

# TIPS FOR SUCCESS WITH YOUR NEW DIET PLAN

## PLANNING

- Before starting the diet, find helpful resources
  - » cookbooks
  - » friends, family, and professionals who can support you—consider working with a keto-savvy nutritionist or coach
  - » find online or in-person support groups
  - » sign up on mailing lists for blogs that offer new information, tips, recipes, success stories, etc.
- Write down your diet goals and why you have chosen to adopt this plan. Put it in a prominent place in your home as a supportive reminder.
- Determine how you will address your dietary restrictions with others. Sometimes people are more understanding if you say you follow a special diet for health reasons (pre-diabetes, heart health, etc). Or you may want to say that certain foods don't agree with you.
- Manage expectations. Changing your diet can be challenging. Keep in mind that it may take time to build new dietary habits.

## PRACTICE

- Take it one day at a time. If you stray from your plan, take time to reflect on why it happened and what you might do differently in the future to improve your chances of success. Review your diet goals and motivations, and then start fresh the next day with a renewed commitment to your plan.
- Celebrate milestones:
  - » First three days, first week, second week, third week, first month, second month, six months, one year. Since sweets and starches

can be addictive for many people, much as alcohol or drugs can be, it may be helpful to think of successful stretches as periods of sobriety that deserve pride and recognition.

- » Challenging times where you stuck to your diet (dinner out with friends, holidays, office parties)
- » Reductions in medications, improvements in symptoms or test results

- Add gold stars to your calendar for each successful day. (This may sound silly, but it can be very satisfying to have a visual representation of how far you've come.)
- Identify ways to celebrate special occasions that don't involve food (go for a hike, go away for a weekend vacation, see a movie, buy yourself a present, take a bubble bath, go to a spa . . .).
- Engage in social activities that don't center around food.

## MEAL PLANNING TIPS

- When first starting your diet, identify a few snacks and meals that you can fall back on when you are in a hurry or don't want to spend a lot of time cooking. Think about foods you currently eat often and see if you can find low-carb versions that are easy to prepare.
- Set aside a couple of hours each week to prepare some staples so they are ready to eat or easy to cook when you have less time or energy later in the week.
- When you cook something, make enough for leftovers (either for the next day or for the freezer). You may find it helpful to create a weekly meal plan.

- Stock your freezer with leftovers or extra food you can thaw if you get low on groceries so that you are less tempted to order out. It's often helpful to freeze food in serving-size portions so it will thaw faster and you won't have to deal with leftovers.
- Shop the frozen foods section of your grocery store for things like frozen sausages and other pre-cooked low-carb foods to have on hand when you don't have time to shop for fresh foods or cook from scratch.
- Consider an online ketogenic meal delivery service. Many meals marketed as keto are low in fat, so you may want to add additional fat.

## RESISTING ADDICTIVE FOODS

- Identify your trigger foods (the foods that you have a hard time resisting) and come up with alternatives to have on hand. Sometimes it is helpful to identify why you like a certain food and try to find a healthier, low-carb alternative food that meets that need.
- Identify triggering situations and plan ahead for how you will handle them.
- If you are transitioning from a diet that includes a lot of sugary and processed foods to a low-carb diet, it is often helpful to transition to a whole foods paleo-style diet first (including fruits and starchy vegetables) to practice avoiding processed foods, and then transition to lower carb foods as soon as you feel ready. Then, when transitioning from whole foods paleo style eating to low carb eating, it can help to "overeat" low carb foods for one to three days if necessary, to get past the carb cravings.
- Practice fasting for 14–18 hours every evening (if approved by your health care team).
- Have healthy snacks on hand for craving emergencies.
- Make a shopping list before going to the store and stick to it. Don't shop when you are hungry. Some people find it helpful to ask a roommate, partner or family member to do the grocery shopping, especially on days of high vulnerability.
- If you are living with one or more people who don't follow your diet, separate your food into a separate cabinet so you are not tempted by their food. You might even add a little note of encouragement or a private meaningful symbol to the outside of the cabinet to help you stay on track. If you feel comfortable doing so, ask your living companions to support you in your efforts. If you struggle with food obsession or addiction even on a low-carb diet, see if your living companions will hide away the most tempting foods or even lock them away in a food locker.
- You may be able to enjoy keto "treats" on occasion. Be warned that all non-sugar sweeteners can raise insulin and maintain cravings for sweet foods. If you eat keto treats, try to do so sparingly or identify a non-sweet snack that you could enjoy as a treat.
- Make sure you are eating enough protein and fat. Calculate your required protein grams/day to ensure you are getting enough. If you are eating enough protein but still have cravings, make sure you are eating enough fat. I recommend getting your fat naturally from whole foods. Don't fear natural fats in food—there is no need to trim fat from meat, remove skin from chicken, choose egg whites over whole eggs, or eat low-fat/non-fat dairy products. However, the question of how much *added* fats should be in the diet depends on your personal

goals and metabolism. Many people believe all low-carb diets need to be extremely high in fat, but if you are trying to lose weight, adding too much fat to your diet in the form of fat bombs, lots of extra butter, cream, coconut oil, etc. may result in stalled weight loss due to all of the extra calories, and can even cause unwanted weight gain. It is better to think of LCHF as Low Carb Healthy Fat rather than Low Carb High Fat.

