

FAQ

If you're taking any medication, or under medical supervision, please check with your medical professional before embarking on any lifestyle change.

Medications may need adjusting or reducing as you experience improvements.



Frequently asked questions THE LOW-CARB LOW-DOWN

Do you struggle with weight loss? Do you have unstable blood sugars? Do you have an appetite you just can't turn off? Have you tried every diet and exercised relentlessly, but never see any changes? Do you have diabetes, insulin resistance, coeliac disease, PCOS or allergies? Eating low carb could help you.

Carbohydrates, whether they're simple (such as sugar) or complex (such as whole grains), are simply glucose molecules stuck together. When we eat any carbohydrate (including sugar, potatoes, pasta, rice, bread, cakes, sweets, beans and honey), it raises our blood sugar, causing the hormone insulin to be released. Insulin is the driver of hunger and fat storage.

When we eat a low-carb diet, our bodies become fat burners, not sugar burners. Most people experience a reduced appetite, improved mood and stable blood sugars. You'll find the food is fresh and vibrant; choose nutrient-dense ingredients such as non-starchy vegetables, quality meat and fish, eggs, dairy, nuts and seeds. When you eat unprocessed, whole food, you almost become low carb by default. It really is that simple.

Isn't weight loss about calories in versus calories out?

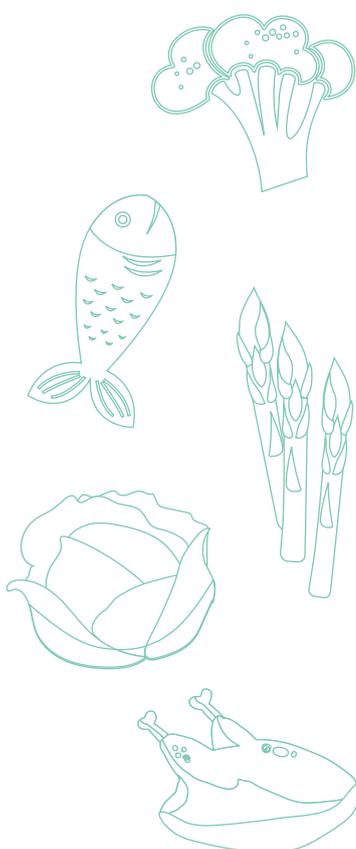
No. It's about the type of food we eat, which has a huge impact on our hormones, appetite control and fat storage. Eating a low-carb diet helps fat, not glucose, become the body's fuel of choice. Cutting down calories too far causes hunger, making you eventually cave in and eat high-carb treats. Yes, we lose weight when we cut calories, but only in the short term, as our metabolism switches to "starvation" mode.

Isn't it unhealthy to eliminate food groups?

Eating low carb does not mean you eliminate a food group, but cuts out the wheat, grains and sugar found in thousands of processed products. You still eat nutrient-dense carbohydrates in berries and low-carb fruit, non-starchy vegetables and other real food. You reduce the impact carbs have on your body, lowering your insulin levels and improving your appetite control and cholesterol profile.

Why avoid grains?

Modern grains are completely different to the grains our ancestors ate, and they did not consume the volume that most people do now. Eliminating grains – including whole grains – from your diet means you immediately stop eating processed foods such as bread, cakes, pasta, rice and biscuits. It dramatically reduces your carb intake, reduces insulin levels and stabilises hunger. Remember: grains raise blood sugar and insulin as much as table sugar.



Why should we eat more healthy fats?

We have been told for decades to reduce dietary fat, in the belief that fat makes us fat and causes heart disease. But the current low-fat guidelines are based on poor science. Eating plenty of healthy, naturally occurring fats such as extra-virgin olive oil, coconut oil, avocado oil and butter keeps you fuller for longer. They also help keep sugar cravings away and stabilise hormones.

Surely we need carbs to fuel our body and brain?

No – our bodies are brilliant adapters and can run far more efficiently on fat. When we switch to a low-carb, high-fat diet, the body burns fat. We can only store a limited amount of glucose (from carbohydrates) as glycogen, but we have an almost unlimited supply of energy as fat.

Why can't I just eat everything in moderation?

Sure, have a treat occasionally – just not every day, or even every week. People who don't want to change their eating habits regard the phrase "eating in moderation" as a wonderful get-out clause. Junk-food companies love the term "moderation" as it allows them to justify their products as part of a "balanced diet". "Everything in moderation" is actually very bad dietary advice.

Won't all that fat give me cardiovascular disease?

In February 2017, the World Heart Foundation president Salim Yusuf presented some of the data from the 17-country, 140,000-person PURE study on diet and cardiovascular disease. His conclusions? As carbohydrate intake is increased, there's an increased risk of cardiovascular disease. It also found that increasing monounsaturated fats – such as olive oil – is protective, plus saturated fats may be beneficial (and, at the very least, do no harm).

What about my cholesterol?

Cholesterol forms the building blocks for all our sex hormones, bile acid and vitamin D, and is required by almost every cell in our bodies. It is so vital that our bodies can manufacture it. It's also worth noting that cholesterol is a poor predictor of heart disease. Half of those with heart disease have "normal" cholesterol levels, and half of those with "high" cholesterol levels have healthy hearts. Most heart-attack victims have cholesterol within the normal range. Inflammation is the real killer. And what causes inflammation? You guessed it: a diet high in sugar and processed carbs.

How do I start eating low carb?

Crowd out the junk. At every meal, choose the most nutrient-dense food you can: good-quality meat or fish, non-starchy vegetables, full-fat dairy, nuts, seeds and possibly low-sugar fruit. This way, processed, high-carb foods will start to feature less often. And don't drink your sugar – soda, fruit juice and flavoured milks are the biggest source of sugar for many.

How many carbs should I eat per day?

There is no strict definition of low carb, but many regard 50g-100g total carbs per day as being low carb. Don't get too caught up with counting carb grams to begin with, though – just reducing your carbs will be beneficial.

