

eat right boston

SUMMER 2019



To Keto or Not to Keto

So, I continue to get a lot of questions on the ketogenic diet...AKA the Keto Diet. It's cousins with the Atkins, South Beach and Paleo in that it restricts carbohydrates. But unlike its cousins, the keto plan relies on fat to supply as much as 90% of its daily calories. And a lot of that fat is unhealthy, saturated (palm or coconut oil, lard, butter, and cocoa butter) that clogs up your arteries.

As a registered dietitian, I rely on science to form an opinion about diet trends. Science supports there may be an application of the ketogenic diet for epileptic seizures in children. But, as far as weight loss is concerned, yes, you will lose a significant amount of weight in the beginning but that weight will likely return once you restart your prior eating patterns. Let's face it, no one is able to stay on a restrictive diet unless it is a critical component of a serious medical condition.

How does keto work? When you remove carbohydrates and sugar from your diet, you rely on ketones (produced in the liver) to fuel your body. But you need the right balance of macronutrients to be able to pull this off. You can't exceed 50 grams of carbohydrate a day, and eating too much protein can skew your state of ketosis.

Besides the fuzzy brain and mood swings in the beginning, other health risks associated with a keto diet plan include developing micronutrient deficiencies of magnesium, potassium, phosphorus, Vitamin B and C that result when you restrict carbohydrate-containing foods (veggies, fruits, whole grains). The kidneys also take a hit because many of the nutrients that regulate blood pressure (the kidneys do this!) are MIA. And then there's the link of saturated fats and heart disease. It may sound appealing, but there are no long-term studies on this diet. Always check with your physician before embarking on such a restrictive diet plan.

Cheese Whiz

Who isn't confused when they walk down the grocery aisles these days? You are not alone-I am too! I'm especially overwhelmed in the refrigerator section with all the yogurts, substitution milks, and cheeses.

There's a continued debate as to whether or not to use full fat dairy products today. Purists will endorse these products over their fat-reduced counterparts but are they for everyone? Choosing a product that's right for you should be approached individually. Growing children benefit from the extra calories and the nutrients that fats provide and don't necessarily need to worry about their cholesterol levels like an adult may have to. But, there are some families that pass along that high cholesterol gene, so sharing family history with pediatricians is important so they can determine the best approach with food choices.

I prefer to use products that have the least amount of ingredients in them, so that's one of my ways to screen products in a grocery aisle. Low fat or reduced fat aged cheeses like cheddar or Jarlsberg Light (Swiss) use less whole milk in the processing. Nothing is generally added in to the 50% reduced fat cheeses. Fat gives cheese its melting quality and mouth feel. You might notice that some of the lower fat cheeses take on a more rubbery consistency and don't melt very well. For those products, I suggest a lower cooking temperature for a longer period of cooking time (example is a grilled cheese sandwich). But with full fat, comes saturated fat; the kind of fat that is bad for heart disease, so be careful!

I've always loved cottage cheese. I get that it's not a favorite for many people. The consistency is an acquired taste. But cottage cheese is the new "it" product in the dairy aisle these days. Manufacturers have always added sugars and fruit wannabes to yogurt to make its tangy taste easier to tolerate and to get people to eat them. The same thing is happening to cottage cheese. Years ago, chives or pineapple were the only items added to cottage cheese. Now there's a host of fruit wannabes being added to cottage cheese, as well. Try to avoid those. Buy plain and just dice up your own fruits.

I add in frozen berries to my yogurt and wait a day for the flavors to blend in. It's a win-win with flavor and fiber! Some of my other tips include: adding plain yogurt into mashed potatoes, coleslaw, and I have even partially mixed it in with mayo in my tunafish. I've found it doesn't hold up the next day in some of these as the water content of the yogurt begins to seep out, so use it the same day.

I've never been a fan of cream cheese. It's full fat with 70% coming in the form of saturated fat (6 grams per 2T; its lighter versions have 4 grams of saturated fat per 2T. Cream cheese provides minimal protein when compared to its dairy cousins. Using the whipped version that is easier to spread might mean you use less of an amount. But know that it also has saturated fat in it. Labne is a spreadable Mediterranean-style kefir cheese that has 60 calories per 2T. It also is 66% saturated fat but it provides live active cultures for gut health. As an aside, in my researching, I noticed that Philadelphia brand has a cheesecake dessert available for 170 calories. So, I looked up what a piece of cheesecake is at the Cheesecake Factory and whoooooaaa, there's 1170 calories in one piece. You can do the math!

