

Controlled Carbohydrate Nutrition

The Atkins Lifestyle

The following information is meant to be an overview of the high points of the Atkins Lifestyle. It is not meant to replace reading the books. Start first with *Dr. Atkins' New Diet Revolution*. When you are close to your goal weight read *Atkins for Life*.

Education is essential if you are to stop the cycle of yo-yo dieting and succeed not only in losing weight but in attaining the most important goal- to make this a healthy, successful choice for life.

The Atkins Lifestyle: The Four Phases

- Induction
- On-Going Weight Loss (OWL)
- Pre-Maintenance
- Lifetime Maintenance

ACCEPTABLE INDUCTION FOODS

Foods you do not need to limit in Induction:

Eat poultry, fish, shellfish, meat and eggs in portions that make you feel satisfied. Do not stuff yourself.

Exceptions are:

Oysters, mussels, and clams which are higher in carbs than other shellfish. Eat no more than 4 ounces a day.

Processed meats such as ham, bacon, pepperoni, salami, hot dogs, and other luncheon meats—and some fish—may be cured with sugar or contain fillers that contribute carbs.

Avoid meat and fish products cured with nitrates, which are known carcinogens.

Also be beware of products that are not exclusively meat, fish, or fowl, such as imitation crabmeat, fish sticks, meatloaf, and all breaded foods.

Do not consume more than 4 ounces of organ meats a day.

Foods you need to limit in Induction:

Cheese: a maximum of 4 ounces per day

All cheeses contain some carbohydrate. You can consume 3 to 4 ounces daily of full-fat, firm, soft, and semi soft aged cheese (for example, Cheddar, Swiss, Gouda, goat cheese, mozzarella, blue cheese).

Count 1 ounce of cheese as 1 gram of Net Carbs.* Full-fat cream cheese is also permitted, as are cheeses made from soy or rice.

Not allowed unless you are unable to eat the above listed cheeses because of allergies or personal preference. The following may be substituted up to 3 to 4 ounces daily: cottage cheese, farmer cheese, ricotta cheese, and other fresh cheeses.

Avoid the following: reduced-fat cheeses, low calorie cheeses, processed cheeses or cheese spreads.

* Net Carbs are the carbs in a whole food that have an impact on blood sugar, represented by subtracting the fiber grams in the food from the total grams of carbohydrates.

Other dairy:

Butter is unlimited.

Heavy cream, light cream or sour cream up to 3 tablespoons daily.

Salad vegetables:

You can have 2 to 3 loosely packed cups per day* of the following:

Alfalfa sprouts	Arugula
Cabbage	Celery
Chicory	Chives
Cucumber	Daikon
Endive	Escarole
Fennel	Jicama
Lettuce (all types)	Mache
Mushrooms	Parsley

Peppers	Radicchio
Radishes	Romaine
Scallions	Tomato
Watercress	

Any other leafy green vegetables.

*If you lose weight easily it is ok to start with 3 cups of salad vegetables daily.

Cooked vegetables: 1 cup per day

You can have 1 cup (measure cooked) per day of these vegetables, if salad does not exceed 2 or 3 cups.

A few vegetables, such as spinach or tomatoes, that cook down significantly, should be measured raw.

Some of the following vegetables are slightly higher in carbohydrate content than salad vegetables:

Artichoke hearts	Artichokes	Asparagus
Bamboo shoots	Bean sprouts	Beet greens
Bok choy	Broccoli	Broccoli rabe
Brussels sprouts	Cabbage	Cauliflower
Celery root	Chard	Collard greens
Dandelion greens	Eggplant	Hearts of palm
Kale	Kohlrabi	Leeks
Okra	Onion	Pumpkin
Rhubarb	Sauerkraut	String or wax beans
Summer squash	Tomato	Turnips
Water chestnuts	Zucchini or summer squash	

Note that certain vegetables appear on both this list and the preceding salad list.

Garnishes:

Crumbled crisp bacon (look for nitrate-free products)

Grated cheese (figure into your cheese count)

Minced hard-boiled egg

Sauteed mushrooms (figure into your vegetable count)

Spices and herbs (as long as they contain no added sugar)

Salad dressings:

Oil and vinegar

Prepared salad dressings without added sugars, such as sugar, corn syrup, or honey (no more than 2 grams Net Carbs per serving).

