from the original meaning, the truth is that the number of calories you eat has nothing to do with the term "**diet**." Therefore, the amount of sugar, fats, protein, and carbohydrates on your plate is not as relevant to the word as you may initially believe.

Although there are several types of diets with different approaches that people follow to achieve their goals, the **Ketogenic Diet** has been gaining the most popularity. Let us discuss it in detail.

THE KETOGENIC DIET

The reason behind the popularity of this diet is how compelling it has proven to be. It helps people achieve their goals much quicker in comparison to other approaches. In addition, the thing that makes the Keto diet stand out from others is the fact that it also improves overall health. It will make you look and feel younger. It also tries to counter dangerous symptoms that have long-term health implications.

You might be surprised to find out that there are more than 20 studies that have backed up the positive benefits associated with the Ketogenic Diet. For those who do not know, the Ketogenic diet is *high fat and low carbohydrate diet*. It shares several similarities with low carb diets, such as Atkins.

For this diet to be effective, you have to reduce your carbohydrate intake drastically and replace it with fat. This carbohydrate reduction brings your body to a metabolic state, commonly referred to as *Ketosis*. Once Ketosis occurs, your body starts to burn fat for energy. Not only that, but it also converts fats into *ketones* inside our livers. The ketones provide power to the brain.

*“Burn fat for energy [and]
provide power to the
brain.”*

Numerous people who have followed the ketogenic diets have observed massive drops in their insulin levels and blood sugar. This effect works synergistically with the ketones to provide the person following the diet further benefits.

What are Ketones?

For those who are not aware of what *ketones* are, they are essentially chemicals present inside our livers. Our bodies produce ketones when it does not have sufficient insulin. Ketones convert glucose or sugar into energy. The body requires another source, which is why it utilizes fat instead.

The liver converts fats into ketones. They are a type of acid that our liver sends in our bloodstreams. The tissues and muscles use them as fuel.

KETOGENIC DIET TYPES

Many of you may not have thought that the ketogenic diet has **multiple diet types**. All of its versions have proven to be effective. However, its level of success varies from person to person. Some may benefit from a particular variation of a Ketogenic diet, while others may benefit from a different one. The following are the various versions of this ever so popular diet:

Standard/Regular Ketogenic Diet aka SKD

The *standard ketogenic diet* consists of high fats, moderate protein, and very low carbohydrates. Typically, this diet has 5% of carbohydrates, 20% protein, and 75% fat.

Targeted Ketogenic Diet aka TKD

The *targeted ketogenic diets* allow you to have some carbohydrates as long as you make sure that you consume them around your workouts. Some people prefer to take them before their workouts, while others consume them after it.

Cyclical Ketogenic Diet aka CKD

This diet also gives you some leeway when it comes to carbohydrate consumption. The *cyclical ketogenic diet* is effective when you allow yourself five ketogenic days along with two days with high carb consumption. Usually, people choose weekends as their high carbohydrate days.

High Protein Keto Diet

This diet closely follows the standard ketogenic diet. However, there is a difference. It requires you to take more protein. The ratio for the high protein diet is 5% carbohydrates, 35% protein, and 60% fat.

Even though the diets mentioned above have scientific backing, **the only diets studied extensively are the high protein ketogenic diet and the standard ketogenic diet.**

Targeted or cyclical ketogenic diets are extremely advanced methods. High-level athletes and bodybuilders typically use them to get in peak physical shape.

WHY THE KETOGENIC DIET GAINED SO MUCH POPULARITY?

You surely must have noticed how the Ketogenic diet took the world by storm in the past couple of years. There are tons of informative content regarding it. Numerous high-profile celebrities are also endorsing it. However, what is the reason? Well, there are tons of them. Let us begin!

1. Multiple Transformations

The real buzz regarding Keto started when people started to follow the diet and started to see quick results. These rapid results inspired people to follow the diet and post their transformations on social media, especially on Instagram. The transformation stories took a life of its own and thus began the *#ketotransformation* trend on Instagram. The shocking part about it is that this trend has not lost its steam. There even have been notable stories where people have lost more than 100 pounds without entering a gym (although Keto and exercise go well hand in hand).

Renowned Olympian Amy Van Dyken remained enthusiastic and vocal about this diet's benefits as not only did Keto help her lose weight; it also improved her memory along with her energy levels.

Another instance of strong endorsement is that of an Instagram user who lost a considerable amount of fat from areas initially thought to be impossible to lose weight from. Moreover, the transformation occurred in a minimal period.

2. Keto Products Started Becoming Popular in Grocery Stores

People who follow low carbohydrate diets, such as the Keto diet, are aware of what they should be eating. They know what is healthy for them and what is not. However, despite that knowledge, they face a challenge. In addition, that challenge is making Keto-friendly ingredients into meals. This challenge was particularly tricky for newbies. Fortunately, high profile stores like Amazon, Wal-Mart, and Whole Foods took control of the situation by providing ready-made snacks and ingredients which people could mix and match for creating keto meals in very little time.

3. More and More Keto Recipes Started Appearing Online

Some people find following the Ketogenic diet to be difficult. However, they persevere, as they know how beneficial it is in the long run. In addition, with the abundance of keto-friendly recipes online, following the diet has become as easy as ever. These recipes are full of varieties that ensure you do not have to sacrifice your taste buds to achieve your diet goals. The internet has become a hub of vegetarian keto recipes, keto breakfast recipes, keto instant pot recipes, and many others for everyone's convenience. There is even a keto recipe for people who cannot live without bread.

"With the abundance of keto friendly recipes online, following the diet has become as easy as ever."

4. Celebrity Endorsements

Several high-profile celebrities have been endorsing the ketogenic diet for a long time. So much so that you might think that they support it more than their art or products. This popularity of this eating plan has increased tenfold in the past couple of years, and a big reason for it is the number of TV stars, sports stars, and actors embracing it.

The keto diet is as low carb as it gets. As you may know by now, people who follow the standard version of the Keto diet, consume around 75% fat, close to 20% of protein, and 5% carbohydrates. You might not notice a difference in the first few days; however, after a few days of following the Keto diet, your body will enter *Ketosis* (which we will discuss comprehensively).

