

Published by Last Updated On: November 22, 2022

Imagine sitting down at a dinner party with friends, and food is being served. There's usually always one vegan at the table who receives a specially prepared extra helping of leaves.

At this stage, someone next to the vegan jumps in and says he'll trade all his veg for the vegan's share of meat. This will raise many eyebrows and even the odd ridicule when that person also claims to be on an all-meat diet.

I don't have to imagine this kind of situation as it happens to me regularly. A few years ago, I started practicing the carnivore diet on and off, and it has revealed a lot of eye-opening things about weight loss, digestion, health, and mental focus that really surprised me.

So, if you're intrigued about digging into a nice juicy rib-eye for breakfast, then sit tight and start getting excited as we answer your question - what is the carnivore diet?

What Is The Carnivore Diet?

The carnivore diet, as the name suggests, is all about eating meat and other animal products. If the food came from something that could fly, walk or swim, it's fair game, and you can have it morning, noon, and night. [1] It means beef, pork, chicken, fish, and turkey are all very dominant foods in my refrigerator.

For many people, that might sound like heaven, but there are some stringent rules -- even if they are not officially documented. You are very limited in what kind of macros you can focus on. So, the carnivore diet might sound easier than you think.

When I explain this at dinner parties (under the vegan's evil looks at the table), I often get asked how this is any different to paleo or keto diet? While there are some overlapping similarities, there are a few differences.

For example, the ketogenic diet is high-fat, medium protein, and low carb, which is possible for a vegetarian, as well. Paleo does focus a lot on red meat and animal products, in general, but there is a lot of green stuff on your plate that wouldn't be allowed here.

Since I have started this carnivore diet, I have found an increasing number of people who have been converted. I've been introduced to quite a few people in my neighborhood through my butcher (one of my newest best friends).

A lot of the popularity comes from the fact that the carnivore diet effectively makes you feel better and provides the nutrients that bodybuilders need in large quantities, i.e., protein and energy (we'll get into all the benefits further down).

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If you're still interested, then let me introduce you to some basic rules.

Recommended Article: The Carnivore Code Book Review

How To Get Started On The Carnivore Diet?

Over the past year, I have spent a lot of time with dieticians to develop better carnivore diet meal plans and put it all together in 5 relatively simple rules.

An all-meat diet is a lifestyle choice that is easier said than done.

### 1. What To Eat

If it was alive and contains protein and fat, then it probably passes the test. For the most part, this will be a food list of red meat and other meat products, but adding some dairy products is also allowed when you're on an all-meat diet. The list of things not allowed is definitely a lot longer, and we'll get to that shortly.

Here are some examples:

Red Meat: Pork, Beef, Lamb, and Game

Pork, Beef, Lamb, and Game White Meat: Turkey, Chicken, Fish, and Seafood

Turkey, Chicken, Fish, and Seafood Organ Meat: Liver, Kidney, Bone Marrow, Heart

Liver, Kidney, Bone Marrow, Heart Eggs: Chicken, Duck, and Goose Eggs

Chicken, Duck, and Goose Eggs Dairy: Butter, Cheese, and Cream

Surprisingly for most people, these will provide all the nutrition you need, including vitamins, minerals, and protein.

## 2. How Much To Eat

The simple answer is to eat as much as it takes to feel full. Meat is an incredible filler, and you'll be surprised how little it will take to keep you going for many hours while on the carnivore diet. This low-carb diet may help decrease unnecessary body fat within a short period.

From talking to other dieters, the average carnivore diet meal plan probably has about 2 lbs of meat daily. It's likely to be a lot more during the first month as your digestive system and appetite adjust, and you fight other food cravings.

Once you have adjusted, you can keep track of your calories and your activity for weight loss. Then the question becomes: do you want to build muscle or just lose some weight? If you head to the gym every day and want to bulk up, then 4 or more lbs is not uncommon.

## 3. When To Eat

I generally recommend sticking with 3 meals per day when on a carnivore diet. After about 2 weeks, your metabolism will adapt and become more efficient at sourcing energy from fats.

This means that you should not be avoiding the fatty cuts of meat, as you'll need to eat animal meat to fuel your body and brain, like what happens when you're on a ketogenic diet.

Start your day off with a good dose of protein and then keep the protein levels up throughout the day.

This is especially important if you're trying to build muscle, control body weight, and spend time at the gym every day.

## 4. What To Drink

The simple answer is water and plenty of it. Coffee and tea, including herbal teas, are also OK, as long as you don't sweeten them with any type of sugar.