Not Allowed

Balsamic vinegar (contains added sugar)

Rice vinegar with added sugar

Prepared salad dressings with added sugar

Condiments:

Caponeta (eggplant relish)

Mayonnaise (regular, full fat)

Mustard (not honey mustard)

Horseradish

Pesto (after first 2 weeks of Induction)

Pickles (not "bread and butter" or other sweet pickles); be sure to calculate the grams of Net Carbs.

Soy sauce (tamari, others made without wheat)

Tabasco sauce

Tapenade (black olive puree)

Worcester sauce

Not allowed:

Barbecue sauce

Ketchup

Pickle relish

Russian dressing

Cranberry sauce

Any sauce with added sugar, corn syrup, or bleached flour, such as steak sauce, jarred gravies, etc.

Oils:

You may use any type of oil, preferably cold-pressed or expeller-pressed. Olive oil or butter is preferred.

You may use margarine spreads made of vegetable oils as long as they do not contain added trans fats (hydrogenated oils).

Artificial sweeteners:

The words sugarless, sugar-free or no added sugar are not sufficient. You must also look at carbohydrate counts. We recommend the following sweeteners:

Sucralose (marketed as Splenda)

Saccharin (marketed as Sweet'n Low)

Acesulfame-K (marketed as Sweet One)

Note: Most chewing gum, breath mints, cough syrups, and cough drops are filled with sugar or other caloric sweeteners and must be avoided. However, there are many sugar-free products available.

Beverages:

Be sure to drink a minimum of eight 8-ounce glasses of water each day, including:

Filtered water

Mineral water

Spring water

Tap water

The following beverages are acceptable but should be consumed in addition to the recommended 64 ounces of water:

Decaffeinated coffee

Diet soda made with one of the acceptable artificial sweeteners (no more than 3 cans per day)

Essence-flavored seltzer (must say no calories)

Herb tea (without barley or any fruit sugar, or fructose, added)

Clear broth/bouillon (not all brands; read the label)

Club soda

Not allowed:

Coffee substitutes made from grains

Alcoholic beverages

Caffeinated cola drinks

Fruit or vegetable juices

Special category foods:

Each day you can eat the following, but add to your carb count:

10 green olives or 6 black olives

Half a Haas avocado

2 to 3 tablespoons of lemon juice or lime juice

If you stay on Induction past the second week you may add 1 ounce of nuts and/or seeds to your daily intake. The best choices are macadamias, almonds, pecans, Brazil nuts, pumpkin or sunflower seeds.

Note: these foods occasionally slow down weight loss in some people, and may need to be avoided at first. If you seem to be losing slowly, moderate your intake of these foods or avoid them altogether.

Climbing the Ladder

When people are moving out of Induction and ready to add more carbs, it is a common mistake to add to try to add the food group they like the most and often have the most difficulty controlling. To take the guesswork out of what to add next, Dr. Atkins devised the carbohydrate ladder.

Follow the ladder by adding foods in the order in which Dr. Atkins usually added to his patients' diets.

More greens whether it be salad or veggies from the permissible list

Nuts or seeds or fresh cheeses if you have only been eating aged cheeses

Berries

Legumes

Fruits other than berries

Starchy vegetables

Whole grains

The Power of Five and Ten

What constitutes approximately 5 grams of Net Carbs when it comes to the foods on the Carbohydrate Ladder? This list will help you get a handle on a 5-gram portion of those items.

Vegetables

- ¾ cup cooked spinach
- ½ cup red peppers
- 1 medium tomato
- ⅔ cup cooked broccoli
- 8 medium asparagus
- 1 cup cauliflower
- ⅓ cup chopped onions
- ½ Haas avocado
- ⅔ cup summer squash

Dairy

- 5 ounces farmer cheese or pot cheese
- ½ cup cottage cheese
- ⅔ cup ricotta cheese
- ½ cup heavy cream

Nuts and Seeds

- 1 ounce of:
 - Macadamias (approximately 10–12 nuts)
 - Walnuts (approximately 14 halves)
 - Almonds (approximately 24 nuts)
 - Pecans (approximately 31 nuts)
 - Hulled sunflower seeds (3 tablespoons)
 - ½ ounce cashews (approximately 9 nuts)

Fruits

- ¼ cup blueberries, raspberries
- ½ cup strawberries
- ¼ cup cantaloupe, honeydew

