



ONE DIET DOES NOT FIT ALL – PART II

Could the Atkins diet be modified to be healthier? Part I of this article discussed some of the issues surrounding a low carbohydrate eating plan. This second part continues the discussion and outlines a healthier version of the diet.

Including lots of vegetables (at least 4 cups per day) and lean sources of protein would provide vitamins and minerals, phytonutrients, and fiber without all the saturated fat of the original plan.

HEALTHIER VERSION

ATKINS PLAN

Egg whites (egg substitute) omelets with peppers, onions, mushrooms ,etc.	Whole eggs
Skinless poultry, fish, seafood, lean beef, pork (> 90% lean ground beef, sirloin, tenderloin cuts of meat)	Bacon, sausage, fatty burgers, prime rib, fatty meats
Peanuts, nuts, avocados	Pork rinds
Olive oil and canola oil	Butter, blue cheese dressing

Working up to at least 150- 200 grams of carbohydrate a day, depending on total energy intake, without bringing back the junk is the goal. This means choosing foods like skim milk, dried beans (black, kidney, garbanzo, pinto, etc.), potatoes, fruit that requires chewing, and whole grains like oatmeal and whole wheat bread more often than fries, soda, crackers, rice, bagels, and ice cream, etc.

One good thing that happens to people who go on the Atkins diet is they clean out their closet of junk (food). They give up their 6 pack of soda everyday, thereby eliminating 900 Calories. At fast food places, two double whoppers (no bun) replace the usual double whopper, medium fries, and shake. Atkins: 1380 Calories, Usual eating habits: 1640 Calories. So far this person has cut over 1000 Calories from the daily intake. Why they could not eliminate the soda and the fries in an attempt to have a healthier diet in the first place remains a mystery. The same black and white, no choices approach, that initially appeals to the dieter is the same thing that leads to its failure after a couple of weeks. One other note with these diets is that when food manufacturers take the carbohydrates out of foods, they increase the fiber content significantly as a replacement. This is a positive move as opposed to before when they took the fat out and added sugar to products during the fat-free craze. These products, however, still contain calories and over-consumption will lead to weight gain, even if they are low in carbohydrates.

Whether you point the finger at high carbohydrate or low fat diets, keep in mind that people have been doing diets like Atkins for as long as we have been getting fatter. The bottom line is that Americans are eating on average, 500 calories more each day than they were 15 years ago. Couple that with the fact that 25% of adults get little or no physical activity at all on a daily basis and the place to put the blame is pretty obvious!

We all need similar vitamins, minerals, and fiber. However, like the different grades of gasoline, the best fuel mix (carbohydrate, protein, fat) may vary slightly for an overweight and/or sedentary person vs. a person at a healthy weight who is physically active, vs. an endurance athlete. This does not change the overall facts underlying a

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healthy lifestyle: variety, fiber from fruits, vegetables and whole grains, monounsaturated fats in place of saturated and hydrogenated fats, portion control, and last but not least, daily physical activity.

If you need help to improve your eating habits and prevent weight gain, *Shape Your Future...Your Weigh!*[™] can help. Contact your local base Health and Wellness Center (HAWC) or Dietitian for more information or visit the *Shape Your Future...Your Weigh!*[™] community website at <http://airforcemedicine.afms.mil/shapeyourfuture>.