

## Ketogenic Diet (Keto)

This high-fat, adequate-protein, low-carb fad diet sends the body into a state of ketosis, in which the body uses stored fat for energy instead of carbohydrates. Past research suggests the ketogenic, or "keto," diet can be an effective weight loss method, but to be successful, you must follow the plan consistently with no cheat days " otherwise, you're just eating a high-fat diet that may be high in unhealthy fats for no reason.

(A pro tip? If you're planning on doing the diet, check out this complete keto food list and read up on the healthiest fats for keto diet followers.)

Although the keto diet is popular among people with type 2 diabetes, you should avoid this diet if you have type 1 diabetes or other specific metabolic disorders.

No matter what your current state of health, you should speak with your physician before beginning the ketogenic diet, advises the Cleveland Clinic.

One of this diet's biggest hurdles? Saying goodbye to bread and other carbs. "It can be challenging to make sure to hit the low levels recommended for carbohydrates," says Hultin. "This diet likely means a lot of planning ahead and bringing food with you to parties and events."

You'll also want to be prepared for some of the plan's notable side effects, like keto-related diarrhea and constipation, fatigue, mood swings, headaches, and bad breath. These symptoms are a common part of the so-called keto flu, which happens as your body adjusts to burning fat rather than carbs for fuel, experts say.

[Learn More About the Keto Diet](#)

## Paleo Diet

"A lot of people think the foundation of a paleo diet is high-fat meat, but I suggest that it's vegetables," says Hultin. The concept is to eat only foods " including meat, fish, poultry, eggs, fruits, and vegetables " that would have been available to our Paleolithic ancestors. This means grains, dairy, legumes, added sugar, and salt are all no-nos.

With this eating style, you're looking at a lot of menu planning and preparation. One past review suggests the diet could lead to weight loss, but the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics warns the plan could leave you low on carbs, plus it doesn't allow for nutrient-dense foods like whole grains, legumes, and dairy. You're also at risk of missing vitamins and minerals like calcium, vitamin D, and B vitamins, per the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

This also means that this diet isn't suitable for anyone at risk for

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osteoporosis, as a past article notes (PDF).

[Learn More About the Paleo Diet Here](#)

### Atkins Diet

This low-carb, high-protein diet has been around for decades. In fact, some say the keto diet is the new Atkins, though these popular low-carb plans are markedly different.

According to the Atkins website, the plan works in phases, with a very low daily net carb allowance of about 20, 40, or 100 grams (g) in the first phase, meaning the diet may send you into ketosis. How many net carbs you need to stay under depends on the plan you opt for. (You can calculate net carbs by subtracting fiber and sugar alcohols from total carbs. This value, though an unofficial nutritional term, can give you an estimate of how much a food might affect blood sugar levels.) Unlike the keto diet, you're allowed more carbs as the phases continue.

In one past review, researchers found that the Atkins diet can yield modest long-term weight loss, similar to that of the Weight Watchers eating plan.

Because the diet is low in carbs, it may not be appropriate for someone who is on insulin or has diabetes " and because it's high in protein, you'd want to avoid it if you have kidney disease, according to the Mayo Clinic.

[Learn More About the Atkins Diet](#)

### DASH Diet

"This is a great way of eating that I highly recommend to many clients, and I even model in my own life," says Elizabeth Shaw, RDN, who is in private practice in San Diego and is the co-author of Fertility Foods Cookbook. "Since the premise of the diet is designed to help people who have high blood pressure, low-sodium foods are recommended. But considering that most Americans exceed their daily sodium levels anyway, it's not surprising that dietitians recommend this style of eating for treating many different conditions, such as heart disease and obesity."

The DASH diet, or Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension, is mainly focused on reducing sodium intake and increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables, according to the Mayo Clinic.

In one past study, people following the DASH diet saw an improvement in blood pressure compared to a control group who did not follow the DASH diet.

U.S. News & World Report has also consistently listed the DASH diet as a top diet in its annual rankings.

