A Brief Guide to Diets

by Ronald Steriti, NMD, PhD

About this booklet

This booklet is written as a handy guide to different diets with an emphasis on educating the reader about nutrition so that they may make more informed choices.

About the Author

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Macronutrient Diets

Macronutrient diets are based on changing the ratio of the proteins, carbohydrates and fats.

Balanced Diets

Traditional naturopathic diets stress a balanced ratio of fats, carbohydrates and protein. These diets are often called 30/30/40 diets referring to the percentages of fats, carbohydrates and proteins. This is similar to the diet recommended by Barry Sears in his book *The Zone Diet.* For many people this means dramatically reducing carbohydrates (such as bread, sugar and pasta) and increasing the amounts of protein and fats.

Low Carbohydrate Diets

Dr. Atkins in his book *Dr. Atkins' Diet Revolution* advocates a diet very low in carbohydrates which are mainly used to lose weight. In his book he advocates high protein meals with an emphasis on meats. If followed strictly, his diet will result in what he terms "benign dietary ketoacidosis" with accelerated weight loss.

Carbohydrates

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Carbohydrates include starch which is found in grains, cereals, and vegetables. Sugar (glucose) is a simple carbohydrate. Bread and pasta are also carbohydrates. Carbohydrates are broken down to form energy in the body. If there is no need for this energy, fats are formed and stored (for future use).

Simple Carbohydrates

Simple carbohydrates include monosaccharides and disaccharides. The word saccharide is derived from the Latin word meaning sweet, mono means one, and di means two. Therefore, simple carbohydrates have either one or two “sweet” molecules bound together. Sugar (sucrose) is the most common simple carbohydrate. Other simple carbohydrates are galactose, fructose, maltose and lactose.

Complex Carbohydrates

Starch is a complex carbohydrate found only in plants. Starch is formed from polysaccharides, which are long chains of “sweet” molecules (poly means many). Many naturopaths attribute many ailments of modern man, including diabetes and obesity, to the introduction and widespread use of simple carbohydrates such as white sugar and white bread.

The Glycemic Index

Blood glucose

The glycemic index refers to the rate blood glucose levels rise after eating food, in comparison with an equivalent amount of pure glucose (sugar). Sometimes pure glucose is replaced by white bread as a standard.

High glycemic index foods

Food with high glycemic indexes include corn flakes, instant potatoes, honey, bread, rice and potatoes. Interestingly ice cream has a fairly low glycemic index. This is due to the fats which tend to slow blood sugar rises.

Low glycemic index foods

Food with a low glycemic index include kidney beans, lentils, soya beans, peanuts, butter and haricot beans, blackeye and chick peas, apples, ice cream, milk, yogurt and tomato soup

Glucose metabolism

Carbohydrates such as sugar, bread, pasta, rice and potatoes are broken down in the body into a sugar molecules called glucose. Glucose is either burned for energy or stored as fat.

Many physicians consider problems with glucose metabolism to be a precursor of diabetes, a disease characterized by excessive levels of glucose in the blood.

Protein

Protein is made from amino acids which are the building blocks of the body. Although meat and fish are the most well-known sources of protein, blue-green algae contain more protein per gram (and is high in many B vitamins) which is why it is included in many protein powders. Protein is also found in beans, lentils, tempeh, oats and other grains. Many protein powder supplements are made from rice, soy and whey.

High protein foods

Soybeans, nori, chlorella, blue-green algae, spirullina yeast, sunflower seeds, aduki beans, dry peas, lentils, dulse, cheese, sardine, and tuna

Medium protein foods

Amaranth, quinoa, almonds, sesame seeds, tempeh, kelp, alaria, herring, cod, bass, abalone, anchovy, mackerel, fowl, beef, red meat, buckwheat, oats, spelt, filberts, miso, wakame, cottage cheese, clam

Low protein foods

Rice, barley, corn, rye, millet, soy sauce, tofu, sourdough bread, hikiji, kombu, oyster, fruits, carrots, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, kale, parsley, brussel sprouts, pickles, amasake, agar agar, whole milk, yogurt, and eggs.

Fats

Fat is composed of carbohydrate chains (called fatty acids) attached to a glyceride molecule. They are used to store energy in the body. Oil is a liquid form of fat.

