

# 10 False Things People Say About Low-Carb Diets

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When arguing about nutrition, it can be hard to get your point across.

People often seem biased against ideas that don't fit with their philosophy.

When the topic of low-carb turns up, many people dismiss it, call it a "fad" diet and say that it is either harmful or impossible to stick to.

Here are 10 things people say about low-carb diets that just don't make sense.

## 1. Low Carb Diets Are Hard to Stick to

I often see the claim that excluding [entire food groups](#) can be hard and that it is impossible to sustain such an "extreme" change in the way you eat.

This point kind of makes sense. Not allowing yourself certain types of foods could lead to feelings of deprivation.

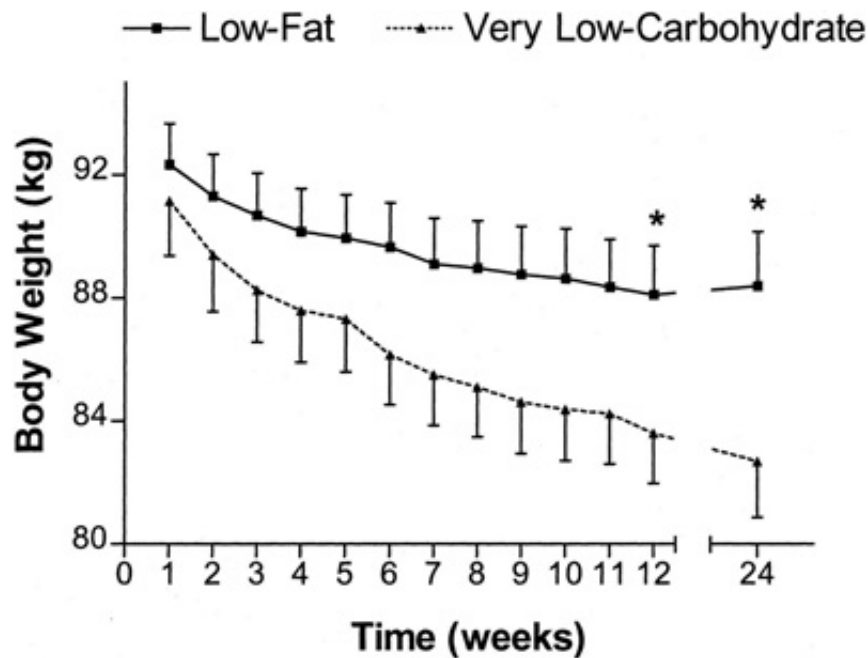
But the thing is, **all diets** restrict something. They either restrict food groups or restrict calories. For some people, the calorie restriction approach may be more feasible. But it is NOT the only way.

Many people don't seem to understand how low-carb diets work and what their main advantage is when it comes to [weight loss](#).

This is the fact that eating low-carb leads to automatic reduction in appetite and **effortless** calorie restriction (1). Compare that to the low-fat, "balanced" diet – which requires you to **count calories and be hungry!**

This is a graph from one of the studies that compared low-carb and low-fat diets. The low-carb dieters are eating until fullness, while the low-fat dieters are calorie restricted (2).





I don't know about you, but I **hate** being hungry. It is a very uncomfortable feeling.

If I get hungry, I eat!

If there is a diet plan out there that allows me to eat until fullness and still lose weight, then that sure is hell is the one I will choose.

In most studies comparing low-carb and low-fat diets, more people in the low-carb groups make it to the end. If anything, they are **easier to stick to**.

**Bottom Line:** Low-carb diets are not harder to stick to. These diets reduce hunger and more people in the low-carb groups make it to the end of the studies.

## 2. Low Carb Diets Exclude Food Groups That Are Essential

It is true that if you want to reap the full benefits of low-carb, then you must remove certain food items from your diet.

These are primarily sugars and starches and include **grains**, legumes, candies, sugary soft drinks and other high carb foods.

If you want to go very low on the carbs and get into ketosis, you must also cut back on fruits.

Despite the hype about these foods, there is **no actual need** for them in the diet.

Humans didn't have access to most of these foods throughout **evolutionary history**. We didn't start eating grains until about 10,000 years ago and we certainly didn't start eating processed junk foods until very recently.

There simply is NO nutrient in starchy or sugary foods that we can't get in greater amounts from animal foods or vegetables.



And remember that low-carb diets are NOT *no*-carb. There's room for plenty of vegetables, more than enough to satisfy your need for all the nutrients.

**Bottom Line:** There is no actual need for foods like grains in the diet. We can get all the nutrients from other foods in greater amounts.