- Consider avoiding or at least minimizing dairy if you are struggling, as it can cause cravings and weight gain due to the natural growth-promoting hormones it contains.
- Some people find nuts addictive and can't stop eating them. If this is you, you may need to limit or eliminate nuts.
- Determine whether you can safely take an occasional day off from your low-carb diet or if doing so will make it too difficult to start the diet again. If you are on a roll with your diet, you may not want to take this risk. Some people find it helpful to stick to whole food sources of carbohydrates (fruits and roots) when they take a day off as this plan is less likely to trigger strong sugar cravings, urges to binge for days afterward, and withdrawal symptoms when you go back to low-carb.

## PRACTICAL TIPS

- Check your ketones and/or blood sugar daily. This is a great way to get immediate feedback about whether you are on the right track.
- When going to a dinner party, offer to bring a dish to share that is on your plan. Then you will have at least one food item there that you can eat, and your host will feel less pressure to address your dietary needs. If you know the host will be serving a main dish with a sauce or

topping you can't eat, ask if they might set aside a plain serving for you.

- If you are going to a food-oriented event and you are worried you won't have enough to eat, eat something before you go so you won't be hungry, and you'll be less tempted.
- Consider purchasing an insulated lunch bag and an ice pack that you can take with you on the go. Cooler Shock ice packs are excellent—they contain a special gel that stays frozen for several hours. When the cooler pack is frozen solid, it is TSA-approved so you can take perishable food with you when flying and it can keep foods ice-cold for up to 10 hours. (Check your country's flying restrictions to see if this is allowed.)

## TIME-SAVING TIPS

- Cook several chicken thighs or breasts to eat over a few days. You can then eat it plain, make it into chicken salad, or heat it up with a low-carb sauce or spice blend to add variety.
- Hard-boiled eggs are a great easy snack (or meal) either plain or as egg salad lettuce wraps. If you find boiling them a hassle, consider purchasing an automatic egg cooker.
- Cold cuts are fast and easy and can be made more interesting by making them into wraps. Try meat-mayo-pickle wraps or turkey-lettuce-tomato-guacamole wraps. (Some cold cuts have added sugars so check the ingredients first.)
- Easy on-the-go foods: rotisserie chicken, canned tuna, guacamole with veggies, cold cuts, olive pouches, nuts, single-serve cheese sticks
- Consider buying pre-cut foods if not cost-prohibitive (spiralized zucchini, veggie sticks, deli items, salad bar items).

## ONLINE RESOURCES

### Blogs

**Diagnosis:Diet** (Georgia Ede MD): primarily focused on nutrition and mental health, but also explores how food choices affect many aspects of health and well-being. [www.diagnosisdiet.com](http://www.diagnosisdiet.com)

**DietDoctor** (Andreas Eenfeldt MD): a wonderful resource with a collection of guides focused on different aspects of the ketogenic diet. The guides, blog, and recipes are free to access, but the library of exceptional videos requires a monthly subscription. [www.dietdoctor.com](http://www.dietdoctor.com)

**Virta Health**: educational articles and videos by top researchers in ketogenic diets, as well as practical tips for staying keto. [www.virtahealth.com/blog](http://www.virtahealth.com/blog)

**Nutrita**: an assortment of different guides as well as in-depth articles about ketogenic diets and health. [www.nutrita.app/blog/](http://www.nutrita.app/blog/)

**KetoMojo**: great articles about how to be successful on keto as well as a number of free educational videos. [www.keto-mojo.com](http://www.keto-mojo.com)

## RECIPE RESOURCES

These sites include good recipes for healthy savory meals. Many of these sites also include a wide variety of keto desserts which contain artificial sweeteners. Keto desserts are best kept to a minimum, particularly if you are struggling to lose body fat or dealing with cravings.

### Low-Carb and Ketogenic

**Diet Doctor**: This site includes a wide variety of excellent recipes, especially for savory breakfasts, as most breakfast recipes on other low-carb sites focus on sweet breakfasts. [www.dietdoctor.com/low-carb/recipes](http://www.dietdoctor.com/low-carb/recipes)

**Ketologic**: [www.ketologic.com/keto-recipes](http://www.ketologic.com/keto-recipes)

**I Breathe I'm Hungry**: [www.ibreatheimhungry.com](http://www.ibreatheimhungry.com)

**Peace, Love and Low-Carb**: [www.peaceloveandlowcarb.com/category/keto](http://www.peaceloveandlowcarb.com/category/keto)

**Maria Emmerich** has published numerous ketogenic cookbooks that are outstanding.

### Paleo Sites with Low-Carb Recipes

**Non Nom Paleo**: [www.nomnompaleo.com](http://www.nomnompaleo.com) Michelle Tam has also published a couple of excellent cookbooks.

**Paleo Leap**: [www.paleoleap.com/category/paleo-diet-recipes/keto](http://www.paleoleap.com/category/paleo-diet-recipes/keto)

**Whole 30**: [www.whole30.com](http://www.whole30.com)

### Online Communities

(note: many online low-carb Facebook groups focus on sharing recipes for keto-treats. These groups may be counter-productive if you are trying to avoid sweetened foods or if you struggle with food addiction.)

Sugar addiction Facebook group: [www.facebook.com/groups/sugaraddiction](http://www.facebook.com/groups/sugaraddiction)

Low-carb Facebook support group: [www.facebook.com/groups/lowcarbsupportgroup](http://www.facebook.com/groups/lowcarbsupportgroup)

### Eating Low-Carb at College

"DietDoctor's guide to college low-carb eating": [www.dietdoctor.com/low-carb/college](http://www.dietdoctor.com/low-carb/college)