Learn More About the DASH Diet

MIND Diet

The MIND diet, or Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay, is a sort of hybrid between the DASH diet and the Mediterranean diet. It features foods meant to slow the progression or development of Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia and an incurable neurodegenerative condition that more than 6.5 million Americans are living with, according to the Alzheimer's Association. Some research backs up this notion, including one past study that found a link between following the MIND diet and a reduced risk of the disease.

Emphasizing vegetables, berries, beans, whole grains, olive oil, fish, and wine, it also calls for a reduction in saturated fat, according to the Mayo Clinic.

Because the MIND diet focuses on cutting unhealthy fats and emphasizes eating whole, fresh foods, people who follow this eating pattern may lose weight while doing so.

Low-Carb Diet

Many diets, including Atkins and the keto diet, fit into this umbrella. A typical low-carb diet limits carbs to less than 57 g daily, but this can vary, according to the Mayo Clinic. A past review observed that people following low-carb diets saw modest weight loss — although study authors note that long-term effects of the diet require further research.

Following this type of eating plan can result in certain nutritional deficiencies, and children, as well as pregnant or lactating women, should avoid it. "The low-carb diet is best for individuals who truly enjoy savory diets that involve more animal-based products and less sweet, refined carbohydrates," notes Kyle.

[Learn Whether a Low-Carb Diet or a Low-Fat Diet Is Better for Weight Loss](#)

#### South Beach Diet

Created in 2003 by the cardiologist Arthur Agatston, this low-carb diet features three phases. The first phase is the most restrictive, limiting carbs such as potatoes and rice. Each subsequent phase becomes more lenient, and the diet emphasizes lean protein, unsaturated fats, and low-glycemic carbs such as nonstarchy vegetables. South Beach promotes lasting lifestyle changes, according to the Mayo Clinic.

In a past study, people with metabolic syndrome who followed the first two phases of the diet noticed significant weight loss " but also experienced some shifts in satiety and hunger hormones, possibly leading to higher levels of hunger during the diet.

Like other low-carb diets, the South Beach Diet isn't appropriate for pregnant or lactating women, or children.

[Learn More About the South Beach Diet](#)

#### Intermittent Fasting

There are many ways to do intermittent fasting " ranging from fasting for a number of hours each day up to an entire 24-hour fasting period one or two times a week. "If you're trying to kick a habit like eating late into the night, then stopping eating earlier in the evening and fasting overnight could be beneficial for you," says Hultin. "There are many types of intermittent fasting, so ensuring you pick one that works for you and your lifestyle is important."

The idea is that fasting induces mild stress on the cells in your body, helping them become better at coping with such stress and possibly helping your body grow stronger. The verdict is still out regarding the diet's long-term

effectiveness with weight loss, according to a review of preliminary animal research (PDF).

But data suggest the approach still presents potential problems, as its restrictive nature may lead to overeating or binge eating, suggests a past article (PDF).

“Intermittent fasting can be really challenging if you have an ever-changing schedule,” adds Hultin. “If you're traveling and crossing time zones, it could be very difficult to follow. It might be best for people with more stability in their lives.” Intermittent fasting isn't safe for people with type 2 diabetes, children, pregnant or lactating women, or anyone with a history of disordered eating.

[Learn More About Fasting Diets](#)

Dubrow Diet (16:8 Diet)

If you want to kick intermittent fasting up a notch, you may consider the Dubrow diet, popularized by the husband-and-wife duo Terry and Heather Dubrow. On this diet, you'll fast for 16 hours and eat for eight, also called the 16:8 eating plan, a type of intermittent fasting. Over three phases, you will also limit calories, fat, and carbohydrates, which may aid weight loss, say registered dietitians.

A plus of this eating plan is that it takes a whole-foods approach, and calls for avoiding processed and packaged foods, along with sources of refined carbs and desserts in general. One minus is that the plan limits healthy complex carbs.

[Learn More About the Dubrow Diet](#)

WW (Formerly Weight Watchers)

In September 2018 Weight Watchers International announced that it would be changing its name to WW, in what many outlets dubbed a rebranding effort. Their goal: to make the eating and lifestyle approach about wellness rather than only weight loss.