5. Documentaries Are Backing Keto Up

Since Keto's rise in popularity, there have been several documentaries that argue in favor of it. Some may come off as preachy, while others make their case by providing hard evidence. A documentary known as *Magic Pill* received high acclaim because of how accurately it portrayed the benefits of Keto. The documentary claims that following the Ketogenic lifestyle can help people to get rid of diabetes, improve autism symptoms, and liver disease. It even claimed that the diet is capable of curing cancer, although it garnered mixed reactions from the audience.

"Following the Ketogenic lifestyle can help people to get rid of diabetes, improve autism symptoms, and liver disease."

Another documentary claimed that this diet cuts down on prescription drug dependency in four to five weeks. Everyone who watches these documentaries have mixed reactions and emotions about them. Despite everyone's feeling about the overflow of Keto related content, it is an excellent reminder telling us that although there are numerous benefits associated with Keto, *there are not any magic pills for improving health in a day.*

6. Contradicting Studies about Keto Went Viral

Although there is an abundance of content that supports Keto on the internet, you will also come across several articles and blogs that talk about its downsides. These opposing articles claim that this way of eating could potentially cause diabetes, heart disease, reduced muscle mass, diarrhea, and stomach pain. A study even claimed that following this diet on a long-term basis could potentially harm your health in the long term.

Some researchers also suggested that anyone who consumed a diet with a low carbohydrate ratio had an elevated mortality rate in comparison to the people who ate carbohydrates in moderate amounts. Another study claimed that people who eat a higher number of animal products by cutting down on carb intake also had higher chances of mortality. These studies further included whole grain bread, peanut butter, and other non-keto foods that are perfect for sustaining long-term health.

Although these studies went viral, very few of them had any valid arguments. Moreover, a lot of them proved inauthentic down the line by renowned dieticians.

7. Several People Considered Giving It a Go

By now, it would be fair to say that the Ketogenic diet has a fair share of controversy surrounding it despite the plethora of people who swear by it. This diet plan has an army of followers. Most of these people have proven its effectiveness by sharing their weight loss journey on social media with before and after photos. This has tempted several people to give this diet a go at some point.

In addition, with so many studies claiming that the Ketogenic diet could cure several illnesses without the need for pharmaceutical medicine; people are extremely enthused to give it a try. If you are considering trying the diet out for yourself, you must keep an important point in mind. Before you go ahead and make a huge lifestyle

change, such as following the Keto diet, it would be advisable to talk to a medical professional

HEALTH BENEFITS OF THE KETOGENIC DIET

Diets with low carbohydrates often receive vilification for the past few decades. As mentioned earlier, some people claim that Ketogenic diets could cause heart diseases by raising cholesterol levels because of the high-fat content present in them.

However, numerous scientific studies have proven time and time again that **low carb diets are beneficial and extremely healthy**. The following are proven health benefits of ketogenic diets.

1. Reduced Appetite

A common complaint that people have with most diet plans is that they often make them hungry. It makes them feel miserable after some time, which is why the majority of them give up. Low carb ketogenic diets, however, are entirely different. After a few days, you will notice that you are not as hungry anymore. The high-fat content in this diet makes **you feel full and energetic all the time**. Several studies have shown that when people eat more fat and protein and cut down on carbohydrates, their daily caloric intake reduces significantly.

2. Rapid Weight Loss

Want to lose weight? It is pretty simple. Just cut the carbs out. Numerous well-reputed studies have illustrated how people on diets with low carbs lose a significant amount of weight in a short time. The reason for it is that low carb diets are perfect for ridding

your body from water weight. This lowers insulin levels and allows quicker weight loss in the first couple of weeks.

A study compared low-fat diets and high carb diets. It discovered that **people who restrict their carbohydrate intake lose weight twice as quickly as the ones who follow low-fat diets**. In addition, the best part about it is that they do not even feel hungry. Another study on obese adults showed that the rapid weight loss effect in ketogenic diets last as long as six months in comparison to conventional diet plans. This is why you see so many mind-blowing transformation photos now and then.

The Keto diet has the upper hand when it comes to thoroughly inspected research and studies.

3. A High Percentage of Fat Loss is Due to the Abdominal Cavity

A lot of you may not know this, but our bodies carry different types of fat. In addition, the areas where fat is present determines the risk of disease and the level of health of a person. There are mostly **two main types of fat in our bodies**. They are subcutaneous fat and visceral fat. *Subcutaneous fat* is under our skins, while *visceral fat* is present in the cavity of our abdomens. Visceral fat only occurs after accumulating for an extended period. Most overweight men have tons of visceral fat.

This type of fat lodges around vital organs. Too much visceral fat causes insulin resistance and inflammation. It also causes metabolic dysfunction, which is quite common in Western Countries. **There is no better option than the Ketogenic diet for eliminating harmful abdominal fat**. In fact, it would be fair to say that most of the fat that people lose by following low carbohydrate diets comes from the abdomen. After some period of following this diet, the pressure that vital organs tolerate reduces significantly, which is why there is a lesser risk of type-2 diabetes and heart disease.

4. Improved Levels of Good Cholesterol

HDL, also known as *high-density lipoprotein*, is **good cholesterol**. The higher your HDL levels are, the lower the chances of heart diseases are. Eating high-quality fat is an excellent way to improve good HDL levels, and what better way to consume fat regularly than by following the ketogenic diet. Consequently, it is not surprising to notice **excellent HDL levels when a person is following the Ketogenic diet**.

5. Massive Drop in Triglycerides

For those who do not know what *triglycerides* are, they are **fat molecules** running around in the bloodstream. Several types of research have indicated how high levels of triglycerides are capable of causing heart diseases. One of the biggest causes of elevated levels of triglycerides in people who work in sedentary jobs is the high consumption of carbohydrates. As soon as people cut down on the carbs and increase their fat intake, they begin experiencing an extremely **dramatic drop in blood triglycerides**. Low-fat diets, on the other hand, cause a rise in blood triglyceride levels.

6. Reduced Insulin and Blood Sugar Levels

Although the ketogenic diet is perfect for losing weight, it does much more than that, especially for people with insulin resistance and diabetes. Millions of people all over the world suffer from these problems. Researches prove that **insulin and blood sugar levels reduce significantly after some time of following a diet with high fats and low carbs**.

