

## About the Fatkins Approach....

When the low-carb diets were introduced in the 90's (at a time where potatoes and pasta seemed to be reserved for grandpas and grandmas – assuredly not a Yuppies food), some diet gurus decided that it was not the calorie intake that mattered, but rather the carb content of your food.

The rationale behind these diets being successful is that cutting back on bread, potatoes and pasta and replacing them by lettuce, spinach, or even meats, induces an obvious calorie reduction, and therefore a reduction in weight.

For those who are extremely motivated, these diets may work, as they are 'doable' in a social context. However, banning a high number of good-tasting foods from one's diet makes these approaches doomed to failure on the long term.

The claim that all low-carb diet creators make is that if you keep your carb intake very low, then the body enters a state of lipolysis/ketosis, switching your metabolism to one that primarily burns fat for energy. Though this claim seems very attractive, you should know that no official, serious medical study has ever proven this point!

Furthermore, several double-blind, long-term medical studies on significant sample sizes have shown evidence that a low carbohydrate, high fat and protein approach will lead to faster weight loss over a 6 month period compared to a low fat, high carbohydrate diet, BUT after 1 year, studies have shown **similar amounts of weight loss from high carbohydrate/low fat and high fat/low carbohydrate diets.**

In a nutshell, the low carb approach (whichever guru's name it carries) does not yield long-term results. So don't skip the bread and other grains, they are good for you!

Breads and grains are important components of a well-balanced diet as they provide fiber, zinc, folic acid, and chromium, as well as several essential vitamins. Remember that variety is an important key to healthy eating. For more variety in your diet, try cooking with these grains: amaranth, rye, oats, wild rice, millet, barley, quinoa, buckwheat, whole wheat, and brown rice. These grains are chock-full of healthy nutrients!

### **F** What's the skinny on carbs?

Carbohydrates are one of the two sources of food (the other being fat) that your body uses for energy. Carbohydrates are broken down into two categories – simple sugars that are easily digested and quickly enter the blood stream, and complex carbohydrates (starches) that take longer to break down. One gram of carbohydrate provides 4 calories of energy, while 1 gram of fat provides 9 calories. Carbohydrates, although they are not as energy dense as fat, are the primary source of energy for the body. When there is not enough glucose (sugars/carbohydrates) in the blood to fuel the body, the body first taps into its reserve tank of sugar, stored as glycogen, and then it taps into its fat reserves.

**N** Embarking on any long-term, low carb diet may increase your risk of cardiovascular disease and kidney failure. The low carbohydrate content of these diets is below the minimum needed to supply the brain and muscles with glucose (needed for cell respiration and proper function). Followers of these diets often suffer from muscle cramps, diarrhea, general weakness, and rashes much more frequently than those people on a recommended lower-fat diet. Also, the American Heart Association, American Dietetic Association, and American Kidney Foundation all oppose a low carbohydrate, high fat and high protein diet.

**F** Carbohydrates make you feel "full" more quickly, compared to the amount of food it would take to feel satiated from a large fatty meal. Therefore, eating carbohydrates may actually lead to a lower caloric intake.

**F** Atkins, South Beach, Low-Carb, and the Extreme Low-Carb Diet, are all low-carb approaches.