

# Low-Carb Diet for Weight Loss

## How to switch to a Low-Carb Diet

Eating the low-carb way means building your diet around lean proteins along with vegetables and fruits prepared fairly simply. If you were a meat-and-potatoes eater, focus on the meat more than the carb-heavy potatoes. The tips in the following list offer advice on what foods to choose:

- Build your meals around fruits, vegetables, and lean protein food sources.
- Choose whole grains or legumes for your daily carb choices. Minimize your intake of processed foods.
- Choose very low-fat milk and dairy foods.
- Choose monounsaturated rather than saturated fats.
- Eat three or four meals per day. Never starve yourself and never skip meals. If you eat between meals, eat healthy foods that are also filling, such as apples or oranges.
- Do not eat a full meal right before bedtime. A bedtime snack such as non-fat yogurt or cottage cheese and fruit is okay.
- Drink plenty of water — eight glasses a day
- Exercise moderately 30 to 60 minutes at least five times a week.
- Practice the 90-percent/10-percent rule: Follow this plan 90 percent of the time, and treat yourself to a favorite food 10 percent of the time.

## How to Stick with a Low-Carb Diet

Sticking with your low-carb diet is much easier if you set yourself up for success and prepare yourself and your kitchen for a low-carb lifestyle. The tips in the following list can help you realize your goals:

- **Set your kitchen up for success.** Always have low-carb-friendly foods on hand ready to eat. Remove as many irresistible temptations as possible.
- **Avoid excessive hunger.** Eat before you're starving. When you're ravenous, it's tougher to make a healthy choice.
- **Prepare snacks in grab-and-go sizes.** Make pre-packaged snacks from cut-up veggies and whole wheat crackers in re-sealable plastic bags. Fresh fruit is already pre-packaged for your convenience so carry some wherever you go.
- **Eat a variety of foods.** Make sure you eat a variety of foods for better nutrition.
- **Find activities and exercises that you enjoy.** If you find something you really enjoy, you're more apt to do it every day. If you're social, find friends to walk with. If you look forward to exercise as your "alone time," plan times when you can work out alone. Make your workout personal.
- **Forgive yourself when you fail.** Everyone experiences a setback from time to time. Don't use it as an excuse to give up completely. Figure out where you went wrong and get going again!

## How to Estimate Portion Sizes for a Low-Carb Diet

A low-carb diet relies on knowing portion sizes to help you eat the proper quantities of the proper foods. To determine the number of low-carb servings you're eating, you need to estimate portion sizes. You may be surprised to see that normal portion sizes are a lot smaller than you think, as the comparisons in the following table show:

Measurement	Size
<b>1/2 cup</b>	About the size of a cupcake wrapper
<b>1 cup</b>	About the size of a tight fist or a tennis ball
<b>1 medium fruit</b>	About the size of a tight fist or tennis ball
<b>1 medium potato</b>	About the size of a computer mouse
<b>1 ounce cheese</b>	About the size of your thumb or a pair of dice
<b>3 ounces meat</b>	About the size of the palm of a woman's hand or a deck of cards
<b>2 tablespoons reduced-fat salad dressing</b>	About the size of a Ping-Pong ball
<b>1 teaspoon oil or butter</b>	About the size of the tip of a thumb

## Approved Snacks for a Low-Carb Diet

Low-carb snacks are a good choice no matter which diet you're following because they're mostly fruits and vegetables. When choosing a low-carb snack, consider the ones in the following list first:

<b>A juicy orange</b>	<b>A handful of raisins</b>
<b>A bunch of grapes</b>	A big green or red apple
<b>An 8-ounce container of low-fat yogurt</b>	Raw vegetables (baby carrots, cherry tomatoes, green beans, pepper strips, radishes, celery, cucumber) with low-fat salad dressing
<b>A can of unsweetened applesauce, diced peaches, or mixed fruit</b>	Sliced turkey rolled up in a lettuce leaf
<b>A glass of skim, 1/2%, or 1% milk</b>	Boiled shrimp with zesty cocktail sauce
<b>Dried apricots</b>	Skim-milk mozzarella string cheese

## Must-Haves for the Low-Carb Pantry

If you're dieting the low-carb way, stock up on low-carb essentials so that when you have a need to eat, you can find healthy, low-carb ingredients. The following list contains recommended items to keep on hand:

<b>Canned or Bottled Foods:</b>	<b>Grains:</b>
<b>Canned tuna, salmon, or sardines (in water)</b>	Whole-grain pasta, long-grain rice, wild rice
<b>Canned vegetables (asparagus, carrots, green beans, mushrooms, and so on)</b>	Whole-grain flours and cornmeal
<b>Canned fruit packed in light syrup or juice</b>	Oatmeal
<b>100-percent fruit preserves</b>	High-fiber, no-sugar cereals
<b>Canned chicken or beef bouillon</b>	Low-sugar granola or homemade granola
<b>Canned tomatoes and tomato paste</b>	Quinoa
<b>Salsa</b>	Roasted soynuts
<b>Ketchup</b>	<b>Seasonings:</b>
<b>Canned or dried beans such as pinto, navy, kidney, limas, garbanzo, peas</b>	Salt-free seasonings
<b>Fat-free refried beans</b>	Garlic and onion, minced and powder
<b>Natural or low-sugar peanut butter</b>	Bouillon cubes or sprinkles
<b>Sun-dried tomatoes</b>	Reduced-sodium soy sauce or Worcestershire sauce
<b>Artichoke hearts</b>	Sugar substitutes
<b>Olives</b>	<b>Oils and Vinegars:</b>
<b>Capers</b>	Nonstick vegetable oil spray
<b>Marinated vegetables (okra, beans)</b>	Healthy oils (olive oil, canola oil, peanut oil, or light combination oils)
<b>Roasted peppers</b>	
<b>Pickles and pickle relish</b>	
<b>Horseradish, Dijon, spicy, or plain mustard</b>	
<b>Red and white table wine (for cooking)</b>	