

7 Reasons to go Low-Carbohydrate

By Erick Minor

Over the past decade, research supporting the benefits of low-carbohydrate diets has grown exponentially. Even though this research is backed by reputable sources, many folks are resistant to change and continue to adhere to the conventional wisdom of calorie counting and low-fat eating. So, I am going to give you a few more good reasons to adopt some variation of low carbohydrate eating if you have not already done so.

Low carbohydrate diets are NOT fad diets and they are not new; the first best-selling diet book, “Letter of Corpulence” was written by William Banting in 1864. Banting, a London undertaker, chronicled his struggle with obesity and explained how he lost 50 lbs in less than a year by following a diet that allowed ample amounts of meat, fish, poultry, game, fibrous vegetables, some fruit, and a few glasses of alcohol. While ingesting his fair share of fat and protein, he did eliminate milk, sugar, beer, potatoes, and sweets from his diet. Calorie counting was not possible at the time, yet he achieved these great results not knowing how many calories he was consuming. Banting made the observation back then that is blatantly obvious today; what you eat matters more than how much you eat.

I have been a low carbohydrate advocate for the past 12 years for one simple reason; low carbohydrate diets are the most effective diets for achieving significant fat loss while improving health indicators.

My adherence to this style of eating stems from the influence of many exceptional practitioners, scientists and authors but most notably: Dr Mauro Di Pasquale, Jonny Bowden PhD, and Gary Taubes. Gary Taubes, author of “Why We Get Fat” and “Good Calories, Bad Calories”, has been a particularly convincing influence on my current beliefs relating to health and body fat. Anyone who has an interest in health and well being should read “Why We Get Fat” which is an easier book to digest compared to the thoroughly detailed and in depth “Good Calories, Bad Calories”. But until you have the time to read any one of the books by these authors, I will share with you some nuggets of information that has changed the way I look at health and nutrition.

1. Natural fats (including saturated) from animal and plant sources are not a cause of heart disease or obesity. There are no studies that can directly link plant or animal fat intake to incidence of heart disease. Dietary fat has minimal impact on insulin response, and since insulin is the fat storage hormone (which I will explain further); dietary fat is not the cause of obesity. According to Dr Michael Eades, one of the authors of *Protein Power*, “saturated fat is a completely neutral fat”. On the contrary, if you consume a high carbohydrate diet, the effects of high levels of fats may be detrimental.
2. People get fat because they are inefficient fat burners, not because they eat fat. Carbohydrate consumption which elevates insulin, locks fat into storage, and increases fat accumulation. When you decrease starchy and simple carbohydrate intake and increase protein and fat intake, insulin levels decrease which allows fat to escape from fat stores and be burned for fuel.
3. Insulin is the primary regulator of fat storage and appetite; when insulin levels are elevated due to carbohydrate consumption or a metabolic condition, fat is unable to be released from fat tissue and any excess energy is stored in fat tissue. Elevated insulin levels rapidly clear the blood of energy which drops blood sugar and drives hunger.

4. Your hormonal profile determines your sensitivity to carbohydrates and how you store energy and nutrients. For example, young males with high testosterone tend to send energy to muscles to be burned whereas older males with lower testosterone tend to store more energy in fat tissue. Hormones determine where, when, and how much energy is burned and how much is stored. As we age, hormonal changes can make you less efficient at burning carbohydrates due to muscle atrophy which causes our muscle cells to become less sensitive to insulin.
5. *Insulin sensitivity is going to determine, for the most part, how long you are going to live and how healthy you are going to be. It determines the rate of aging more so than anything else we know right now” –Ron Rosedale, MD. Low carbohydrate diets improve insulin sensitivity.*
6. All diets that work have one thing in common; they lower carbohydrate intake through the elimination of refined sugars and flour. It does not matter if you follow the Paleo diet, Atkins, South Beach, or any one of the hundreds of registered diets on the market today; they all start by eliminating simple sugars and starchy carbohydrates.
7. Low carbohydrate diets are more effective at decreasing body fat than moderate to high carbohydrate, low fat diets. A government funded diet study published in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* in 2007, compared the Atkins diet, LEARN diet, Ornish diet, and The Zone diet, head-to-head for one year. The results were clear; the Atkins diet was most effective diet for raising HDL, decreasing triglycerides, lowering body fat, and blood pressure.

Works Cited

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Taubes, G. (2007). *Good Calories, Bad Calories*. New York: Anchor Books.