If you have diabetes, you may have to reduce your insulin dosage by fifty percent immediately when you start following a low carb diet. A study conducted about people who had type-2 diabetes showed that the ketogenic diet eliminated or lowered their medication use within five to six months. It would be wise to speak to your doctor

about your blood sugar medication before you start a low carbohydrate diet. The doctor might adjust your dosage for preventing hypoglycemia.

7. Could Reduce Blood Pressure

Hypertension or elevated blood pressures are significant risk factors that lead the way for other diseases like kidney failure and strokes. Diets with low carbohydrates like the ketogenic diet are **perfect for lowering blood pressure**, which will also reduce the risks of other diseases down the line.

8. Improved Metabolism

Heart disease and diabetes mostly occur because of bad metabolism. Metabolic syndrome is essentially a culmination of various other symptoms. They are:

- *Low levels of good HDL cholesterol*
- *High triglycerides*
- *Increased fasting blood sugar levels*
- *High blood pressure*
- *Abdominal obesity*

The ketogenic diet is **beneficial for treating the symptoms** as mentioned earlier.

9. Therapeutic Benefits of Various Brain Disorders

Our brains require glucose. The reason for it is that it has some parts that are only capable of burning this sugar type. Yet surprisingly, a considerable part of our brains is also capable of burning ketones. Ketones form when your carb intake is on the lower side or when you are starving. The ketogenic diet mimics the same mechanism.

There have been several cases in which **children with epilepsy found a cure or reduced their symptoms remarkably following the keto diet**. Close to 50 percent saw a massive reduction in seizures, while 16 percent of them were free from them.

Because of the success of the keto diet for various illnesses, scientists have started to study it for other conditions as well, which includes Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's.

10. Better Sleep

Several people who follow the keto diet claim that they do not feel restless anymore when they lie down to sleep. You may not notice a significant difference overnight, but after a week or two, your brain and body will adjust to it. After that, **your sleep will be longer and sounder**. You will feel well-rested and relaxed one you wake up.

Not many things in the field of nutrition science have the same clarity in reputation as the countless health benefits of ketogenic diets. This diet will improve your blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol. It will also boost weight loss and lessen your appetite. If you are serious about improving your health, any form of the Keto diet could be worth the try.

THE SECRET BEHIND WHY THIS DIET WORKS

Some people might find the concept of reducing their carbs significantly to be a nightmare. High carb dependency can be quite severe to get rid of in the initial stages. It is a huge physiological and lifestyle change because you are replacing your body's desire to consume carbs with high-fat consumption. That's something that your body probably requires getting used to. However, once the first week or ten days are over, it is only smooth sailing from there on out.

Therefore, you might be asking yourself questions like, *"does this diet work?"* *"How does it work?"* and if yes, then *"is the Keto diet ladder worth climbing?"*

For a lot of people, the answer is a clear and simple "yes." Numerous well-reputed studies regarding the keto diet have discovered that it leads to a slightly higher percentage of weight loss in comparison to other well-known diets without making you feel hungry all the time. In addition, the latest research also show that this diet helps with common debilitating conditions.

"Higher percentage of weight loss ... without making you feel hungry."

Here are a couple of primary mechanisms behind the ketogenic diet's excellent results:

First of all, **it reduces your daily caloric intake *naturally***. Since the diet encourages people to consume highly satiated organic foods and to restrict processed foods that stimulate the appetite, the body is always full. It does not require eating as many

calories as it used to. Because of this spontaneous drop in caloric intake, we lose weight and reduce our chances of attaining dangerous diseases like type-2 diabetes.

Following a ketogenic diet increases ketone use. As we discussed earlier, ketones are the most effective energy source for our bodies. However, our body does not produce them if it lacks sugar or glucose for supporting brain activity. Our body receives positive benefits effects when it uses ketones for burning it as fuel. **It reduces our appetite, increases our energy, and supports optimal brain health.**

This potent combo of reducing calories sustainably along with the production of ketones is what makes this diet useful and unique in many ways. You can only follow this diet if you have the will power and desire to change. Everything that follows it will be easy. Achieving your body composition and health goals requires you to overcome the most challenging obstacle that comes with most diet plans. And that is, taking the first step. Luckily, switching to the keto diet becomes more straightforward when you filter out unnecessary information and stick to a reliable and sustainable plan.

KETOSIS AND KETONES EXPLAINED

If you have ever done some research about the ketogenic diet, the chances are that you have heard about Ketosis. It is a metabolic process that burns that fats stored in our body when there is not enough glucose to convert into energy. This process ensures that the body burns stored fats, which results in the buildup of acids known as ketones.

Following the ketogenic diet is the best way to induce Ketosis. The aim of this high fat and low carb diet is to burn unnecessary fat by pressuring the body to use fat instead of carbohydrates for energy.

Ketosis is often present in patients with diabetes. Lack of insulin or incorrect usage of insulin causes this process to occur.

Important Facts about Ketosis

Fact 1

The ketosis process takes place when our bodies do not have enough access to sources of primary fuels like glucose.

Fact 2

Numerous people follow this diet for losing weight. Ketosis ensures that our body burns fat. It makes us look leaner because of the lack of carbohydrate intake.

Fact 3

Our blood's acidity increases as the levels of ketones increase.

KETOSIS EXPLAINED

In normal situations, the cells in our bodies use glucose as the primary source of energy. The cells usually derive glucose from dietary carbs like:

Starchy Foods: Items like pasta and bread **Sugar:** Items like yogurt, milk, and fruits

Our bodies break the items mentioned above down into simple sugars. It can either use glucose for fueling the body or storing it in muscles and livers as glycogen. If there is a shortage of glucose in the body for meeting day to day energy demands, our bodies adopt alternate strategies for meeting those demands. Notably, it begins to break fat stores down for providing glucose by deriving it from triglycerides. The by-product that occurs from this process is ketones.

