



HEALTHY YOU

September 2008

UK Health & Wellness Program
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Ask the Expert: The final word about low-carb?



Q I read in the news recently that low-carb diets are best for weight loss. I thought that low-carb diets were dangerous and ineffective. What should I believe?

A Yes, a recent study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (July 17, 2008) has reignited the debate about which type of diet is best for weight loss. The study concludes that people lost more weight and had more improvements in their cholesterol levels on an Atkins low-carbohydrate diet than on a Mediterranean diet or a “low-fat” diet.

Before you start throwing out your bread, let’s review some specifics of this study. When people hear low-carb diet, they usually assume that foods such as bread, pasta, fruit, and milk are “off limits.” But the low-carb diet used in this study allowed participants to consume 120 grams of carbohydrates a day.* This is actually the highest level of carbohydrates allowed by any Atkins plan and is roughly equivalent to 2 cups of pasta, 1 cup of fruit, and 8 oz. of milk. Hardly low carb by most standards! In addition, participants in the study were encouraged to choose vegetarian sources of fat and protein, such as beans and nuts (heart-healthy foods that are low in saturated fat and cholesterol). This debunks the assumption that participants on the low-carb diet were loading up on bacon, cheese, eggs, and beef patties (artery-clogging foods that raise cholesterol). This “healthier” approach to low-carb dieting is not what most people use when following the Atkins diet, or other low-carb diets.

So, here is what you should take away from this new research:

- A lower-carbohydrate diet can be an effective weight loss strategy for many people, BUT you should only expect to see long-term weight loss and health benefits if you follow the “healthier” approach outlined above.
- Focus on the type of carbohydrates you consume, instead of the amount. Many people could cut calories, feel fuller, and lose weight simply by substituting “good” carbs (high in fiber, low in added sugar) for “bad” carbs (low in fiber, high in added sugar). Choose whole wheat bread and pasta, brown rice, whole grain cereals, and fruits and vegetables over white bread and pasta, sugary cereals, sweets, and soda.
- If you are trying to control your cholesterol, you should focus on consuming more “good” fats and fewer “bad” fats, regardless of what type of weight loss program you follow. Choose nuts, seeds, olive and canola oils, fish, chicken, and low-fat dairy products instead of fried foods, red meats, and high-fat dairy products.

— Karen Bryla McNees, Ed.D., R.D.

** To prevent medical complications, such as ketosis, it is NEVER advisable to consume fewer than 50g of carbohydrates per day.*



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Fall Health & Wellness Events

League of American Bicyclists - Bike Ed Commuting Class

Considering riding your bike to work? Learn how to bike safely with Michael Galbraith, League Cycling Instructor. The Bike Ed Commuting Class demonstrates basic, on-road riding skills and strategies for route and gear selection. Several classes will be held in September and October behind the Joe Craft Center by the bleachers and will be cancelled for bad weather. Class size is limited! To register, visit the Web site at <http://www.uky.edu/HR/wellness/bikeclass.html>.

Good Health on a Budget: Fall Lunch & Learn Series

Please join us for lunch-time sessions geared toward keeping you healthy and well at work and at home. Each session is free and will cover a different topic. Light refreshments will be provided, but feel free to bring your lunch. All sessions are held from 12:10-12:50 p.m., in the Lexmark Room, Main Building. To view topics and register, visit the Web site at www.uky.edu/HR/wellness/lunchandlearn.html.

Throw Down Wellness Style: A Cooking Competition

“Throw Down Wellness Style” is a cooking competition in which contestants compete for the silver ladle by submitting and preparing the winning recipe as judged by UK celebrity judges. All recipes must be made in your own crock pot and brought to the competition cooked completely and ready for sampling and judging. Recipes will be judged on taste, creativity, and originality. UK employees, retirees, spouses, and sponsored dependents can compete by entering one recipe and crock pot creation or attend as a taster/spectator. All participants will be able to sample the entries, judge each entry, and receive a recipe packet containing all of the entered recipes. Space is limited so you must register!

The competition and tasting will be held Wednesday, October 1, from 5:15-6:30 p.m., at 202 Erikson Hall. To register as either a competitor or taster, visit the Web site at www.uky.edu/HR/wellness/cookingclass.html.



The UK Health & Wellness Program is part of UK's employee benefits package and is available to all UK employees, retirees, spouses and sponsored dependents.