What you want to avoid is any type of drink that contains carbs like sodas, fruit and veg juices, and energy drinks as these will disrupt your weight loss goal.

Also Read: [Coffee on a Carnivore Diet](#)

## 5. How To Cook Your Meat

Prepare it in a way that you enjoy most. Eating different meats throughout the day should not become a chore. For beef, try to move towards the medium-rare end of the scale as this ensures more of the protein remains intact.

If you don't like that slightly bloody effect, then go for well done and slowly move towards rare over time. It's vital for pork and poultry that you fully cook it from a health and safety point of view.

Ideally, you should invest in a meat thermometer like ThermoPro TP20, as this will help you get all your meats cooked just right.

Lots of fish are also safe to eat raw, but it can be an acquired taste. Try it out, and if you don't like it, then prepare it to your liking.

Related Articles:

[What Foods To Avoid On The Carnivore Diet?](#)

While on a carnivore diet, you'd want to avoid anything that isn't meat. To be more specific, this means customarily classified healthy foods like fruit and veg. For most people, this will be the biggest adjustment.

You should also avoid sauces and most seasoning. Salt and pepper are fine, but the focus should be purely on meat as nature provides it.

Highly processed meat is also best avoided, and this includes a lot of sausages. Many of these products contain things like cereal, starches, and even sugar -- so avoid them unless you're 100% certain it's pure meat.

Unfortunately, you also have to avoid alcohol, including beer and wine. These are very heavy in carbs and will cause all sorts of problems for your carnivore diet efforts.

How Often Should You Eat?

Hereâ€™s the only rule you need to follow, and there is no right or wrong way to approach it. Eat as often and as much as you need to feel full. If you like to spread things out over the day, then stick with 3 meals while on a carnivore diet.

On the other hand, if you like adding some fasting periods, then go with 2 or even just 1 meal. I prefer 2 to 3 meals as it helps me spread out my protein intake to support my work at the gym.

6 Things To Consider When Starting The Carnivore Diet:

Weâ€™ll get into the detailed benefits shortly, but there are a few things you need to consider before jumping into this drastic lifestyle change. While the instructions you have to follow are simple, that doesnâ€™t mean it will be an easy task.

#### 1. Living Without Eating Plants

Even for the biggest meat and BBQ lovers out there, completely avoiding plant-based foods is a lot more complicated than it sounds.

If youâ€™ve ever kept a food journal, you will have regularly added snacks like an apple or banana, or just a simple granola and nut protein bar.

And that cookie with your afternoon coffee is also gone.

It is all about meat consumption and avoiding any kind of carbs altogether.

#### 2. Stick To Three Meals A Day

When you start, I would advise you to keep eating 3 meals per day, if that is your current routine. It helps you spread out larger volumes of animal products than youâ€™re used to.

This is also my recommendation for anyone in a bulking phase at the gym. If youâ€™re hitting the weights heavy, you need to provide your muscles with a constant protein flow.

For weight loss goals, I have heard of a lot of people who use intermittent fasting. You can achieve this by eating just 1 or 2 meals per day with long periods of just water in between.

### 3. Drinking More Hot Beverages

If you quickly get bored with drinking water, then adding hot beverages throughout the day is a good option.

Just keep in mind that caffeine dehydrates you, so you would still need to increase your fluid intake.

What Iâ€™ve started doing is buying different types of herbal teas, which are caffeine-free.

Green tea might be an acquired taste, but it is very beneficial for your whole body due to the number of antioxidants.

### 4. Cook Meat To Desired Taste

When youâ€™re new to a meat-based diet, then stick to your normal taste.

If you like your beef rare, then youâ€™re already getting the most benefits, as less cooking means that less protein is degraded by heat.

But if you currently eat your beef well done, then stick with that for now and gradually move towards the rarer end of the scale.

For pork and poultry, you should always thoroughly cook it, but avoid getting to that completely dried out stage. Use a meat thermometer if youâ€™re struggling with this.

## 5. All Kinds Of Meat Are Your Friend

Don't just head to your butcher and ask for pork chops and striploin steaks. Change things up a lot between beef, pork, lamb, fresh fish, and even organ meat for your all-meat diet.

By switching things around on a daily basis, you will make sure that you maximize your intake of vitamins and minerals.

This also makes sure you get the full spectrum of amino acids so that your body has everything it needs.

For a good selection of quality meat, check out my review of ButcherBox.

## 6. Athletes Have To Be Patient For Results

High-performance athletes will struggle in the first couple of weeks.

This is because your body no longer gets its energy from glucose, which is sourced from carbs.

