

low carb for life

We're all busy people and don't always have the time or the energy to look after our health the way we should. Many of us feel less than optimal and carry extra weight on our bodies, and some of us have even become diabetic because of our life choices. The good news is that the 'right' food goes a long way in rectifying the situation. Opinions about what constitutes 'a healthy meal' have, however, changed pretty drastically in recent years, and many people are confused about what they should—and shouldn't—eat. Clinical nutritionist **Fiona Kane** from Informed Health in Penrith reminds us that, "Food is medicine. Each meal and each snack should nourish and energise you."

Today, nutritional principles that used to be considered beneficial, or even essential, have been challenged and, to a large degree, abandoned.

The biggest change in thinking concerns carbohydrates and lipids. According to new research, reducing carbohydrates in your diet results in weight loss, decreased appetite and reduced blood sugar and insulin levels—which is good.

The thinking on fats has changed substantially, too. According to the report dated 8 May 2015, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics—formerly known as the American Dietetics Association—has dropped cholesterol and saturated fats from their list of 'nutrients of concern'. (*Academy Comments re. The DGAC Scientific Report*: <http://www.eatrightpro.org/resource/advocacy/take-action/regulatory-comments/dgac-scientific-report>)

Despite the plethora of new research and anecdotal information from people who have regained their health by following a High Fat-Low Carb diet, the Government recommendations have not changed. The 2013 Australian Dietary Guidelines still recommends that Australians eat more grains and reduce their intake of saturated fats. (*Source*: <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines-publications/n55>)

Eat more protein and fat, fewer carbs

Taking into account that obesity levels and heart disease increased as people adopted low fat diets, the official guidelines in Australia, and elsewhere in the world, seem outdated at best. Perhaps the best policy for individuals is to get informed and take responsibility for their own health.

"You should optimally eat both protein and fat at each meal," says Fiona Kane. "Meat, chicken and fish are all great sources of protein. Avocados, nuts, seeds, coconut oil, butter and olive oil, on the other hand, should be eaten for their fat content."

Proteins and fats are essential for the welfare of our bodies.

What people often don't realise is that protein and fat are needed for optimal brain function and to produce hormones and important neurotransmitters such as serotonin and melatonin which are required for a happy mood and good sleep.

"If you eat balanced meals that include protein, fat and not too many carbohydrates, you'll maintain good blood sugar levels throughout the day," says Fiona Kane. "This will help you avoid energy dips, as well as the sugar and caffeine fix that we often use to cure out the afternoon slump."

"Besides, when you eat protein and fats," says Fiona, "you don't tend to overeat because the fat ensures that your brain and stomach get the message that you have eaten enough. If you are feeling bloated, tired, foggy or unwell after you eat, then you are not eating the right foods!"

Eat slowly, drink water, exercise

Busy lifestyles tend to force us to eat fast. It might be a good idea to give your mind and your body time to catch up when you're eating.

"Don't eat your food in two gulps over your computer," says Fiona. "Slow down and chew your food properly to help your body digest it well."

It's also crucial to drink enough water. "Being dehydrated may lead to a big energy drop and a headache by the afternoon," warns Fiona.

And when your energy levels increase—thanks to your new diet—start introducing some exercise to your daily routine. "Even just walking up and down stairs for five minutes will get your energy up again," says Fiona. "But if possible get some fresh air; a quick walk around the block is good for recharging your energy." ●



case study 1: high carb harry

BREAKFAST:

Cereal or croissant plus coffee with two sugars

MORNING TEA:

Muesli bar

LUNCH:

Wholemeal salad sandwich plus iced coffee or iced tea with sugar

AFTERNOON TEA:

Low-fat yoghurt and dried fruit plus coffee or energy drink

DINNER:

Pasta with chicken or veggies and cheese

SNACKS:

Chips or chocolate

Harry is eating high carbohydrates or sugar at every meal. There is no quality fat or protein until dinner time. Harry would be having blood sugar highs and lows all day which would cause regular sugar cravings and energy drops throughout the day.

If you eat loads of sugar and avoid fat and protein, your body never gets the 'full' message and you stay hungry all the time. This person will be relying on sugar and caffeinated drinks to keep their energy up, which leads to many health issues when eating this way long term.



case study 2: low carb larry

BREAKFAST:

Eggs and spinach or smoked salmon, avocado and spinach plus green tea or coffee (no sugar)

MORNING TEA:

Larry's nourishing breakfast meant he didn't need to eat anything at morning tea time, but if you are hungry, a good option is a handful of almonds or Brazil nuts and walnuts

LUNCH:

Salad with tuna or chicken, olive oil, pepitas plus lots of mixed greens

AFTERNOON TEA:

Full fat Greek style yoghurt or coconut yoghurt with macadamias and berries

DINNER:

Salmon or lamb with greens and pumpkin plus mixed herbs in avocado oil or drizzle coconut oil or butter

SNACKS:

A small amount (2-4 squares) of dark chocolate plus herbal tea (no sugar)

Larry is eating a great balance of fat and protein at every meal which stabilises his blood sugar levels and gives him plenty of long term energy. Larry is unlikely to be craving sugar or needing caffeine to stay awake or alert.

We hope you enjoyed

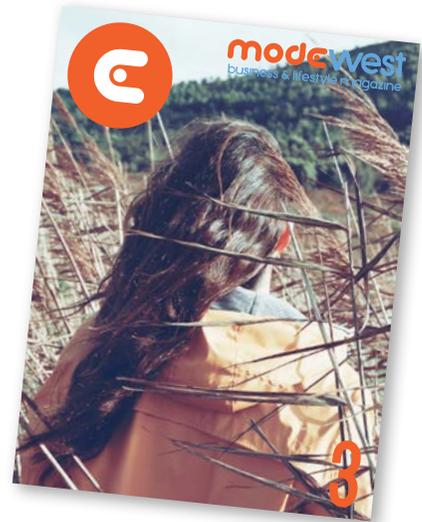
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