

# The controversial atkins diet

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The Controversial Atkins Diet The Atkins diet is a controversial topic to discuss. Now, having deeply researched the Atkins diet, I have learned there is a lot that is positive about Atkins' approach. Still, I'm convinced there are better ways to get the benefits of Atkins without its downsides. By eating healthily and exercising, a person can reap the same benefits. As you're undoubtedly aware, Dr. Atkins' basic premise is that we've all been eating too many carbohydrates, especially refined white flour and sugar. " If you Replace most of those carbohydrates with more fat and more protein", says Atkins, " then you'll lose weight."(Atkins, 4) However, contrary to popular opinion, Atkins is not a " no carb" diet. Even in its strict initial " induction" phase, Atkins allows three cups of salad greens or two cups of greens plus one cup of chopped starchy veggies like broccoli or red peppers. Gradually anyone on this diet is suppose to increase their carbs in their diet until they discover their individual Atkins Carbohydrate Equilibrium (ACE), which is the level of carbohydrate consumption at which you will not gain weight. However, many people miscalculate or don't calculate their carbs at all. These people potentially suffer from unexpected side effects or they gain even more weight. It is factual that much of the rise in American obesity and diabetes can be pinned on our enormous consumption of refined carbohydrates. However, most of the studies have been performed on obese people. If scientists were to study an average weight American, I am sure they would have different results. There are many factors that come into play, exercise being one of the most important. Exercise is essential to a healthy lifestyle. Exercise makes a person's heart stronger, helping it pump more blood with each heart beat. The blood then delivers more oxygen to

the body, which helps it function more efficiently. Exercise can also lower blood pressure, reduce a person's risk of heart disease and reduce levels of LDL (bad cholesterol), which clogs the arteries and can cause a heart attack. At the same time, exercise can raise levels of HDL (good cholesterol), which helps protect against heart disease. Combined with a healthy diet, exercise can speed up weight loss. Exercise can also maintain weight loss; it helps people burn calories faster, even while they are sitting still. Furthermore, the majority of obese people that are studied are unhealthy beforehand, and therefore a high consumption of carbs is not the only factor linked to obesity; having no exercise can make a person obese too. Since scientists now believe that high carbs are easily correlated with obesity, the best way to limit carbohydrates, is to keep track of how many grams are consumed. Dr. Atkins uses a concept he calls net carbs. From the carb count of every food, he deducts any fiber and sugar alcohols (maltitol, sorbitol, mannitol, etc.), arguing that these types of carbohydrates do not spark insulin production and fat storage. It's true that different carbohydrates have a different effect on your blood sugar. The twenty-three carb grams in a cup of lucky charms will cause a much quicker rise in blood sugar than the same amount of carbs in a half cup of healthy lentils. Therefore, it's essential to your health to understand how to distinguish "good carbs" from "bad carbs." On the other hand counting net carbs, however, is a tedious and difficult way to sort the good from the bad; unless you're conveniently eating "Low Net Carb" products sold by Atkins Nutritionals or carrying around the net carbs chart from the back of an Atkins book. Some people believe the Atkins diet is unreasonable and complicated because to them it seems like a hard diet to

follow. A normal person can not easily distinguish " good carbs" from " bad carbs." Food is supposed to be enjoyed not obsessed over. The alternative is to learn and follow the basics of good nutrition. Then you should not have to count calories or net carb grams, or in other words fixate yourself on food. Another reason this diet creates controversy is because Atkins never explained his overall division of the food pie. Everyone should eat from all of the food groups in the food pyramid. Yet from what I have researched I found that he is recommending a diet that does not follow the food pyramid at all. The diet claims to be effective at producing weight loss regardless of the consumption of fatty meat, butter, and other high-fat dairy products. However, Atkins claims that as long as you are in taking thirty grams of carbohydrates a day or less will you lose weight. In general, Atkins supports good, wholesome food. Yet, he tries to convince people to eat them in very strange proportions. The Atkins diet, which has a reputation as " high-protein- no carbohydrate," is in fact only a high-fat diet. After learning this, it's safe to guess that Atkins would not be so popular if it were advertised as an extremely high-fat diet. A recent systematic review of low-carbohydrate diets found that the weight loss achieved is associated with the duration of the diet and restriction of energy intake; it has nothing to do with the restriction of carbohydrates or increase of fatty foods. Today, Americans are unnecessarily fat-phobic. Dr. Atkins is trying to change this when he says there's " absolutely no need to avoid foods that contain saturated fats" claiming that these fats are benign or even beneficial in the context of a low-carb diet. However many people swear by Atkins word and replacing carbohydrates with fatty foods is a risk some people are willing to take to

lose weight. Others are not willing to take this risk. The goal of dieting is to get the benefits of Atkins without its harmful side effects. A person can lose excess pounds and maintain a healthy weight by simply eating healthy food and exercising; without getting excessive and counting each and every carbohydrate, gram and calorie. That is why there is controversy. I have learned there is a lot that is positive about Atkins' approach. Still, I'm convinced there are better ways to get the benefits of Atkins without its downsides.