Instead, your body will have to adapt to processing more fat.

It's not so much a lack of calories, but more the type of calorie intake you now have.

Improvements in both physical and mental energy will come through.

For some athletes, adding some plant products in the first weeks may be an option, just to keep the raw energy levels up to perform at your best.

The carnivore diet and ketogenic diet both permit protein and fat while restricting carbs, but the carnivore approach is considerably more extreme. Because you aren't eating any plant foods at all, your carb intake is virtually zero.

- Sean Hyson, Editor in Chief for Onnit

Recommended Article: Carnivore Diet For Bodybuilding

Getting Started On The Diet: The Different Levels:

When you make very drastic changes in your diet, then it can become quite overwhelming. While the rules for us carnivores are relatively simple, there are some small elements to keep in mind if you want to get into the carnivore diet. For that reason, I suggest working your way through a few different levels.

Level 1

At level 1, the main rule is that if it's meat, it belongs to the plate. No stringent rules yet on the types of meat, cuts, or the level of processing. You will also be allowed tea and coffee, eggs, full-fat cream, butter, and cheese, just to give yourself a little diversity.

Table salt, pepper, and some electrolyte supplements are also allowed and will help make your food taste more familiar and reduce the effects of any dehydration.

It's still a drastic change, but not quite as full-on as the final level. This gives you more of a chance to physically and mentally adapt. You'll learn more about this when you read the book of Dr. Shawn Baker, an orthopedic surgeon who's also an advocate of the carnivore diet.

Level 2

After 2 to 4 weeks at level 1, you can take the next step and remove all non-meat products. From a dietary perspective, you'll now be taking in meat and water and nothing else.

You should now also remove any highly processed meats like pastrami and salami, as well as any dairy products. Salt and pepper are still allowed, but avoid using too much. The idea is to take another big step towards joining true carnivores.

Level 3



Once you've completed another 2 to 4 weeks at level 2, you can move onto level 3, where the only allowable meat is grass-fed beef. You can switch between cuts as much as you like, and also get some organ meat from cows, as well.

This will be considerably more expensive, but pasture beef's quality and nutrient richness are just far superior. If this does become too expensive, just make sure you stick to beef and avoid pork, fish, and poultry.

Beyond Level 3

Stick with level 3 for about 30 days and start to observe the changes in your digestion and metabolism. We'll get to the benefits shortly, but you will start noticing things like increased physical and mental energy.

At this stage, you can slowly add in some of the things you removed in levels 2 and 3. You should still mainly focus on grass-fed beef, but having some regular changes like lamb and seafood will help you to stay motivated.

The aim is to identify those meat sources that make you feel bloated or sick. Eventually, you should end up with a list of products to stick with.

Choosing What Level To Get Into First

Generally speaking, I suggest you start at level 1. But, if you're not a caffeine addict, then you can jump straight to level 2.

I have had friends try to jump straight into level 3 and just struggle too much with the new restrictions. Try to spend at least 30 days between levels 1 and 2 before you take that final step.

What Are The Benefits Of The Carnivore Diet?

Pretty much every time I get into a conversation about my diet, people completely trash it and say I'm crazy taking on all that cholesterol and saturated fat, and that I'm eating my way into an early grave.

Once I show them before and after photos of a few friends and me, and explain some of the health benefits, they start

to question their preconceptions.

### 1. Weight Loss

This is top of the list for any type of diet, but what's particularly interesting here is what happens in your body. Your blood sugar levels will completely stabilize because you have switched to a high-protein and zero-carb food intake.

With no more carbs to be converted into fat, your body has to switch into a state of ketosis as when you're on a keto diet. Your body will burn fat from your food as fuel, and if there isn't enough in your food, you will burn any stored fat. As a result, you will lose weight, and you will do this rather quickly.

### 2. Improved Heart Health

I know what you're thinking. How could massive amounts of saturated fats be healthier for your heart than low meat or even a vegetarian diet?

It's common wisdom that fat and heart attacks go together, right? As it turns out, there are a couple of reasons to believe that this is a misconception.

One study [2], in particular, has turned this theory on its head and instead points the finger at sugar as the main cause for heart disease.

And then, there is the so-called "Inuit Paradox" [3], where the people of Northwestern Alaska practically only eat fat and blubber with hardly a vegetable in sight. Despite this, they have a 10 times lower risk of heart disease.

Today, when diet books top the best-seller list, and nobody seems sure of what to eat to stay healthy, it's surprising to learn how well the Eskimo did on a high-protein, high-fat diet. - Patricia Gadsby, Discover Magazine

### 3. Reduces Inflammation

Inflammation is one of the biggest issues for obese people as it causes havoc with the digestive and vascular system.