As mentioned earlier, ketones are acidic in nature and form inside the blood and eradicated in the urine. Small quantities of ketones serve to signal that our body is breaking the fat down. However, be wary of extremely high ketone levels, they can be highly poisonous for our bodies. Eventually, high ketone levels pave the path for a dangerous process known as ketoacidosis.

When Ketosis occurs in our bodies, they are in a metabolic state in which the body changes fat stores to energy, which releases ketones.

HOW HEALTHY IS KETOSIS

Although there are tons of health benefits associated with the ketogenic diet, people with certain health conditions should be wary of it and consult their doctors before proceeding with it. Besides that, following Keto improves HDL levels. The improvement is significantly better in comparison to other diets with moderate carb intake.

The Keto diet's focus on promoting healthier eating also could be the reason for its countless health benefits. Medical experts have carefully studied this diet to see its effects on epileptic children. The study involved children who were not benefitting from other varieties of treatments. They concluded that the diet could help these children in

some cases. Researchers also noticed its positive effects on epileptic adults. Research is still ongoing to further the diet's legitimacy.

KETOSIS AND DIABETES

Diabetic patients often wonder if they can follow this diet. Well, let us take a closer look. Ketosis is capable of occurring if the body does not have sufficient insulin for processing glucose. If a patient who has diabetes urinates, and there are traces of ketones present in the urine, it is a sign that their diabetes is not under control.

That said, some dieticians recommend patients with type-2 diabetes to follow the keto diet. They also refer to type-2 diabetes as non-insulin dependent diabetes. With type-2 diabetes, the body continues to produce a decent amount of insulin. However, it cannot use the insulin properly for transporting glucose to the cells for use as fuel.

As we all know, the Ketogenic diet pays attention to the reduction of carbohydrate consumption. People with type-2 diabetes should reduce carb intake as they convert to glucose and cause blood sugar levels to rise.

If you happen to be a patient who follows this diet, make sure that you carefully monitor your ketone levels. The reason for it is that high ketone levels cause ketoacidosis.

WHAT IS KETOACIDOSIS?

Although we have touched upon this topic, let us delve into some more details about it. Abnormal ketone levels are capable of poisoning our bodies. You should take this very seriously as it has the potential to develop within a day.

Ketoacidosis has several potential triggers. It often occurs due to illnesses that pave the way for the production of high hormone levels. It does not bode well with insulin and is a recipe for disaster. People who go for insulin therapy face ketoacidosis.

They either face this because of a lack of insulin or missing their scheduled treatments. There are also some less common triggers. They are:

- Surgery
- Stress
- Physical trauma
- Emotional trauma
- Drug abuse

This process often occurs in individuals with type 1 diabetes because of the body's inability to produce insulin. It also occurs in individuals who have type-2 diabetes; however, it is not as common.

Increased blood sugar levels and high ketone levels are telltale signs of ketoacidosis. Luckily, some kits help you to detect them. Let us look at some of the ketoacidosis's early symptoms.

EARLY SYMPTOMS OF KETOACIDOSIS

- Rapid breathing or shortness of breath
- Vomiting and nausea
- Frequent Urination
- Fruity Breath
- Dry Mouth or Excessive Thirst
- Flushed or Dry Skin
- Too much confusion or difficulty in concentration
- Abdominal pain

FOODS TO EAT ON A KETO DIET

Several studies have indicated that this high fat, low carbohydrate diet is perfect for losing weight and reducing the effects of epilepsy and diabetes. There is also some evidence that it could be helpful for Alzheimer's and certain cancers. Typically, a ketogenic diet restricts carbohydrate intake to 20 to 50 grams a day. Although you might find this to be challenging initially, you can certainly stock your fridge with several nutritious foods. The following are some of those foods:

SEAFOOD

Seafood like shellfish and fish are extremely Keto-friendly foods. Other fish like salmon contain decent quantities of selenium, potassium, and vitamin B, yet they are free from carbohydrates. However, it would be wise to keep in mind that the carb ration in various shellfish types varies greatly. For example, while most crabs and shrimp have little to no carbs, other shellfish types do.

This does not mean that you cannot include shellfish in your keto diet, but it is necessary to account for your carb intake when your goal is to stay in a narrow range. The following are carbohydrate counts of 100 grams of shellfish servings.

SHELLFISH	CARBOHYDRATE COUNT PER 100 GRAMS
Squid	3 gm
Oysters	4 gm
Octopus	4 gm
Mussels	7 gm
Clams	5 gm

Mackerel, sardines, salmon, and other types of fatty fish contain a high amount of omega-3 fats. Studies have shown that these fats are perfect for lowering increase insulin sensitivity and lowering insulin levels in obese and overweight people. Additionally, eating fish improves mental health and reduces the risk of mental diseases according to studies. Eating seafood twice per week is ideal.

CHEESE

Cheese is both delicious as well as nutritious. There are numerous types of cheese. Luckily, all of them contain an extremely low carbohydrate amount and a higher fat percentage, therefore, making them **an excellent fit for ketogenic diet followers**. Twenty-eight grams or one ounce of cheddar cheese seven grams of protein and one gram of carbohydrates. It also has a high calcium percentage.

Cheese contains high saturated fat too, but there haven't been any cases that indicate heart disease risk because of it. Some studies support high saturated fats for protection from heart diseases. Cheese also has *conjugated linoleic acid*. *It is a fat type that helps to improve body composition and reduce overall body fat.*

Moreover, regularly eating cheese could help you put on muscle mass and increase overall body strength as you age. A 3-month long study conducted on older adults discovered that people who consumed 210 grams (7 ounces) of ricotta cheese every day benefit from increased muscle strength and muscle mass. Cheese also contains beneficial fatty acids and protein yet contains minimal carbohydrates.

COTTAGE CHEESE AND GREEK YOGURT

Cottage cheese and plain Greek yogurt are **high protein foods that are perfect for the ketogenic lifestyle**. Sure, they do contain some carbohydrates, but you can incorporate them into your diet. Greek yogurt has eleven grams of protein and five grams of carbohydrates. Cottage cheese, on the other hand, provides eighteen grams of protein and five grams of carbs.

Both cottage cheese and yogurt make you feel full, substantially decreasing your appetite. The best part about them is that they are delicious. You can also combine them with sugar-free sweeteners, cinnamon, and chopped nuts for a quick and straightforward ketogenic treat.