Juices

- ¼ cup lemon juice
- ½ cup tomato juice

Portions of 10 grams of Net Carbs

Legumes (Cooked)

- 1/3 cup lentils
- 1/3 cup kidney beans
- 1/3 cup chickpeas
- 1/3 cup baby lima beans

Fruits

- ½ large apple
- 1 medium kiwifruit
- ¼ small cantaloupe
- 1 medium tangerine
- 3 small plums

Starchy Vegetables (cooked)

¼ cup carrots
¾ cup mashed turnip
¾ cup chestnuts

Whole Grains (cooked)

¼ cup brown rice
½ cup plain old-fashioned oatmeal
1/3 cup corn kernels

On-Going Weight Loss (OWL)

When you are ready to move beyond Induction after 2 weeks or later, consult the carbohydrate ladder to choose what to add next. You will add 5 more grams daily to your intake. For example, if you are eating 20 grams increase to 25 grams daily for the next week. Each week add 5 more grams of carbs until weight loss stops, and then cut back by about 5 grams to restart losing.

You will have found your CCLL or your Critical Carbohydrate Level for Losing. Depending upon how much excess body fat you have, losing about 2 pounds a week *on average* is fine. If you are carrying a lot of weight you may lose at a faster pace in the early stages. As you have less fat mass to lose the rate of loss will slow. This is perfectly normal and expected.

When possible, Dr Atkins gave his patients the choice of what to add next. Add nuts from the list if you miss crunch, or because they are convenient to carry without concern for refrigeration. Some people want to broaden their cheese choices by adding fresh cheeses. This can be helpful for those who are looking for an alternative to eggs for breakfast. Want more salad or veggies? Increase your intake by 5 grams from the allowable list.

Once you have added these items continue to refer to the carb ladder for future additions. The idea is to broaden your diet enough to continue to make progress with your weight, control hunger and cravings and keep your chemistry in balance. You will know if you have added too much, too fast or the wrong food if weight and inch loss stops, your hunger increases or cravings are triggered. If this happens lower your carb intake. If you get really out of control resume Induction for several days and when things calm down move slowly back to your previous successful level. Avoid abusing Induction: it is best to move through the phases slowly and correctly.

It is important to remember that your weight is not the only number to pay attention to. Improvement in lab tests that were abnormal at the start is a goal and a sign that you are rebalancing your metabolism. For comparison, have your lab tests repeated after 6 weeks or so into the program.

Pre-Maintenance

When you are within about 10 pounds of your goal weight it is time to move to Pre-Maintenance and purposely slow weight loss. This never goes over well with people because they want to get weight off ASAP. Yet this phase is important for long term success. Experiment with adding higher glycemic items from the carb ladder. Giving yourself the chance to instill healthy food choices will make it easier to individualize your program for a lifetime.

Add 10 grams daily of Net Carbs slowing weight loss to less than 1 pound a week. Yes, it will take a bit of time to lose those last few pounds!

You will know if you have added too much, too fast or the wrong food if weight and inch loss stops, your hunger increases or cravings are triggered. If this happens lower your carb intake to the previous comfortable level.

Lifetime Maintenance

You have found your Lifetime Maintenance level when weight and inch loss has stopped for a month.

When this happens you are at your ACE: Atkins Carbohydrate Equilibrium. Your ACE is the number of grams of carbs you can eat without gaining or losing. Stay at this level if you are at goal. If not, cut back your carb intake by 5 or 10 grams to resume slow weight loss until you reach your goal weight.

Once you have reached your goal, maintain your weight within 5 pounds. If unmanageable hunger or cravings restart or you begin to regain, cut your carb intake to the level that gets you back in control.

For more important information be sure to review the following presentation:
Atkins Nutritional Approach

The information presented on this site is in no way intended as medical advice or as a substitute for medical treatment. This information should be used in conjunction with the guidance and care of your physician. Consult your physician before beginning this program as you would any weight-loss or weight-maintenance program. Those of you on diuretics or diabetes medication should proceed only under a doctor's supervision as changing your diet usually requires a change in medication dosages. As with any plan, the weight-loss phases of this program should not be used by patients on dialysis or by pregnant or nursing women. As with any weight-loss plan, we recommend anyone under the age of 18 follow the program under the guidance of their physician.

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