For the last 50 years, meat has been blamed for pretty much every ailment, including inflammation. A recent study compared the standard low-fat and high-carb diet to a high-fat and low-carb diet in a group of obese adults [4].

The results were the opposite of common beliefs showing far greater inflammation reductions in test subjects with a high-fat diet.

#### 4. Less Digestive Problems

One of the most common questions I get is how I handle all the bloating? We all know that a lack of fiber will cause constipation, and you'll soon be reaching for some form of medication to get some relief.

As it turns out, scientists have been able to show that decreasing fiber while constipated has very positive effects on the digestive system [5]. It's certainly not something I have had any issues with.

Read More: Carnivore Diet Constipation

#### 5. Better Mental Focus

Same as the ketogenic diet, the carnivore diet also introduces certain metabolic changes to your bodily functions. Your body switches from using easily accessible glucose to ketones for fuel.

While you might think that easy fuel is better for the brain, the exact opposite is the case. The problem with glucose is that you constantly go through fluctuations of peaks and troughs.

However, once you switch to ketones, your body metabolizes fat from your diet or those unwanted love handles. It's these ketones that give you a lot more mental clarity when on an elimination diet.

#### 6. Easy Diet Plan

Suppose you have tried different diets and another way of eating options to lose weight. In that case, you'll know that it's pretty much always about eliminating foods, counting something else, and then adding a sprinkle of magic carnivore diet supplements.

They are rarely easy to understand and rather difficult to stick to. With the carnivore diet, it's completely different. If a product came from animals, then it's pretty much on the menu. As you progress, you do restrict it a little, but you don't need to overthink it.

Are There Side Effects To The Carnivore Diet?

Any time you make drastic changes to the foods you consume, there can be unwanted and unexpected side-effects such as:

#### 1. Keto Flu

Just like with the keto diet, when your body switches from glucose to ketones, you go through an induction phase where you might feel like you have the flu.

Stomach upset, aches and pains, and fatigue are all common and normal, but also temporary. Improvements will come in a matter of days and, you will fully reverse these symptoms.

Recommended Article: Keto vs Carnivore Diet

#### 2. Lack Of Vitamins

There are certain vitamins, like vitamin C, that are abundant in fruit and vegetables that are in short supply in meat.

As well as that, cooking food will degrade the vitamins and minerals, so you'll always get less than the optimum amount when you're on an all-meat diet.

One solution is to use supplements which are beneficial no matter what diet you follow.

### 3. Dehydration

As your body drains all blood glucose in the first few days, your body will tap into glycogen reserves. And every part of glycogen binds to 3 parts of water. That water is released and processed by your kidneys. You'll likely lose half a gallon of water in a few days.

Feel free to check our article about carnivore diet side effects if you wish to learn more.

### Hormonal Rebalancing

Some people can have some initial mood swings that aren't necessarily related to low energy levels. As your metabolism changes, there can be some hormonal rebalancing. However, the outcome will be a healthier immune system and stable hormone levels.

### What Are The Mistakes To Avoid When On A Carnivore Diet?

When I first started, I was probably a bit too confident that it would be easy. How many mistakes could you make when preparing and eating meat, right? As it turns out, there are a few things to avoid.

Sneaking in some fruit and veg. To be honest, I didn't fully understand ketosis, and I thought as long as my main source of food was red meat, I'd be fine. It's called a meat-only diet for a reason, so stick with meat. Only buy lean cuts. Meat from all animals is available in lean and fatty cuts. You don't have to eat pork belly every day, but don't be afraid of the fat. It's what will provide you with fuel. Drinking too little water. This is a problem for most Americans on all types of diets. But, because you're eating less volume and most fruit and veg is predominantly water, you will have to drink more. Not eating enough. The carnivorous diet is not just about a little bit of meat. You need to eat until you're full. Even if you want to burn fat, your body will need plenty of energy just to keep going. Not adding salt. Electrolytes are vital for the salinity of your blood. When you just eat meat, you can suddenly see a reduction in salts, so don't be afraid to use it as a seasoning in your carnivore diet.

Also Read: Carnivore and Fruit Diet

What Is The Science Behind The Carnivore Diet?

It might sound like some sort of cliché, but a full carnivore diet may actually be based on some science.

How Does It Work?

Fatty meat, lean meat, organ meats, fish, and poultry are high in protein and basically zero carbs. In the now normal western diet, the body turns all carbs into blood sugar, no matter how much energy you need. Any excess glucose is then stored in the form of fat, which is why so many people are obese these days.