COCONUT OIL

Coconut oil is arguably the healthiest among most oils. It has several unique elements that make it perfect for the keto diet. There is medium-chain triglycerides (MCT) present in coconut oil. MCTs are much better than long-chain fats used up as rapid energy sources or converted into ketones after they enter the liver.

In fact, there have even been tests where people with Alzheimer's received coconut oil to increase their ketone levels. It had a positive impact on them as well as on people with other nervous system and brain disorders. Coconut oil also contains lauric oil, which is one of its primary fatty acids. Some research suggests that the combination of lauric acid and MCTs help to promote a sustained ketosis level.

In addition, coconut oil could help adults with obesity lose belly fat and weight if they consume 30 ml of it daily. A study even proved this by testing men who drank two teaspoons of coconut oil every day without making significant dietary changes. The men's waistline reduced by 2.5 cm on average.

EGGS

You will find it hard to find any food that is as versatile as eggs. One big egg has below one gram of carbohydrates and less than six grams of protein, making them the perfect food for the keto lifestyle. Additionally, eggs are capable of triggering our hormones, *keeping stable blood sugar levels, and making you feel full*. Because of this, you will not consume as many calories throughout the day.

The egg yolk received criticism for a long while. People suggest that you shouldn't eat for the fear of increased cholesterol levels. However, recent studies show that you should eat as it has most of the egg's nutrients. Important antioxidants like zeaxanthin and lutein are also present in an egg; they are essential for protecting eye health. In most cases, consuming egg yolks does not increase blood cholesterol levels. In fact, it would be fair to say that eggs modify LDL's shape to lower the chances of heart disease risk.

POULTRY AND MEAT

Poultry and meat are staples of the keto diet. Poultry and fresh meat are full of B vitamins and various minerals, including zinc, selenium, and potassium. They are also low in carbohydrates. These items also contain high-quality protein, which is crucial for maintaining and increasing muscle mass, especially when following a low carbohydrate diet.

A study in older women discovered that eating a fatty meat-based diet leads to slightly higher HDL cholesterol levels (8 percent) in comparison to high carb, low-fat diets. If possible, go for grass-fed meat. The reason for it is that animals contain a higher percentage of antioxidants, conjugated linoleic acid, and omega-3 fats if they eat grass. There is nothing wrong with grain-fed animals either, but they will have a slightly lower nutritional value.

AVOCADOS

This is an incredibly healthy fruit. One hundred grams or 3.5 ounces of avocado has close to nine grams of carbohydrates. Seven of these grams are fiber; therefore, the net carbohydrate count is just two grams.

Avocados contain several minerals and vitamins, including potassium. Most of us do not have enough of this essential mineral. A great thing about higher potassium intake

is that it makes the keto diet transition significantly more manageable. Moreover, **avocados could help improve triglyceride and cholesterol levels.**

According to a study, people experienced a significant decrease in harmful triglycerides and LDL cholesterol when they consumed avocados regularly. They also noticed improvements in good HGL cholesterol.

OLIVE OIL

Olive oil has numerous benefits for heart health. It contains a higher percentage of monosaturated fat, oleic acid, which combines to reduce risk factors associated with heart diseases. Additionally, **extra virgin olive oil contains a lot of antioxidants called *phenols*.** These compounds provide additional heart health protection by improving artery function and reducing inflammation.

Since **olive oil is a pure fat source, it does not have any carbohydrates.** It is perfect for healthy mayonnaise and salad dressings. Because olive oil is not as stable in comparison to saturated fats, especially at higher temperatures, it would be wise to use it for low heat cooking. You can even add it to foods after cooking them.

CREAM AND BUTTER

Cream and butter are perfect fats to consume when you are following the keto diet. They have little to no carbohydrates and only contain trace amounts. Because of the high saturated fats present in them, people firmly believed that butter and cream were significant contributors to various heart diseases. Recently, however, studies have proven that the link between heart diseases and saturated fats is not as big as once imagined.

On the contrary, some studies have even claimed that moderate high fat consumption could potentially reduce stroke and heart attack risks.

SHIRATAKI NOODLES

These noodles are an **excellent addition to the keto diet**. You can find them in most grocery stores, and if not, you can always buy them online. Shirataki noodles are very low in carbohydrates (1 gram) and five calories for every serving as they mainly consist of water.

A viscous fiber known as glucomannan is the major constituent of these noodles. It is capable of absorbing its water weight by fifty times. The fiber creates a gel that slows down the movement of food inside your digestive tract. **It helps to reduce blood sugar spikes and decrease hunger, making it highly beneficial for diabetes management and weight loss.**

You can buy Shirataki noodles in various shapes, including linguine, fettuccine, and rice. You can also substitute them for regular noodles in most recipes.

BERRIES

Fruits are often too high in carbohydrates, which is why including them in keto diets does not make sense. Berries, however, are an exception. **They contain a lot of fiber and are low in carbohydrates.** In fact, it would be fair to say that blackberries and raspberries contain equal or more fiber than digestible carbohydrates.

Berries are also full of antioxidants that are capable of protecting against various diseases and reducing inflammation. The following are carbohydrate counts for 100 grams of some common berries:

BERRIES	NET CARBS	TOTAL CARBS
<i>Strawberries</i>	5 grams	10 grams
<i>Raspberries</i>	5 grams	12 grams
<i>Blueberries</i>	12 grams	14 grams
<i>Blackberries</i>	5 grams	10 grams

SEEDS AND NUTS

Seeds and nuts are low carb, high fat and healthy foods. Consuming nuts frequently can reduce various chronic diseases like depression, certain cancers, and heart diseases.

