
Getting started with Keto: George Elder, www.takebackyrhealth.com

If you decide that this life choice is for you, then I offer the following tips. Prepare to find your refrigerator full and your pantry with less in it, because you are eating real food.

First, what carbohydrate level should you be aiming to eat? There seems to be a magic number of grams of carbohydrates for each individual. If you are below this number you will most likely be losing weight. As the level of carbs rises your weight loss will slow. When you reach your magic number weight loss will stop and if you eat more carbs per day than the magic number, you will put on weight. So a good plan is to start with 20 grams or less carbohydrates per day and after you have fully fat adapted (maybe 3-4 weeks) add a few grams back each week, to manage your weight loss to stop losing weight when you get to your goal weight. Keep the carbohydrate level low if you have heaps to lose, but don't get bored by the lack of food diversity. Add those carbs back gradually, but drop back if you start to put weight back on.

Make sure you eat plenty of good fat so that you are not feeling hungry. The aim is not to eat less calories, or you may kick your body into starvation mode and your metabolism will slow. So keep up your calories, ensure you are eating plenty of fat, but do not snack between meals. Remember your goal is to keep insulin levels low. No gum, breath mints, Redbull, or sweets. Eating the required level of fat is quite difficult at first as it goes against all past conditioning.

Plan your meals because there is generally more preparation required due to less off the shelf items available. An easy way to plan meals is to cook larger meals each dinner time and refrigerate the excess for the next days breakfast or lunch. This helps, as you are adjusting to a higher level of home cooked food. If on removing it from the refrigerator you can see it has set (like fat sets when cold) then this is a sign you are getting plenty of fat.

When you realise one day that you completely missed a meal without noticing, then you are ready to think about eating windows and 16:8 fasting. Maybe dropping breakfast and only having two meals per day.

Keeping hydration up is critical and you may need to supplement salt, and magnesium as the reduction in carbohydrates increases the water loss and with this you will also lose those essential minerals. Leg cramps can be a signal that you need more sodium. Drinking a huge glass of water as soon as I get out of bed each morning works for me.

Go easy on the exercise for the first 2-3 weeks as your body adapts particularly if you are not used to regular exercise, give yourself a good 6 weeks of adaption before starting. By then you may find that it is all much easier and you are chomping at the bit to start.

The early changes in your gut can result in mild constipation, so keep hydration up and if you are concerned, taking some psyllium husk in water (teaspoon in a glass) may help the transition. This can also be an indication of insufficient fat in the diet, so add more butter to the vegetables and olive oil to the salads. I expect you have already stopped trimming the fat off meat and are buying the cheapest and fattiest mince (ground beef). In my experience your body will soon settle down to a new regular.

If you slip up and have too many carbs, just double down and it will come right, but recovery can take 2-3 days. If you need something sweet, try eating one square of chocolate with above 70% cocoa solids. Check out my cracker recipe at the end of the book. These can be great when you have a craving or when you need a quick lunch.

When I want a real treat I take 1/2 cup of frozen blueberries, cover with cream and leave a few minutes for the cream to freeze. Then eat with a spoon. Yum. Like ice cream but without the sugar.

For traveling food, I suggest some boiled eggs in the shell, cheese, salami slices, ham slices, canned tuna or sardines, some nuts, cold sausages and some of my crackers. Green salad with some vinegar and olive oil dressing is a good option.