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KETO FOR BEGINNERS

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What is a Ketogenic diet?

A ketogenic diet is one which aims to force the body to use (and burn) superior amounts of fat by restricting the carbohydrate intake and its use of glucose. It is a diet that consists of high fats, moderate proteins and low carbs. When you reduce your carbs, the body is induced into a metabolic state called ketosis. When this happens, your body starts to turn fat into ketones in the liver which also supply energy for the brain.

What is glucose and insulin?

Usually when you eat something high in carbs, your body produces glucose and insulin.

- Glucose is a type of sugar that the body gets from foods that are rich in carbohydrates such as potato's, bread, rice and so forth. It is the easiest molecule in the body to be converted and used as energy over all the other energy sources in the body.
- Insulin is a hormone and its job is to move the glucose in your bloodstream and take it around the body.

What can I eat/not eat on a Keto diet?

Basically think of the ketogenic diet as eating real foods. Avoid processed foods and obviously carbohydrates of a high net carb content. The list below is a guide:

Eat the following:

- **Leafy Greens**- spinach, kale, lettuce, bok choy, chives, swiss chard, arugula.
- **Above the Ground Vegetables**- broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, bell pepper, zucchini, cucumber, celery stalks, asparagus, mushrooms, kohlrabi.
- **Meats/Seafood** - fish (fatty fish is better), ground beef, shellfish, chicken, lamb, bacon, eggs, duck, pork chops, clams, oysters, mussels, squid, goat.
- **Nuts and Seeds**- pecans, macadamia, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, walnuts, pine nuts, hazelnuts, flaxseed, brazil nuts. Most nuts are very low in carbs and high in omega 3.
- **Some Low Carb Fruits**- avocado, raspberries, blackberries, strawberries
- **Dairy Products**- cottage cheese, cream cheese, mascarpone, heavy cream, mozzarella, brie, mayonnaise, feta cheese, full-fat yogurts.
- **Other Fats**- saturated fats, monounsaturated fats, coconut oil, olive oil, butter.
- **Sweeteners**- stevia, monk fruit, tagatose, erythritol.
- **Condiments and Sauces**- ketchup (find a low or no sugar added one), mayonnaise (try to find one with avocado oil), horseradish, worcestershire sauce, yellow mustard, hot sauces. These are some safe to use ones.
- **Herbs and Spices**- rosemary, thyme, cayenne pepper, cumin, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt and pepper, lemon pepper, cilantro, basil, oregano, parsley, chili powder.
- **Water and Beverages**- water is obviously the staple beverage of all and should be the main source for hydration. Coffee, (black or use non sweetened almond milk or try it with coconut oil/butter. This is called a bulletproof coffee), tea (stick to black or green

tea as they have added weight loss benefits), diet coke/soda (but do try to avoid it as much as you can as it can lead to sugar cravings), alcohol (only hard liquor, beer and wine are high in carbs so avoid that).

DO NOT eat the following:

- **Starch-** potatoes, pasta, bread, rice, oats, porridge, muesli, crisps, beans, lentils etc.
- **High Carb Fruits-** grapes, pear, banana, apple, pineapple, mango, kiwi, peach, orange, watermelon.
- **Processed Foods-** ready to eat foods such as luncheon meats, baked ham, cheese spreads, fruit drinks, granola bars, prepared pot pies, sausage.
- **Sugar-** candy, juice, chocolate, ice-cream. Basically avoid all sugar at all costs.
- **Low Fat Foods-** sometimes the foods that are advertised with low fat are generally very high in carbs. Watch out from these and avoid completely if you can and always read the package.

In summary, aim to eat quality fat on the keto diet which means the source of this fat will matter. Do not purchase foods that claim they are healthy or low in calories. These will have hidden ingredients that will throw you off hitting ketosis. Eat whole foods and remember the key is you are now exchanging foods containing carbohydrates with higher fat intake and a moderate protein consumption.

What are the most common mistakes people make when going on Keto?

When the keto diet is implemented correctly, you will notice many great benefits that you will absolutely love. However, there are common mistakes people make once they incorporate this diet into their lifestyle which need to be avoided. Common mistakes are:

1. You are not eating enough fat

Before you switch to a keto diet, you must understand the most important thing. Growing up, you have most likely been running on carbohydrates. Now, you are asking your body to switch up its metabolism and run on fat instead of carbs. This is where it becomes ESSENTIAL to change your mindset when you are shopping for your food or eating out to simply 'get enough fat'. 75% of your calories need to come from fat. These are all from foods listed above and more. I know mentally, it's not what you have been used to. It could be quite scary at first eating eggs topped with so much butter. But that's okay! It's how it should be and you need to keep in mind, fat is your new energy source. If you are not getting enough fat, you will feel tired and lethargic because you have no fuel for your body to run off. If you neglect this main and very important component of the diet, your body will constantly be stressed out and on survival mode literally holding on to every single calorie. DO NOT fear the fat.

2. You are eating too much protein

Consuming too much protein on a keto diet goes through a process called 'gluconeogenesis'. Basically, your body will treat any excess protein like carbohydrates and convert it into glucose. When this happens, you will be kicked out of ketosis which is what we don't want! It is very

important to choose high-fat meals with low protein. You only want about 20% of your calories to come from protein. No more and no less. Generally speaking, protein is the most important macro for sure. It is a macro heavily associated with muscle growth due to the amino acids it contains. Put it this way. If you have a high protein consumption on a keto diet, it is basically the same effect as eating too much carbs.

The greatest thing about keto is that you will not be losing any muscle due to the lower protein you are now consuming and this is because ketones are protein sparing. This means that when your body is in ketosis, it will keep the protein in your body and not strip it away.

