

# The the publics trust in the guidelines



The traditional dietary guidelines most of us were taught in school are now being challenged as a result of a new diet. Remember when your teacher told you that all you needed to do to eat healthy you just needed to consume a lot of pastas and breads and eat meats and fats sparingly. Times have changed.

In today's fast paced world of dot coms and international space stations, everyone is looking for something new. It's in with the new and out with the old. It seems this is true with our eating habits as well.

I guess we could credit some of this change to the rise of obesity in America. Whatever the reason, it seems that this new high protein diet is here to stay. In fact, according to a new breed of nutritionist, the wait is over. The answer this new protein diet offers for an age-old problem of obesity includes a 180-degree turn around in the currently accepted dietary guidelines. The advocates of the "high protein diet" recommend that a person almost completely eliminate your carbohydrate intake and double your protein intake. This is a far cry from what nutritionists have recommended in the past.

In fact, high protein diet plans are insisting that instead of having that plain baked potato and brown rice you planned for dinner, that you serve up a nice, juicy, double helping of barbecue ribs, and ignore the fat. Never mind the fat? What do they mean ignore the fat? Don't they know about fat? Sounds too good to be true, right? Well, not according to advocates of the protein diet. They insist that by eliminating high carbohydrate foods and replacing them with high protein foods, regardless of the amount of fat they

contain, your body can more efficiently burn fat and therefore help you to lose weight. Yes, the new protein diet actually insists that you can eat fat and lose weight. However, the question still remains, “ Is this diet healthy for Americans?” This is exactly what I hope to answer for you in the following pages. To help you understand what nutritionists are calling a high protein diet I will review the popular literature that has been published on the topic.

You have heard the popular saying, “ History repeats itself.” It appears that it applies to diets as well, because in actuality, high protein diets have appeared for over 40 years. In the 1960s the Atkins’ Diet. In the 1970s, it was reincarnated as the Stillman Diet. Then, in the 1980s it surfaced again as the popular Scarsdale Diet.

In each of these decades the high protein diet craze eventually died down because of the lack of scientific support and the publics trust in the guidelines put forth by our government. Despite high protein’s questionable past and the repeated warnings by every major health institute in America, a new crop of high protein diet books, such as The Zone and Dr Atkin’s New Diet Revolution has caught the public’s attention again (4). To try to comprehend what the stir is all about we will examine one of the top selling books on the market today about protein diets, The Atkin’s Diet. The main dietary principle driving the Atkins Diet is ketosis (5). Ketosis is a condition in which unusual products of fat are broke down in the blood.

More simply stated, it means excess, stored body fat is burned, which results in weight loss. To put the body into a state of ketosis you must restrict the amount of carbohydrates consumed in a day to less than 100 grams.

According to Dr. Atkins, regular insulin production converts excess carbohydrates into body fat. However, in the absence of carbohydrates the body cannot use its' fat in the normal way. Therefore, energy the body requires can be burned through benign dietary ketosis, or the burning of stored fat, rather than from carbohydrates consumed (5).

What does all of this mean to you and me? To explain it in layman's terms, it simply means that when fewer carbohydrates are consumed, the body naturally produces less insulin. As a result, the body, which now lacks its' carbohydrate energy source, finds alternative methods