Furthermore, seeds and nuts contain a high percentage of fiber. It makes you feel full, making you absorb fewer calories in a day. Although most seeds and nuts contain low net carbohydrates, the amount can surprisingly vary among the various types. Let us take a look:

SEEDS AND NUTS	NET CARBS	TOTAL CARBS
<i>Sesame Seeds</i>	3 grams	7 grams
<i>Pumpkin Seeds</i>	4 grams	5 grams
<i>Flaxseeds</i>	0 grams	12 grams
<i>Chia Sees</i>	1 gram	12 grams
<i>Walnuts</i>	2 grams	4 grams
<i>Pistachios</i>	5 grams	8 grams
<i>Pecans</i>	1 gram	4 grams
<i>Macadamia Nuts</i>	2 grams	4 grams
<i>Cashews</i>	8 grams	9 grams
<i>Brazil Nuts</i>	1 gram	3 grams
<i>Almonds</i>	3 grams	6 grams

Total Carbs

The total number of carbohydrates you consume in a single day refers to as total carbs.

Net Carbs

There is a vast difference between net carbohydrates and total carbohydrates. The total carbohydrate grams present in any food minus their sugar alcohol and fiber grams refer to as net carbohydrates. The fiber and sugar alcohol are subtracted as our bodies do not digest them.

UNSWEETENED TEA AND COFFEE

Tea and coffee are **free from carbohydrates** and are incredibly healthy. They have caffeine, which is perfect for improving metabolism, which may lead to better physical performance, mood, and alertness. In addition, tea and coffee drinkers have significantly lesser risks of developing diabetes or heart diseases. Steer clear from tea lattes and light coffee as they usually contain high carb flavorings and non-fat milk. Instead, you can add heavy cream or a teaspoon of butter in your tea or coffee.

OLIVES

Consuming olives will provide you the same benefits that olive oil does. The only difference will be that olives are solid. Olives contain an important antioxidant known as Oleuropein. It has several anti-inflammatory properties that offer protection from cell damage.

Additionally, some studies suggest that eating olives decreases blood pressure and prevents bone loss. Because of their small size, the carb content in olives is on the lower side. Half of those carbohydrates are fiber. Therefore, they are easily digestible, as well. There is one gram of fiber and two grams of carbs in a one ounce serving of olives.

COCOA POWDER AND DARK CHOCOLATE

Cocoa powder and dark chocolate are excellent antioxidant sources. As a matter of fact, some people even claim cocoa to be a super fruit because it contains as many antioxidant properties as acai berries and blueberries. Dark chocolates also contain flavanols. Flavanols are perfect for maintaining artery health and lowering blood pressure.

Surprisingly, you can include chocolate in your ketogenic diet. However, it is necessary to choose chocolate that contains more than 65 percent of cocoa solids or even more.

An ounce of unsweetened chocolate includes three grams of net carbohydrates. Dark chocolate is easily available in online and grocery stores.

"Maintain muscle mass while losing body fat."

"You can include chocolate in your ketogenic diet."

LOW CARBOHYDRATE VEGETABLES

Vegetables that do not contain starch have low carbohydrates and calories. However, they contain copious amounts of vitamin C and various other minerals. Most vegetables contain fiber. Our bodies do not digest them, which is why it absorbs them like other carbohydrates.

In most cases, vegetables have minimal net carb count. However, eating a serving of vegetables like beets, yam, potatoes, and other starchy vegetables, could exceed your entire day's carb limit. The net carbohydrate count for vegetables with no starch ranges below one gram for a single cup of raw spinach to eight grams for a cup of Brussels sprouts.

Low carb vegetables also have antioxidants that offer protection against unstable molecules known as free radicals. They are capable of causing massive cell damage. In addition, cruciferous vegetables like cauliflower, broccoli, and kale decrease the risk of heart problems and cancer.

You can easily substitute your higher carb foods with low carb vegetables. For example, you can use cauliflower to mimic mashed potatoes or rice. You can even use zucchini to make "zoodles." Spaghetti squash is also an excellent substitute for high carb spaghetti.

KETO APPROVED CONDIMENTS

Although you may find some difficulty in searching for Keto approved condiments, there are plenty of them available online and some grocery stores. Make sure that the condiments that you choose do not contain added sugar. Read the nutritional information thoroughly and choose condiments that are not overly processed.

Keto-friendly mayo is a highly popular condiment. It is non-GMO, free from gluten, and sugar-free. In addition, most companies that make Keto-friendly mayo use rosemary extract, avocado oil, sea salt, vinegar, and cage-free eggs

There are plenty of other foods that you can eat when you are following the ketogenic diet. However, the ones mentioned here are among the best and yield quick results.

KETO-FRIENDLY ITEMS TO STOCK IN YOUR KITCHEN

- Almonds
- Peanuts
- Peanut Butter
- Full Fat Milk
- Sour Cream
- Avocado Oil
- Turkey
- Ham and
- Cream Cheese

HOW TO START FOLLOWING KETO AND ADAPT TO THE LIFESTYLE

Thinking of making a jump to low carb high fat eating? Well, the early days can be slightly tough. After all, for most of us it is a radical departure from our conventional way of eating. Most people have copious amounts of carbohydrates in their diets, and to make matters worse, most of the carbs are highly processed.

Several people these days are giving the keto diet a try. As we discussed earlier, it puts our body through ketosis. **It occurs when our bodies' burn fats instead of carbohydrates.** Because of this radical change, our bodies begin to lose fat, weight, and protect us from serious problems like diabetes.

Those who are new to the keto diet might be wondering how to start following it and sustain it for an extended period. You have to adapt to a completely different lifestyle, one in which you have to make mental and practical changes. No need to be overwhelmed as we will discuss every important detail that will help you to start following and adapt to the keto lifestyle.

1. Be Aware of What You Will Eat and What You Won't Eat

As abundantly mentioned before, you will be limiting your carbs severely in a ketogenic diet. Beginning with around 20 or 30 grams of carbs per day would be ideal. In addition, you must be aware of what foods contain protein, fats, and carbohydrates, so you know how to make the correct choices. For example, ice cream, candy, cookies, chips, pasta, and bread are not the only items that contain carbohydrates. Some beans contain proteins as well, but their carb percentages are high too. Vegetables and fruits,

although are considered healthy, contain carbs as well. **The only items that do not consist of carbohydrates are pure fats, meat, oils, and butter.**

2. Become Acclimated with Fats

Many people are hesitant towards high fat diets because they believe that it is harmful for their health. Researches regarding fats show mixed results. Some of them suggest that using polyunsaturated fat and getting rid of trans fat is crucial for reducing heart disease risk. Other researchers indicated that types of fat and total fat do not directly cause heart diseases.

