

What are low-carb diets?

These diets limit sugars and starches (also called carbohydrates). Carbohydrate restriction can be:

- strict, with fewer than 20 grams of carbs per day
- moderate, with 20 to 50 grams of carbs per day
- liberal, with 50 to 100 grams of carbs per day

Who are these diets for?

These diets can be right for almost anyone, but evidence supports their use in people with:

- prediabetes
- type 2 diabetes
- overweight or obesity
- metabolic syndrome
- high blood pressure
- other conditions, as indicated by a healthcare provider

What do these diets do?

Avoiding sugars and starches can help you:

- lose weight without hunger
- lower your blood sugar levels
- improve heart disease risk factors
- reduce medications
- feel better in general

Are low-carb diets safe?

Yes. These diets are a safe and healthy way to eat for most people. Some precautions involve:

- adaptation, or "keto" flu, during first 1-2 weeks
- monitoring blood sugars when starting the diet
- adjusting diabetes and other medications immediately
- more dietary carbohydrates for breastfeeding mothers

Low carb is easy as 1-2-3:

1. Limit carbohydrate foods.
2. Eat adequate protein at every meal.
3. Adjust dietary fat as needed for flavor and satiety.

Want to know more?

Dietdoctor.com has everything you need to make low carb simple:

- how-to guides for starting low carb
- 900+ low-carb recipes
- simple two-week program for beginners
- evidence-based information
- inspiration from 600+ success stories
- and much more!

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- our customizable weekly meal planner with a personal shopping list
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- video courses for starting low carb

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Low carb made simple

Diet Doctor's guide to losing weight and improving health



Enjoy



Protein

- beef
- deli meats*
- eggs
- game
- lamb
- poultry
- pork
- sausages*
- seafood
- tofu, tempeh, natto*

Vegetables

- artichoke
- asparagus
- avocado
- bok choy
- broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- cabbage
- cauliflower
- celery
- cucumber
- eggplant
- fennel
- garlic
- green beans
- hearts of palm
- herbs
- jicama
- kohlrabi
- leafy greens
- leeks
- mushrooms
- okra
- olives
- onions
- peppers
- pickles*
- pumpkin
- radishes
- rhubarb
- rutabaga
- shallots
- snow peas
- sprouts
- squash
- sugar snap peas
- tomatillos
- tomato
- turnip
- zucchini

Beverages

Water: Still or sparkling water, with a slice of lemon or lime, if you like

Coffee and tea: with a little cream, if you prefer

Full-fat dairy

- butter
- cheeses of all kinds
- cottage cheese
- cream cheese
- ghee
- heavy cream
- mascarpone
- ricotta
- sour cream
- yogurt – plain, full-fat

Natural fats

- avocado oil
- chicken fat (schmaltz)
- coconut milk
- coconut oil
- full-fat salad dressings*
- ghee
- lard and tallow
- mayonnaise
- nuts and nut butters
- nut oils of all types
- olive oil
- sesame oil

**no sugars or starches added*

Limit or avoid

Sugar

Sugar is in soft drinks, candy, juice, sports drinks, chocolate, cakes, pastries, sweetened yogurts, ice cream, and breakfast cereals.

Low-fat and fat-free milks contain milk sugar. Sugar can also hide in many products. Read labels carefully to avoid hidden sugars.

Starch

Starches include bread, cereal, pasta, rice, potatoes, French fries, potato chips, bagels, crackers, legumes (most dried beans), porridge, oatmeal, and muesli.

Starchy foods turn into sugar when they are digested. This includes whole-grain and whole-wheat products.

Fruit

Most fruit contains a lot of sugar. Tart fruit, such as berries, lemons, and limes, or fruit with a high water content, such as melons, are okay in moderate or small amounts.

Alcohol and sweeteners

Some low-carb alcohols, such as dry wines, spirits without sweet mixers, and low-carb beer, are okay in moderation. Diet sodas, dark chocolate, and non-caloric sweeteners can be used occasionally. However, some people find progress toward health goals is slowed or halted with these items.