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What You Need to Know Before Starting a Low Carb Diet

By Nancy Andrews

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by: **Nancy Andrews**

In the last 12 months or so, low carbohydrate diets have captured the hearts and weight loss hopes of the American public. And why not? These diets promise quick weight loss and the ability to keep eating fatty foods. If you love your steak and eggs, this seems like the ultimate diet. However, before signing up, the low carb diet bears a review. Is it really the right diet for you?

The premise of the Atkins or any low carbohydrate diet is that carbohydrates are the source of all our weight loss woes. There is some real substance to the argument in that we Americans have been eating excessive amounts of refined carbohydrates which have caused many of us to become insulin resistant as the body continues to wage war against repeated blood sugar spikes brought on by our poor eating habits.

The Atkins diet and other very low carbohydrate diets take your body out of a sugar burning state by practically eliminating all carbs for an induction period that can last two weeks or more. The body will continue to burn sugar as its primary energy source until it essentially runs dry and then converts to burning fat. During the conversion, the dieter can feel tired, irritable, have headaches or get dizzy. Once you get past this incredibly tough period, you are allowed to eat a few carbs, but generally not more than 60 grams a day. That's like eating one bagel a day and then stopping. This is a difficult road to follow for a lifetime.

In fact, a recent study showed that most adults who start a low carbohydrate diet quit the diet within a year. Admittedly, there is great progress by Atkins and other food manufacturers to dramatically reduce the amount of effective carbs in some food offerings that could be classified as comfort foods (e.g., muffins, brownies, yogurt and more). This helps but you cannot have much if you want to stay within the diet guidelines.

In addition to the loss of almost all traditional comfort foods, by cutting out carbohydrates, the diet is also cutting out a lot of foods that are good for us. Fruits and vegetables have fiber, vitamins and

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phytonutrients that help keep us healthy. Limiting fiber while consuming a lot of saturated fat, is not the most heart healthy diet.

The low carb diet does take a person out of a primary sugar burning state into a fat burning state. However, some literature makes it sound as though you cannot burn fat any other way. The fact is that we are all burning some fat, we may just be adding more fat faster than we burn it. Modifying the diet to eliminate refined carbohydrates and focusing on high quality protein and good fats will gradually train the body to burn more fat and less sugar.

To their credit, the Atkins group have refined their diet guidelines from their original 'eat all the fat you want' stance to 'eat moderate amounts of good fats'. This is not only a heart healthy step forward but is also likely to help your weight loss efforts as essential fatty acids (the good fats) can help you actually burn more fat. However, when you consider that carbs are already limited on this diet, I'm not sure what you eat except grilled chicken breast, fat free cottage cheese and egg-white omelets. This

effectively transforms the diet into a high-protein, low-calorie diet which, if it becomes low calorie, will induce the body to lower its metabolism.

But the one thing you need to know about why the Atkins diet brings about significant weight loss in the first week is that it sends the body into ketosis. Without getting technical, this is a body imbalance that causes your body to flush out toxins (ketones) through your urine like crazy! What you are losing then is primarily water - not fat. Over the long term, restricting carbohydrate consumption to the levels recommended in Atkins and other similar diets is that they overlook the fact that your body needs carbohydrates to utilize the protein you consume. Thus, just like the low calorie diet, this diet cannot help you increase or even maintain muscle mass if carbohydrates are not consumed at a higher level than they recommend.

Finally, if you go off of the low carb diet, your body will immediately stop burning fat as it's primary fuel source. Adding carbs back into the diet will usually cause weight gain as the water weight loss comes back within days.

If you are committed to fat loss success, then you cannot overlook the body's need for sufficient calorie levels to prevent the body from lowering its metabolism. You also need sufficient protein that the body can utilize to have a shapely figure (this goes for guys and gals), youthful skin and great hair. Keep the fruits and vegetables, permit yourself a serving or two of a whole grain bread or pasta, focus on high quality proteins and good fats, get calcium from low fat dairy products such as yogurt and your body will respond with a slow, steady and healthy weight loss.

Here's to your health as well as your weight loss success!

After four years of a near twenty-year Finance career as VP Finance at a global software company, I wanted a fresh challenge. I re-focused my career to pursue my long term personal interest, Health and Fitness, and founded Accelerate Nutrition, Inc. of which I am President. Our website,

is focused at increasing health awareness on diet and fitness

issues.

Low-Carb Dieting During Pregnancy May Benefit Your Baby!

By Melissa White

As low-carb dieters change their eating habits, it is likely that these habits will stay with them. There is no surprise then that more and more pregnant women are trying to maintain their low-carb routine during the months of pregnancy. There are new studies being done on low-carb dieting that point to the fact that there may be benefits in the long run for children of low-carb dieting.

Scientists from the Southampton School of Medicine have used mice to study the benefits of low-carb diets during gestation. It was found that pups born to mice fed a high-unsaturated protein and fat diet and low in carbohydrates were more likely to have low liver triglyceride levels than the pups born to mice fed a standard diet which was high-carb and low-fat. Low-carb pups also had higher amounts of protein that help in burning fat than the pups that were on the standard diet.

The mother mice were put on either the low-carb diet or the high-carb/low fat diets six weeks prior to being impregnated and stayed on the diets throughout their entire pregnancy as well as the duration of nursing. Post weaning all pups were fed the same high-carb diet, despite this fact, the pups born to the low-carb mothers were found to have significantly greater levels of the hepatic proteins CD36, CPT-1 and PPAR α , which help with fatty acid oxidation.

The mice on the low-carb diet ate about 21 percent less than the high-carb/low fat diet. These low-carb mothers also consumed about 57 percent fewer carbs, 23 percent more protein, and 153 percent more fat than the high-carb mothers.

Humans too need to maintain low levels of liver triglyceride and a good lipid (fat) metabolism. This will help reduce the risk of coronary artery disease. This disease alone kills thousands of Americans each year.

Melissa "Granny" White is a Low-Carb Diet fan and has been making delicious Low Carb recipes for years. You can get all 800 of her delicious recipes at:

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