With so many contradictory studies, determining what is healthy and what's not becomes increasingly difficult. **Always remember that the overall quality of a diet holds much more importance than that of a single nutrient.**

You might find preparing for a high fat diet uncomfortable initially, which is why it would be wise to begin with small adjustments. For example, instead of ordering burger with high carb buns, order one where there are lettuce leaves instead of the buns. Instead of ordering fries, go for vegetables. Choose non-starch vegetables instead of rice or potatoes in your meal. Use a lot of oil in your diet. Avocado oil, olive oil, and coconut oil are good examples. Remember that old eating habits like grilled chicken breast are not good enough for keto as they do not contain enough fat.

Start replacing carbs with fat slowly and steadily. Take time with the transition as sometimes too quick of a diet transition can cause a relapse. **Prepare yourself for a long-term relationship with fat** as, without it, ketogenic diets are not effective.

3. Protein is Good, but in Moderation

There is a common misconception about high fat low carb diets and that is, you can eat high amounts of protein. This could not be any further from the truth as **you have to watch your protein intake** just as you watch your carb intake.

Dieticians discovered that protein also converts to glucose, which is why overeating it renders ketosis ineffective. Keep a high amount of fat in your meals with a small portion of protein (preferably meat). The other way around will not work in this diet.

4. Work on Your Cooking Skills

There are tons of keto cookbooks and websites with recipes approved by pros. Most keto pros recommend choosing four or five of your favorite keto recipes and preparing them in bulk. **The reason why they prefer cooking meals in bulk in advance is that it prevents you from standing and wondering what you will eat.** Most people in such cases turn back to carbs.

5. Start Drinking Bulletproof Coffee

Bulletproof coffee is all the hype these days, and for good reason. Drink it and you will feel like a million bucks. Making this coffee is quite simple as **all you will need to do is mix butter and coconut oil in your coffee.** It will make you feel full, allowing you ample time to prepare your next meal.

6. Discuss Your Weight Loss and Diet Goals with Friends and Family

Tell your plan to people who are close to you. You may not be able to eat with them. Therefore, preparing them in advance and informing them about your new habits will be helpful down the line. You can even encourage them to try it.

Don't worry if you receive pushback, in fact it is quite common. Just do enough research that you can provide adequate answers regarding the diet. No one has to like

what you are following or doing, but having their back always helps. Just imagine how helpful the support of people closest to you will be during the diet. You may be able to lose the weight faster than you imagined.

7. Prepare Yourself for a Few Side Effects

Although the keto diet comes with numerous attributes like weight and fat loss, you must also **prepare yourself for a couple of side effects** like keto breath and keto flu. *Keto flu* refers to the time after you begin the diet and your body is still getting acclimated to burning fat instead of carbs for energy. The effects of this flu vary from person to person. Some feel miserable, while others have no problem whatsoever.

You may feel extremely sluggish in the first seven to ten days. Some people even find it difficult to climb stairs. Diarrhea, constipation, and mental fog are also some things that keto followers face in the initial stages. Therefore, choose a time when you do not have too many obligations or deadlines so that you have sufficient time to rest.

Meanwhile, make sure that you restrict physical activities if you have the keto flu, giving your body ample time to adjust to the fat-burning process.

8. Increase Your Electrolytes Intake

Several pieces of research discovered that our kidneys excrete more electrolytes and water during ketosis. So, make sure you **get sufficient potassium and sodium** in your body to function correctly. Put an adequate amount of salt in your food, eat vegetables without starch (arugula, bell peppers, kale, asparagus) and eat bone broth with salt. They all combine to maintain your body's electrolyte levels.

9. Don't Hesitate to Admit that Your Diet is Not Working

Since the meteoric rise in this diet's popularity, several hybrid keto diets have come up. There are also plant-based versions of this diet. One of those plant-based versions is the vegan keto diet. It predominantly consists of plants along with the option of

shellfish, fish, ghee, and eggs. Although this approach is also healthy, **several dieticians recommend being extremely cautious when following these keto hybrid diets.**

Since you cannot eat lentils, beans, seeds, or nuts in this diet because of their low carb content, all you will have left is some protein powder with low carbs and tofu. Chances are that the diet will not pan out as it is not sustainable because of its extreme restrictions.

10. Only Eat if You Are Hungry

Most people have developed a habit of eating four to six meals per day. Some of them even like to have snacks in between the meals. When following a ketogenic diet, eating frequent meals is not necessary at all, it could have an adverse effect on your weight loss journey. Follow a schedule, and only eat when you are hungry. Avoid food altogether if you aren't. Drink lots of water when you feel like snacking. You will notice that eating fewer carbohydrates will make this easier as it will curb your appetite.

11. Eat Whole Foods

Although you may not need to eat whole or natural foods completely when following this diet, overeating processed food could increase your cravings down the line. **Whole foods are perfect for suppressing hunger and improving your overall health.**

12. Prepare an After Plan as Keto Is Not a Long-Term Solution

Keto is a short-term solution for weight loss. In most cases, keto followers, go on this diet 2 or three times per year, while others just follow it once and make healthy changes to their diets. Therefore, it is important that you have an after plan once you exit the keto diet. **Focus on living a healthy lifestyle once you stop following the diet. Going back to your standard diet will undo all your hard work.**

The ultimate goal of every keto follower should be to follow a healthy diet pattern that involves eating less sugar, less flour, less pasta, and less bread. They should also incorporate more starchy vegetables in their diet. Give some thought to what your diet will be like once you stop following keto. Utilize this diet to springboard to a better long-term solution.

KETO TIPS

FIGURING OUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT TO EAT ON KETO

You can use two main methods to figure out how much you can eat on the keto diet to gain maximum results. Both of them require experimentation. Try them out and see which works best for you.

1. Gauge your results and adjust your food intake.

You will need to check you results after every few weeks and modify the amount of fat you eat depending on your results. If you are losing weight exceptionally quickly but feel incredibly fatigued, increase your fat intake. Once you make the necessary adjustments to your ketogenic diet, examine the results after a month to see whether you need to make any changes or not. Also, make sure that you reach your goals without sacrificing your health. There is no point in losing weight and feeling lethargic all the time.