### 3. Low Carb Diets Lead to a State Known as Ketosis, Which Causes Harm

Nutrition professionals often say that low-carb diets cause ketoacidosis, a medical emergency that can kill you.

Anyone with basic knowledge of biochemistry knows that this is **completely false**.

They're confusing the words "ketosis" and "ketoacidosis" – which are vastly different.

**Ketosis** does happen on low-carb diets, especially when you eat under 50 grams of carbs per day.

When the body isn't getting any carbs, it releases a lot of fats from the fat tissues, which go to the liver and are turned into so-called **ketone bodies**.

Ketone bodies are molecules that can cross the blood-brain barrier and provide energy for the brain when it isn't receiving enough glucose.

This is the body's **natural response** to a very low carb intake and also happens during starvation.

This is NOT to be confused with keto**acidosis**, which is something that only happens in uncontrolled diabetes (mainly type I) and involves the bloodstream being flooded with glucose and ketone bodies in extremely large amounts.

Ketoacidosis is dangerous, that's true. But that simply has NOTHING to do with low-carb diets.

The metabolic state of ketosis has been proven to be therapeutic in many ways. It can help with epilepsy, brain cancer and type II diabetes, to name a few (3, 4, 5).

Ketosis is a **good thing**, NOT something to be feared!

**Bottom Line:** Ketosis is a completely natural phenomenon that has nothing but positive effects and it is NOT to be confused with ketoacidosis, which only happens in uncontrolled diabetes.



### 4. Low Carb Diets Are High in Saturated Fat and Therefore Dangerous

On a low-carb diet, you're encouraged to eat foods like **meat** and eggs, which happen to be rich in saturated fat and cholesterol.

This is claimed to cause all sorts of problems, raise your LDL cholesterol and risk of heart disease and whatnot.

But the thing is, saturated fats and cholesterol **aren't bad for you**. This is a myth that has [never been proven](#).

A massive study that came out in 2010 looked at 21 prospective studies that included a total of 347,747 subjects. Their results: **there is absolutely no association between saturated fat and heart disease (6)**.



Despite being high in saturated fat, low-carb diets lead to **a reduction** in blood levels of saturated fat, because they become the body's preferred fuel source (7).

[Saturated fats](#) in the diet raise HDL (the good) cholesterol and change LDL from small, dense (very, very bad) to Large LDL – which is harmless (8, 9).

We can say the same for foods that are high in cholesterol.

For example, eggs have been demonized by nutrition professionals and the media. Despite the fear mongering, consuming eggs does NOT raise your bad LDL or your risk of heart disease (10, 11).

If anything, eggs are among the healthiest foods on the planet and eating them can provide various [health benefits](#).

**Bottom Line:** Eating saturated fats or cholesterol is not harmful in any way. This is a myth that has been proven to be completely false.

## 5. Low Carb Diets Are Not Proven to be Safe in The Long Term

I often hear claims that low-carb diets are not proven to be safe in the long term.

This is not true. We do have randomized studies that went on for as long as 2 years, with no adverse effects and nothing but positive effects on health (12).

There is **absolutely no reason** to believe that these diets should cause problems down the line.

There are several populations around the world that have eaten almost no carbohydrates for very long periods of times (their whole lives).

These include the [Inuit](#), which ate almost no plant foods, and the [Masai](#) in Africa which ate mostly meat and drank raw milk and blood.

Both of these populations ate lots of meat and fat, were in excellent health, with **no evidence** of many of the chronic diseases that are killing Western populations by the millions.



But what we DO have are long-term studies on low-fat diets. In the Women's Health Initiative, the largest randomized controlled trial ever on diet, low-fat diets were proven to be **completely ineffective**.

After 7.5 years, the low-fat dieters weighed only 0.4 kg (1 pound) less than women eating the standard western junk food diet. There was also no reduction in heart disease (13, 14).

**Bottom Line:** Studies showing health benefits of low-carb have gone for as long as 2 years. Populations that have eaten low-carb, high-fat diets for long periods of time are in excellent health.

## 6. Most of The Weight Loss on Low Carb Diets is Water Weight

It is true that in the first week or so, people on low-carb diets lose a lot of water weight.

The glycogen stores in the muscles and liver go down and along with them the water they tend to hold on to.

Additionally, low-carb diets reduce insulin levels, which cause the kidneys to release some of the sodium and water they are holding on to (15, 16).

But after you've lost that initial amount of water weight then you will continue to lose weight, but this time it's coming from your body fat stores.

A study that used DEXA scanners, which can measure body composition with supreme accuracy, revealed that low-carb caused 3.4 kg (7.5 pounds) of fat loss and 1.1 kg (2.4 pounds) of muscle gain in only 6 weeks (17).