Hopefully, I did not confuse you any more than you already are as you wander up and down the aisles. My simplest advice is to look for cheese that has less than 3 grams of saturated fat per serving as Science Says saturated fats are still bad for your heart!

The Eyes Have It!

So, I know I talked about eye health in the last newsletter but most recently I was diagnosed with eye floaters, those annoying little black specks that play a game of cat and mouse with your line of vision. They pretty much show up one day out of the blue. It appears that just like every other organ in our body, the integrity of our eyes also diminishes with time. As we age, the gel-like, vitreous solution in the eye turns into a more liquid, aqueous solution. This liquid can creep behind the retina and can pull up on the lining, putting people at risk for detached retinas.

So, after asking my ophthalmologist some questions I decided to do a little research on eye health. As you know there are oodles of supplements that are being promoted for all kinds of health issues, including eye. Some of the key nutrients in eye health are lutein, zeaxanthin, carotenoids, and astraxanthin. These all play their respective roles in the health of the retina. As a reminder, the Food and Drug Administration does not regulate these supplements, so be mindful of what you are buying.

When it comes to research, as clinicians we rely on evidence-based studies to determine treatment plans. What I found is all of the research about eyes and diet are related to age-related macular degeneration or AMD. AMD is partially impacted by genetics and some lifestyle factors.

The National Eye Institute has conducted a few studies looking at the effects of supplements on eye health. They found that vitamins C and E, beta-carotene, copper and zinc had positive effects on AMD. When they added in omega 3-fatty acids (commonly found in fish), there were no big changes in results.

The American Optometric Association recommends consuming 10 milligrams (mg) of lutein, 500 mg of vitamin C, 400 mg of vitamin E, 40-80 mg of zinc, and 2 mg of zeaxanthin to slow AMD. Eating more fresh fruits and vegetables rich in these anti-oxidant nutrients is also suggested. Also, vitamin A and C-containing foods has been linked to lower risk of cataracts and AMD. Foods like sweet potatoes, carrots, kiwi, broccoli, nuts, seeds, and wheat germ are good sources of these vitamins.

According to the National Health Institute (NIH), other general recommendations for eye health include maintaining a healthy weight. Being overweight can increase your risk of developing diabetes, which has eye health implications of its own.

With the warmer weather upon us here in New England, it's important to protect your eyes from the sun's ultraviolet rays. Look for sunglasses that block 99 to 100 percent of both UV-A and UV-B radiation.

And lastly, try to reduce eyestrain from excessive computer use. The NIH recommends that for every 20 minutes you are on an electronic device, you look out 20 feet and hold that look for 20 seconds to give your eyes a break.

Spinach, Walnut, and Strawberry Salad

An easy salad to top off a summer BBQ!

4 cups baby spinach
2 cups sliced strawberries
1/2 cup chopped walnuts
1 recipe Citrus Vinaigrette (below)

Directions: In a large bowl, combine all ingredients and toss to mix
Servings: 2 (about 3 cups each)

Citrus Vinaigrette

2 Tablespoons lemon juice
2 Tablespoons orange juice
2 Tablespoons lime juice
2 Tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard*
1 garlic clove, minced (optional)
1/4 tsp sea salt (or to taste)
1/8 tsp pepper

Directions: In a small bowl, whisk all ingredients until smooth
Servings: 4 (2Tbl each). Approximately 70 calories

* The mustard acts as an emulsifier to hold the fat and citrus juice together. Use this trick in any vinaigrette you make to hold it together better. It will keep for one week in the refrigerator.

Recipe Source: ***The 28-Day Gout Diet Plan***



*I had a fun time visiting friends in California.
Of course, I had to let everyone know I was from
Boston! Enjoy your summer!*
-Sophie



Sophia Kamveris, MS, RD, LDN
22 Mill St-Suite 105
Arlington, MA 02474
www.eatrightboston.com
(P) 617-515-8984