2. Use a keto calculator to track your calorie intake.

If you want to be more accurate with the input of your food, using a keto calculator would be advisable. It would help you to establish protein, carb, fat, and calorie consumption. As soon as you know how much you need to eat, use a calorie-tracking app to make your results more accurate. Tracking apps and calculators help figure out the exact amount of food you should eat every day to achieve your goals. There are tons of keto calculators and apps online, so they won't be hard to find.

CARB, PROTEIN, AND FAT INTAKE: WHAT IS THE IDEAL MACRONUTRIENT AMOUNT TO CONSUME?

Calorie consumption is an extremely critical variable in virtually every diet. It helps to determine whether you gain or lose weight; however, it is not all. You should also notice the amount of protein, fats, and carbs you consume in every meal. This is particularly true if you want to maintain muscle mass while losing body fat.

“Maintain muscle mass while losing body fat.”

Let us look at the importance of all critical macronutrients and how to find the right balance in context to the ketogenic diet:

Protein: Protein is a crucial item in everybody's menu. Eating small amounts of protein will reduce our muscle mass and impact your overall wellbeing and health negatively. Overeating protein, on the other hand, decreases ketone production. Therefore, **it is essential to consume the right amount when you are following the keto diet.** Not too little, and not too much. The easiest way to find the ideal amount of protein to take is by using a keto calculator.

Fat: **Fat is a primary calorie source in the keto diet.** Eat enough of it to ensure that you gain maximum results. The more fat you eat, the quicker you will enter the state of ketosis.

Carbohydrates: **You cannot enter ketosis by restricting carbohydrate consumption.** Keeping carb intake below 30 or 40 grams per day would be the ideal choice. The good thing is, carbohydrates are not that important anyway, so we can get away with restricting as much as we can.

WHY KETO AND EXERCISE YIELD QUICKER RESULTS

A competent weight loss strategy requires a balanced diet along with regular exercise.

Without exercise, you will not see the results as quickly as you want to. However, when it comes to the ketogenic diet, you might need to make some variations to your workout routine. The reason for it is that your body will be using fat for fuel instead of using carbohydrates.

This does not mean that exercising on the keto diet is impossible; however, you will notice some changes. It is possible that you might not feel like exercising in the beginning primarily because of the *keto flu*. This happens because of the change in metabolism due to a high fat diet. No need to worry however, it does not last for an extended period and you should be able to restore your natural strength within a week or two. You can still go to the gym despite of the flu. However, if you feel too tired, sit back and rest.

Once you notice your energy levels restoring, go hard at the gym. Some people even feel more energetic than before, which allows them to exercise with higher intensity.

In comparison to low carbohydrate diets, you will notice that fat loss occurs rapidly as **the body uses it for fuel**. However, the rapid fat loss will only be possible if you take at least 30 to 40 minutes out of your day to exercise. High intensity workouts like weightlifting, sprinting, and plyometrics are perfect for quick weight loss. They require intensity, which is why the body burns fat more quickly. However, there is a small downside to it, and that is, you might get tired quickly in comparison to carb dominant diets. Your endurance levels might decrease sooner as well.

By no means does this mean that you need to take it easy during your workouts. In fact, try to consume a higher amount of fat if you want your exercise sessions to last longer. Low intensity exercises like bike rides, jogs, yoga etc. are for people who tire out easily. Shoot for moderate to low intensity for the first couple of weeks when you start your keto diet plan.

Besides the quick weight loss, there is another positive for following the keto diet plan, and that is, you will gain more muscle. According to a research, people who follow resistance training programs along with this diet gain lean body mass and lose body fat within a couple of weeks. **You are free to switch things up if you do not feel that your exercise routine is working. Not every exercise or diet plan works for everyone.** You can always follow a variation of this diet. The cyclical keto diet and the targeted keto diet are particularly famous among athletes as they allow you to take a slightly higher amount of carbohydrates at particular periods, which help to increase endurance.

You can only use trial and error to figure out what suits you the most. Once you do, stick to it and keep making adjustments wherever you feel necessary.

KETO FAQ'S

Here are the answers to some frequently asked questions regarding the ketogenic diet:

Is it okay to follow Keto if I am physically fit and active?

People often think that Ketogenic diets are only for people who are not fit and are looking to lose weight. However, according to research, **people with high energy levels can also benefit from this diet**. Just make sure that your exercising intensity is not too high while your body is adapting to the new diet.

Do intermittent fasting and keto complement each other?

Doing intermittent fasting while you are following keto can pace up your body's fat burning process while improving its ketone levels. However, it would be wise to adapt to keto before you start intermittent fasting

Is it important to restrict or count calories on keto?

No, it is not important to count or restrict calories when you are following keto. Although, this diet does have subset known as restricted keto diet in which the calories are specifically restricted.

How long will I face carbohydrate withdrawals on keto?

It usually takes about 5 to 10 days for the carbohydrate withdrawal to go away. It could take slightly longer for some people to feel their best when following this diet.

Is the Keto Flu avoidable?

You could suffer from lack of energy or mild physical weakness during the keto flu.

Although you cannot do much to prevent it completely, there are a couple of measures that you can take to lessen its impact. These measures are Incorporating enough salt in your diet, staying hydrated at all times and consuming enough electrolytes.

FINAL VERDICT ABOUT KETO

Most of the tests and research regarding the keto diet conducted so far show promise. Although there is still research ongoing, **one thing is for certain, and that is-this diet does help with weight loss, blood sugar, and various other problems.** However, the keto diet tends to be effective when you cycle it on and off. It is not sustainable for an extremely long period.

If you have faced difficulty with losing weight in the past, **following the ketogenic diet could work wonders for you.** Also, keep in mind that everybody's body composition and genetic makeup is different. Therefore, the exact ration of protein, carbohydrates, and fats that they consume could vary.

Before you start this diet, it would be wise to consult with a dietitian or physician so that they could monitor biomechanical changes in your body. You can also ask their suggestions regarding meal plans according to your current health conditions. The dietitians could also help you with the reintroduction of carbohydrates once you cycle off the high fat diet.