With Oprah as one of its most notable proponents, this eating plan has been around for years. Jean Nidetch founded the organization in the early 1960s, according to the WW website. It's gone through many iterations, its most recent version being WW PersonalPoints. On this plan, you'll take a personal assessment, which takes several lifestyle factors into account in order to give you a holistic, all-over approach to weight loss and your PersonalPoints.

Evidence suggests that WW's plans promote long-lasting, sustainable changes, and undoubtedly a bounty of research backs this up. In fact, one past study showed that people following then-Weight Watchers were close to nine times more likely to lose 10 percent of their body weight, compared to people following a self-help diet plan.

WW might also be a good option for you if you like the idea of community support. Connect is a members-only social community for people following a WW approach, and many people find that this support is key to their success. In fact, past research suggests that participants in an online weight loss plan who were highly involved with the online community aspect of the program lost more weight over six months than participants who did not engage in this type of social networking. (While the exact online weight loss plan was not specified, the community aspect is very similar to WW's approach.)

[Learn More About the WW Diet](#)

[Vegan and Vegetarian Diets](#)

"A vegan or vegetarian diet is best for individuals who do not like to consume animal products, whether for health reasons, environmental reasons, or animal welfare reasons," says Kyle. "There are many health benefits of consuming more plant-based foods, such as a reduction in chronic disease."

There's a large spectrum of where people can fall on a vegetarian diet: For example, vegans consume no animal products, whereas ovo-lacto vegetarians eat both dairy and eggs. The eating style may help with weight loss, suggests a past review in *Nutrients*, but some vegans and vegetarians may become deficient in specific nutrients, such as calcium, iron, zinc, and vitamin B12, according to a past article in *Nutrition, Metabolism and Cardiovascular Diseases*.

[Learn More About Vegetarian Diets](#)

[Learn More About Vegan Diets](#)

[Raw Vegan Diet](#)

The raw vegan diet is a more extreme version of the traditional vegan diet. In addition to eating no animal products (that means no cheese or dairy too), raw vegans do not eat any foods cooked above 118 degrees F, the idea being that nutrients may be lost during the normal cooking process, per a past article. While this diet can be difficult to stick with because it's so restrictive, it does offer the same health benefits of a vegan diet.

[Learn More About the Raw Vegan Diet](#)

[Pescatarian Diet](#)

Pescatarians are vegetarians or vegans who also eat fish. Prioritizing fish as your main protein can provide a bounty of health benefits, such as a lower risk of stroke and heart disease, per a May 2018 advisory published in *Circulation*.

[Learn More About the Pescatarian Diet](#)

[Flexitarian Diet](#)

You can think of the flexitarian diet as a plan for part-time vegetarians. With this approach, plant proteins, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and fruits and veggies will be staples, with the occasional meat dish thrown in.

Because the diet isn't as restrictive as a traditional vegan or vegetarian diet, it may be simpler to stick with — hence its No. 2 ranking in U.S. News & World Report's Easiest Diets to Follow category. Because you'll be eating meat some of the time, you may also be at a lower risk of the aforementioned nutrient deficiencies that vegetarians and vegans may face.

While there isn't a wealth of research on this eating approach, U.S. News points out that, because of the focus on plants, those who follow the Flexitarian Diet tend to weigh less than meat eaters, and have a lower risk of certain

conditions, such as heart disease and diabetes.

[Learn More About the Flexitarian Diet](#)

[Mediterranean Diet](#)

“Diets such as the Mediterranean diet are sustainable, have been shown to improve health, and aren’t restrictive or short term,” says Asche.

The Mediterranean diet is meant to reflect the eating pattern of people living in the Mediterranean. So think plenty of vegetables, fruits, olive oil, fish, nuts, beans, legumes and only a moderate amount of red wine and dairy.

The diet can be helpful for weight loss, as well as decreasing risk of developing conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and Alzheimer’s disease, according to past research and the Mayo Clinic. It has been consistently ranked as a top diet in the U.S. News annual rankings.



## Reference

[Spark](#)

[Qualitative Inquiryâ€”Past, Present, and Future: A Critical Reader](#)