Another study that compared low-carb and low-fat diets showed that the low-carb group lost significantly more body fat, especially from the abdominal area where the "unhealthiest" fat in the body is (18).

**Bottom Line:** In the first week of low-carb eating, a lot of excess water is shed from the body. After that, the weight is coming from body fat stores.



## 7. Low Carb Diets Lead to Deficiencies in Vital Nutrients

Certain foods in the western diet actually lead to a **reduction** in nutrient absorption.

Grains, for example, are very high in a substance called **phytic acid**, which hinders absorption of iron, zinc and calcium from the diet (19).

Additionally, avoiding wheat (including whole wheat) should lead to improvements in **Vitamin D** levels, because wheat fiber has been shown to reduce blood levels of this very important vitamin

(20).

Low-carb diets don't contain wheat, are low in phytic acid and therefore don't contain substances that "steal" nutrients from the body.

Most natural, unprocessed foods that are high in fat like eggs, meat, fish and nuts are **incredibly nutritious** and especially rich in fat soluble vitamins, which low-fat diets lack.

Low-carb diets tend to be high in vegetables. Personally I had never eaten as many vegetables as I did when I started eating low-carb. Now I eat vegetables with every meal.

Not a single one of the studies on low-carb diets in adults has demonstrated any signs of a nutrient deficiency!

**Bottom Line:** Low-carb diets allow for plenty of nutritious animal foods and vegetables, which provide all the nutrients necessary for humans.



## 8. Low Carb Diets Don't Supply Carbs That The Brain Needs to Function

According to certain health authorities, the recommended daily minimum for carbohydrate is 130 grams.

The reason is that the brain is assumed to be dependent on glucose for fuel.

This is half true. There are certain neurons in the brain that can't burn anything but glucose, but other parts of the brain can do just fine with ketone bodies.

When we eat very little carbs, our requirement for glucose goes down. Some parts of the brain start burning ketone bodies instead of glucose.

Even when we eat zero carbohydrates (which I don't recommend btw), the body can produce ALL the glucose it needs out of proteins and fats via a process known as [gluconeogenesis](#) (21).

Low-carb diets don't starve the brain, they don't make you feel slow (unless perhaps in the first few days while you're adapting) and they give the brain a stable source of energy throughout the day.

When your brain is burning ketones for fuel, you won't experience the same blood sugar crashes and afternoon dips in energy. Personally my energy never feels as stable as when I've been eating little carbs for many days in a row.



**Bottom Line:** The body can produce all the glucose it needs from proteins and fats if it isn't getting any from the diet.

## 9. Low Carb Diets Raise Your Risk of Heart Disease

It used to be “common knowledge” that a low-carb, high-fat diet would raise your risk of all sorts of diseases, most notably heart disease.

This hypothesis has been tested and proven to be false.

Since the year 2002, over 20 randomized controlled trials have been performed that compare low-carb and low-fat diets. They all lead to a similar conclusion.

Low-carb diets:

1. Reduce **body fat** much more than low-fat diets, even though the low-carb groups are allowed to eat until fullness (2, 22).
2. Cause a greater reduction in **blood pressure** (23, 24).
3. Lower **blood sugar** and improve symptoms of **diabetes** (25, 26).
4. Lower blood **triglycerides** much more (27, 28).
5. Change the pattern of **LDL** (the “bad”) cholesterol from small, dense LDL (very bad) to Large LDL (29, 30).
6. Increase **HDL** (the good) cholesterol much more than low-fat diets (31).

They improve ALL biomarkers of health MORE than the low-fat diet still recommended by the authorities.

Still, many nutrition professionals have the audacity to claim that low-carb diets are **dangerous** and continue to peddle their **failed low-fat dogma** that is literally hurting more people than it helps.

**Bottom Line:** Low-carb diets actually improve all biomarkers of health much more than the low-fat diet still peddled by the mainstream.



## 10. Low Carb Diets Are Not Proven to Work

Fortunately, despite **the low-carb diet** nowhere to be found in mainstream guidelines, health professionals are taking notice.

Many **doctors** and quite a few **dietitians** have seen these studies and acknowledged low-carb, real-food based diets and started using them in their practice.

At the end of the day, there are few things as **well proven** in nutrition as the superiority of low-carb diets compared to the standard of care, a calorie restricted, low-fat diet (32, 33, 34).

Low-carb diets are the easiest, healthiest AND most effective way to lose weight and reverse

metabolic disease like diabetes. **It is a scientific fact.**