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Low Carbohydrate Stupidity

By Stephen Bucaro

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Low Carbohydrate Stupidity

By Stephen Bucaro

The latest buzz word for today's diet scams and prepackaged food rip-offs is "low carb". "Eat all the fat and meat you want and still lose weight." Yeh, when your cold dead body starts to dry up!

Let's make one thing clear, without carbohydrates you die. Carbohydrates; fruits, vegetables, and grains provide the fiber, sugar, and electrolytes your body needs to survive. Without these vital nutrients, you die.

How did this carbohydrate stupidity get started? It started as the result of confusion about a new discovery called the glycemic index.

When you eat carbohydrates, your blood sugar level rises. Excessive blood sugar is not good for your body. To clear the sugar from your bloodstream, your pancreas releases insulin. This causes the sugar to be stored in your fat

cells.

The fact is that you need some sugar in your blood because that's where your energy comes from. Without blood sugar, neither your muscles nor your brain will work. But excess blood sugar is a problem.

New research has discovered that eating certain refined carbohydrates causes your blood sugar to rise much higher and stay high longer than eating whole carbohydrates.

Note: As you age, your pancreas becomes less efficient at

producing insulin. As a result, sugar is not effectively cleared from the bloodstream, resulting in diabetes.

The glycemic index uses the blood sugar rise caused by eating pure sugar as a guide for rating other foods. Pure sugar has a glycemic index of 100. To stay thin and healthy, you need to avoid foods with a glycemic index higher than about 50.

The glycemic index of thousands of foods has been measured by monitoring thousands of people's blood sugar after eating the food, and then calculating an average. The results have been published and you can find glycemic tables on the Web.

What are the offending foods?

1. Any food made of refined flour; bread, cake, cookies, cereal, crackers, donuts, etc.
2. White rice.
3. Potatoes.

The above foods will cause your blood sugar to rise rapidly and stay high for a long period. If the above foods are a regular part of your diet, you will be gaining weight uncontrollably. Avoid these foods and your weight will gradually fall back to a normal weight zone.

What are the good carbohydrates?

1. 100% stone ground whole wheat bread.
2. Whole grain wheat bran cereal.
3. Surprisingly, pastas like spaghetti, macaroni, and

ravioli have glycemic indexes lower than 50.

4. Even more surprising, chocolate has a glycemic index less than 50.

Most fruits and vegetables have a low glycemic index, but there are some exceptions. Oranges and grapefruits have a low glycemic index but turn them into juice and the glycemic index zooms up. Beans and nuts have a low glycemic index, but watch those calories! Plain baked beans have 240 calories per cup and walnuts have 190 calories per ounce. And just because a product contains a food with a low glycemic index doesn't mean the product's recipe has a low glycemic index.

Locate a good glycemic index table and use it to select low glycemic index carbohydrates to replace the high glycemic index foods in your diet.

Don't be fooled by listening to the low carbohydrate stupidity. Don't eat only fat and meat. That would cause health problems that will eventually lead to your death.

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Do Low Carbohydrate Diets Lead to Weight Loss Success?

By Marsha J. Hudnall, MS, RD, CD

So your neighbor, office mate, best friend, whoever just lost 10 pounds in only two weeks following the latest in high protein low carbohydrate diets. And now you're thinking you should give it a go — have even started the search for high protein low carbohydrate recipes?

True, high protein low carb diets seem to be leading many people to weight loss success. Trouble is, they seemed to do it 30 years ago, too. They were the rage in the early 70s, and look where many of us are today: growing fatter with each decade.

Low Carbohydrate Stupidity

The bottom line: Diets — low carb diets or not — simply don't work for the vast majority of people. If that doesn't convince you, look at some of the reasons why high protein low carbohydrate diets seem to create weight loss success stories — but really don't.

"I'm not hungry when I eat high protein low carb diets."

Many people say they feel more satisfied eating low carbohydrate diets. And indeed, studies show protein is the most satiating nutrient. Proteins and fat (which is usually in high protein low carbohydrate foods) cause your body to release cholecystokinin, a hormone that contributes to the feeling of fullness. Some protein in meals and even snacks may help us feel more satisfied and go longer between eating. But the key word is "some." We don't need an excess of protein, or low carb diets, to get these effects. By just eating balanced meals that contain grain/starchy foods, protein foods, vegetables and/or fruits and some fat, most people can achieve the same satiety. One other important note is that hunger control with low carbohydrate diets is often the result of ketosis (when your body burns fat for fuel.) Ketosis is very unhealthy, causing nausea, headaches, fatigue, even coma.

"Results are results - I saw successful weight loss, didn't I?"

Many people do lose weight on high protein low carb diets. Instead of fat, however, they're initially losing more water than anything else — and it quickly returns once off low carb diets. They seem to see successful weight loss, too, because low carb diets restrict many foods, resulting in eating less than usual.

The big question is: Is it really successful weight loss if it doesn't stay off? For most people, if weight loss is achieved quickly and with a restrictive method such as a diet that does not allow for individual likes and dislikes, then the lost pounds will return, along with discouragement, defeat and even more pounds than before. What's more, high protein low carb diets may also increase risk for health problems such as osteoporosis, cancer, even heart disease. A healthy intake of whole grain foods, fruits and vegetables — often on the "avoid" list in high protein low carb diets - appears to help reduce this risk, and is the mainstay of a sensible plan to achieve weight loss success.

Create your own weight loss success story.

Despite what you hear about high protein low carb diets, there's little evidence that weight loss success is truly (permanently) achieved. What's more, disordered eating behaviors are usually reinforced by high protein low carb diets, adding to the struggles that low carbohydrate diets and other diets are supposed to solve. Stop dieting now and start living a healthy lifestyle that truly leaves you feeling good!

©2004 Green Mountain at Fox Run, Ludlow, Vermont. Marsha J. Hudnall, MS, RD, LD is director of health communications and senior nutritionist at Green Mountain at Fox Run (

). For over 32 years, Green Mountain at Fox Run has developed and refined a life-changing program exclusively for women seeking permanent strategies for healthy weight loss and health (

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