3. Eating too much carbs

Listen carefully. Only 5% of your calories should come from carbohydrates. You cannot go over because it will kick you out of ketosis! Especially watch out from hidden sugars in processed foods and always read the nutritional and ingredient labels. If you have too much carbs on this diet, you will experience an insulin spike. This is when your blood sugar elevates and you will most likely soon become hungry again and possibly even eat more than usual. Take into account, the carbohydrate count in the keto diet is crucial. Too much carbs will mean you will never reach a state of ketosis which voids the entire program. The fewer carbs, the more effective. You want to keep your carbs from vegetables which is called 'trace carbs'. Green leafy vegetables are also very nutritious and contain a lot of fibre so do not worry too much about your portions there.

4. Not getting enough salt/magnesium/potassium

Electrolytes are very important for the human body and super critical when you do the keto diet. Now if you are not getting enough salt, magnesium or potassium in your diet, you will feel typical side effects associated with a low carb diet. These side effects include headaches, low energy, fatigue and just pure tiredness. In the first phase of entering the keto diet, you will experience these effects if you do not keep your electrolytes high. These are all symptoms of what is commonly known as the 'keto-flu'. This is where many people call it quits because it scares them and they think that depriving their body from carbs is not right for them. Guys, this flu will pass. Stay strong and counteract these effects but replenishing these primary electrolytes using the right foods and supplements. The reason this happens is because insulin is the hormone that tells the kidney to store sodium in the body. Now that the insulin is suppressed, your kidneys will begin to flush out all the sodium especially when you are breaking a sweat when working out. Replace the sodium by adding salt on your foods or even drinking chicken broth.

Am I going to get fat by eating so much fat?

Fat does not make you fat. This myth has been floating around for a very long time and it is simply not true. Fats do not make you fat especially if you are staying within your required calorie range. You will not get fat unless you combine the keto diet with a high carb diet in which case you will be in an excessive calorie surplus and most likely gain weight.

What is the balance between fats, protein and carbs?

- 60-75% of calories from fat (could even be more in some cases).
- 15-30% of calories from protein.
- 5-10% of calories from carbs.

How long does it take to get into Ketosis?

It depends and it is different with everyone but generally it takes about 2 – 7 days for your body to completely be in ketosis. Once you are in ketosis, you need to maintain this state through your diet.

How do I know I am in ketosis?

Apart from having high levels of energy at all times, improved mental clarity, reduced appetite and more, you can measure your level of ketones using urine sticks (purchased from most pharmacies) or a blood meter if you have one.

Can I still eat at restaurants?

Yes of course you can. Many restaurants have ketogenic friendly foods anyway so if you're out and about and your tummy growls, stick to meat, cheese and vegetables. Just remember to avoid carbs and double check this with the waiter if you are unsure. There are so many hidden carbs and sugars in the foods available at places so be careful with what you order. If you are at a fast food joint for instance Burger King, just skip the bun and have the meat patty in a bunless burger between the lettuce. Be careful of condiments too. Many dressings and sauces contain sugar!

Can I drink alcohol on this diet?

Some alcohol and cocktail drinks are loaded with sugar and high carbs. Try to cut out wine and beer especially. Having a social life and going out with friends/family can be tricky but you can make it work if you want to stay in a ketosis state. Stick with hard liquor if you want to have a drink. It is usually the best choice in this case.

Can I still build muscle on the keto diet?

Yes of course. If your goal is to build muscle, the keto diet will help you achieve this. The ketogenic diet has muscle-sparing effects. If you already have muscle on your frame, the keto diet will allow you to still keep your hard earned muscle. When you are in ketosis state, your body will not use your muscle and organ tissue because it doesn't need to. Your body already has plenty of fat for energy because of the diet itself.

Do I need to count my calories?

Counting calories is a personal preference. However, I would personally advise it. It can certainly become tricky with some foods and nutrient information but this is why JRF works all this out for you! I will create a personalised keto plan just for you and that way you will not have to track it, you will just need to follow it!

What is the main difference between a low carbohydrate diet and a ketogenic diet?

The main difference between these two diets is a low carbohydrate diet is about 130 – 150 grams of carbs and a keto diet is about 50 grams. Of course this will vary for each individual.

What are SOME of the benefits on the keto diet?

There are some great benefits that come with the keto diet. Research has shown that it can cause significant reductions in blood sugar and insulin levels. Along with the increased ketones in the body, the numerous health benefits are listed below:

- A drop in weight
- Better mental focus
- Lack of hunger – suppressed appetite
- Lower blood pressure
- Drop in cholesterol
- More energy
- Clearer thinking
- Mood stabilization
- Better skin – less acne
- No muscle catabolism
- Increased physical endurance
- Less sugar cravings
- Better brain function – improves memory and concentration

Do I have to still exercise to lose weight on the keto diet?

Following a diet consistently means you will still lose weight without stepping foot into the gym. Your body fat will decrease regardless if you are exercising or not if you are in a calorie deficit (eating less calories and burning more). However, for better and faster results, combining a gym workout will help you lose more fat and gain muscle when lifting weights.

How often shall I eat?

Eat when you are hungry but also save your calories/meals to last you the entire day so you don't need to snack.

I have high cholesterol, is the keto diet safe for me?

Yes, it is safe but keep in mind that a healthy keto diet should not only just be based around sausages, cheese, eggs and bacon. You should also make sure to include the sources of healthy

fats such as your nuts, coconut oil and avocados. In saying that, there has been a lot research in regards to cholesterol being vital for our body.

Can vegetarians do the keto diet?

Yes, they can. Vegetarians just need to find alternatives for quality protein and make sure they meet their daily caloric and adequate food intake.

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