You may also be able to resolve digestive problems like bloating, gas, and constipation and overcome depression, fatigue, joint pain, and other maladies. - Michael Matthews, Fitness Expert

Carnivore dieters essentially remove all carbs, so the body has to switch to a different sourcing energy method. And it very cleverly does so by switching to a state called ketosis.

Here dietary and stored fat is transformed into ketones, which are actually a preferred and much more efficient fuel source for physical and mental activity [6].

Carnivore Diet: Before And After

I could show you pictures from forum posts where people have shared their results, but I thought it would be a lot more honest to show you my carnivore diet results.

I was never obese and went to the gym regularly, but I always struggled with weight fluctuations. I also found it difficult to bulk up, which didn't seem to be down to what I was doing at the gym.

As you can see, I lost fat and built up some muscle in the process too. It seems to have fixed my bulking problem. I also noticed some initial weight loss in the first two weeks of about 2 to 3 pounds. However, I found out later that it was probably just fluid from reduced glycogen reserves.

## Carnivore Diet FAQs

Is the Carnivore Diet Safe? Yes, the carnivore diet is safe, and there are numerous cultures on earth that remain on a meat only diet all year.

Recent studies have also shown that sugar is the more likely culprit in heart disease, rather than saturated fats. You can always undergo regular blood work tests to keep tabs. Will the All-Meat Diet Cause Nutrient Deficiencies? No, an all-meat diet will not cause nutrient deficiencies, as long as you mix things up in this low-carb diet.

You still need a lot of vitamins and minerals for your digestive and immune system, but by adding some fish and seafood on your carnivore diet food list, you'll still be able to get these nutrients and prevent certain digestive issues. Does the Carnivore Diet Work for Athletes? Yes, the carnivore diet does work for athletes. However, you have to expect a dip in energy, stamina, and performance in the first few weeks. Once your body fully enters ketosis, you'll be able to get all the energy you need from fat for long-term benefits. How Long Does It Take To Adapt to the Carnivore Diet? It usually takes about one week to adapt to the carnivore diet and enter full ketosis. Dependent on how strict you are and how much you exercise, this can take as long as 2 weeks. Can I Include Supplements While on the Carnivore Diet? Yes, some supplements can be included while on the carnivore diet. However, you have to avoid any products that contain carbs. I would suggest taking some mineral and vitamin pills, at least until you have your meal plan sorted. Does the Carnivore Diet Put You in Ketosis? Yes, the carnivore diet will put you in ketosis within 5 to 10 days on average. Similar to the ketogenic diet, a carnivore lifestyle choice will practically eliminate all carb intake with your body becoming reliant on fat and protein for energy. Is the Carnivore Diet Expensive? Yes, the carnivore diet can be expensive, but there are very good ways to reduce the costs. By switching to cheaper cuts, you can still buy grass-fed beef to eat on a day-to-day basis. Does the Carnivore Diet Increase Testosterone? Yes, the carnivore diet can increase testosterone levels and has been supported by a study based on high-fat and low-fiber intake. Keep in mind, though, that other health factors will also influence your testosterone levels.

## What is the Carnivore Diet - Answered

Whether your goal is fat loss and you want to build up some serious lean mass, this diet could well be the solution you're looking for.

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I'll be the first to admit that it's rather drastic, and I did have some struggles along the way. But, as you will understand at this stage, there are some real and scientifically proven benefits of getting your body to switch to ketosis.

Yes, you could try the keto diet, but it's a lot more complicated than sticking to the carnivore diet food list. You also don't have to stay with this diet forever. I have a cyclical approach to it and regularly spend 3 to 6 months on a more "normal" diet.

You do need commitment, and some planning is required as well. For added convenience, get your premium meat cuts from ButcherBox. We love how we always get fresh and juicy steaks every time we order.

Our #1 Recommendation ButcherBox Price 5.0 Meat Quality 5.0 Menu Options 4.4 Shipping 4.8 4.8 Overall Score Click For Best Price Pros High-quality meat delivered right to your door

High-quality meat delivered right to your door Humanely raised without antibiotics or added hormones

Humanely raised without antibiotics or added hormones Customizable meat orders available

Customizable meat orders available Select from up to 21 different cuts

Select from up to 21 different cuts Get the BEST PRICE until the end of January Cons No organ meat



## Reference

[USAMRIID's Medical Management of Biological Casualties Handbook](#)

[Introduction to Statistics and Research Methods: Becoming a Psychological Detective, An](#)