Essential fatty acids

The omega-3 and omega-6 oils are also called essential fatty acids because the body needs them to remain healthy. The brain is composed almost entirely of essential fatty acids. Clinically, essential fatty acids (like flax and borage oils) have a marked antiinflammatory effect on the body.

Hydrogenated fats

Hydrogenated fats are made by bubbling hydrogen gas with nickel as a catalyst to make an oil more solid at room temperature. This is how margarine and Crisco is made. During the process many of the chemical bonds are broken and reformed into less healthy trans configurations.

Low Fat Foods

The term “low fat” means that the product has much less fat than the regular brand. It has nothing to do with either diets or losing weight. Many of these products are high in carbohydrates which may cause exactly the opposite. Labels should be read carefully.

The Acid-Alkaline Diet

Acid and alkaline ash

All foods are “burned” in the body leaving an ash that is neutral, acid, or alkaline, depending largely on the mineral composition of the foods. The pH of the blood and urine is affected by the acidity or alkalinity of the foods.

Excess acid

Excess acid usually settles in the joints, causing inflammation and pain, and may result in arthritis or rheumatism. Calcium is used to maintain proper pH of the blood. In acidic conditions calcium is taken from the bones to make the blood more alkaline which may cause osteoporosis.

Acidic foods

Acidic foods include meats, fish, dairy and eggs, flour products (spaghetti), and catsup, Raw fruits become acid-forming with the addition of sugar. Alcohol, drugs, aspirin, and tobacco are also acid-forming.

Alkaline foods

Alkaline foods include figs, green vegetables such as spinach, soybeans, raisins, carrots, and celery. Alfalfa and barley help to relieve pain from too much acid-forming foods in the diet.

The Hygienic Diet

Natural Hygiene

Natural Hygiene was taught in the 1830's by Sylvester Graham and William Alcott. The basic philosophy is that the body is always striving for health and that it achieves this by continually cleansing itself of waste material. Symptoms of disease are considered to be natural restorative process. Chronic disease is believed to be caused by the toxic saturation at the cellular level of the bodily tissues, bloodstream, and fluids.

Proper food combining

Central to the hygienic diet is the proper combining of foods to ensure proper digestion.

Fruits and melons should be eaten alone, i.e. for breakfast or about 30 minutes before the main meal. Do not combine fruits and vegetables or fruit and melons.

The main meals of the day (lunch and dinner) consist of vegetables with starches or a protein. Do not combine proteins and starches, and eat only one protein at a time.

Fasting

Fasting with fruits provides the ideal conditions for eliminating toxins and repairing damaged tissues. A juicer is often used.

The Blood Type Diet

The blood type diet was developed by Drs. D'Adamo and D'Adamo. Peter D'Adamo (the son) wrote the bestselling book *Eat Right for Your Type* which describes the diets.

Blood type antigens

Blood type refers to antigens found on red blood cells. Blood group A has galactosamine, group B has galactose and group O has fructose.

Blood Type O

Type O is the oldest , showing a prevalence for hunter-gatherer cultures. Type O people tend to secrete more stomach acid to digest their high-protein diets.

Blood Type A

The A type emerged with the development of agriculture, and is primarily associated with vegetarian foods.

Blood Type B

The B type is associated with cultures that use fermented dairy products such as yogurt, cheese and tofu. Chicken and eggs are very problematic for this blood type.

Blood Type AB

The AB type is a more modern combination of the A and B blood groups. They can tolerate a wide range of foods in small amounts.

The Body Type Diet

Dr. Abranavel in his book, *Dr. Abranavel's Body Type Diet and Lifetime Nutrition Plan*, outlines four different metabolic types based upon which of the body's major gland is dominant in the system.

Adrenal Type

The adrenal type craves meat, butter, eggs, salt, and cheese. They love cheeseburgers and alcohol. Plenty of vegetables, whole grains, legumes and fruit as well as parsley tea is recommended.

Thyroid Type

The thyroid body type craves starches and loves to snack on cookies or a sweet roll and coffee. Extra protein and eggs for breakfast is recommended. Raspberry tea may also help.

Pituitary Type

The pituitary type craves dairy and loves milk shakes. For this type a varied diet with meats, chicken, fish, and vegetables and Fenugreek tea is recommended.

Gonadal Type

The gonadal type craves spices, fats and oils. Their favorite foods are spicy Mexican and Thai foods. For this type a varied diet with plenty of fruit is recommended. Red clover may also help.

Cleansing Diets

Cleansing diets help to reduce the toxic load on the body. Drink at least 2 quarts of water each day during the fast.

The 1st day - Fruit

Begin the cleanse by eating only fruits, except for bananas and citrus.

The 2nd day - Salads

Begin the day with fruit. Green salads are eaten for the rest of the day. They may be eaten raw or steamed, in soup or salad. Use light spices, salt, and 1 tablespoon of flax or olive oil. Avoid tomatoes and peppers.

The 3rd day - Starch

Have fruit for breakfast and a salad for lunch. For dinner you may have a starchy vegetable (potato, yam, squash, or corn) and non-gluten grain (rice, corn, millet, quinoa or amaranth.)

The 4th day - Gluten grains

On the fourth day you can add a gluten grain to your dinner menu. Avoid mixing grains and fruits.

The 5th day - Protein

On the fifth day add a high protein food for dinner. This includes beans, tofu, dairy, meat, fish, nuts and eggs. Do not mix these proteins with starchy vegetables or fruits.

Diet Supplements

Fiber

Fiber supplements, such as psyllium and glucomannan, help with digestion and expand in the stomach to give a sensation of fullness.

Chromium picolinate

Chromium helps your body turn carbohydrates and fats into energy. It also improves the effectiveness of insulin.

Chickweed

Chickweeed is a green leafy vegetable that has a folk history of helping people loose weight. It can be added to salads or steamed.

Pineapple

Pineapple contains an enzyme called bromelain, which helps digest both proteins and fats.

Conjugated Linoleic Acid (CLA)

Conjugated linoleic acid is a component of beef and milk that has been shown to reduce body fat in both animals and humans. CLA is essential for the transport of dietary fat into cells where it is used to build muscle, and produce energy.

Soy Protein

Scientific research shows that soy protein lowers blood fat levels and stimulates the thyroid gland.

More Booklets

Dr. Steriti has written several booklets on natural health, including:

Tips for New Mothers

Healthy Skin, Hair and Nails Naturally

Sports Nutrition for Athletes

A Guide to Diets

What Foods to Buy at an Organic Market or Health Food Store

How to Choose a Good Multiple

Great Health Quotes

An Introduction to Naturopathy and Naturopathic Medicine

Alternative and Nutritional Lab Tests

These booklets can be ordered by sending $5 per booklet with a self-addressed, double-stamped envelope to:

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How to Find a Naturopath

What is Naturopathy?

Naturopathy is a term made popular in the early 1900's to describe a system of medicine that emphasizes natural therapies including herbs, homeopathy, hydrotherapy, nutrition, diet, and manipulation.

What is Naturopathic Medicine?

Naturopathic medical schools have four-year full-time programs that teach both naturopathy and conventional Western diagnosis and treatment. Graduates are trained to become primary care physicians in licensed states.

There are currently four naturopathic medical schools in the United States and one in Canada: Bastyr, National, and Southwest Colleges of Naturopathic Medicine, The University of Bridgeport, and the Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine.

Currently Alaska, Arizona, British Columbia, Connecticut, Hawaii, Maine, Manitoba, Montana, New Hampshire, Ontario, Oregon, Utah, Vermont and Washington have naturopathic medical licensing laws.

Where do I find a naturopath?

Check the American Association of Naturopathic Physician's web site:

www.naturopathic.org

Top Ten Reasons to See a Naturopath

1. It’s part of your healthy life-style.

2. You are taking a lot of supplements, but aren’t sure if they are right for you.

3. You want advice from a specialist that is well trained in natural therapies.

4. You want to make an informed decision about your health.

5. You want a natural health program designed for you.

6. You are confused by contradictory health claims.

7. You have vague complaints but aren’t sick enough to see a medical doctor or use drugs.

8. You are concerned about the long-term side effects of drugs.

9. You have an uncommon health problem which has many specialists baffled.

10. The drugs you are taking cause side effects which are worse than the original problem.