



Teladoc[™]
HEALTH

Your guide to

Low-carb eating plans

Strategies to help you succeed
on Paleo, Keto, and more

**Bonus: 3-day
sample menus**





Welcome!

There's a lot of buzz around low-carb diets right now. While there is no single meal plan that is best for everyone, low-carb eating is one method that may help you reach your goals. No matter what eating style you choose, the best results come from changes you can stick with for the long term.

That's why we created Your Guide to Low-Carb Diets. This guide will help you understand the pros and cons of different low-carb plans. We'll also give you tools for planning healthy low-carb meals and snacks to fuel you on your journey.

We all have different nutrition needs, likes and dislikes, budgets, and more. That's why we want you to have the skills to create a strategy that suits you. We hope you use this guide to create lasting changes so you can live better.

Enjoy!
Your Teladoc Health Team

Sneak peek inside

- Understanding the basics 3**
- Getting to know the low-carb plans 4**
- Putting low-carb plans on the plate 6**
- Understanding food labels 8**
- Smarter low-carb snacks..... 9**
- 1-Day standard low-carb meal plan 10**
- 1-Day Paleo meal plan 12**
- 1-Day Keto meal plan 14**

Understanding the basics

Food is made of three basic nutrients that provide fuel to your body: carbohydrates, protein, and fats. Knowing how the body uses each nutrient and meeting the goals below will help you build meals that are healthy and satisfying.

Carbs

Carbs are the sugars and starches that your body breaks down into glucose to use for energy. It's important for people with diabetes to closely monitor carb intake. Nutritious carbs like whole grains, legumes, and starchy veggies are higher in fiber. That causes a slower rise to your blood sugar level. Too many of the less nutritious kinds, like added sugars, can cause weight gain and increase your risk of diabetes and heart disease.

Your goal: When choosing carbs, opt for smaller portions of the more nutritious carb foods. Avoid added sugars.

Non-starchy veggies

Non-starchy veggies are low in carbs and calories and a great source of fiber, vitamins, and minerals.

Your goal: For most low-carb plans, you can fill half of your plate with a variety of non-starchy veggies at each meal. It's generally not necessary to limit portion sizes like you do with other carb-containing foods — eat as much as you desire.

Protein

Protein helps build and keep muscle. It also helps you feel full. Protein has very little impact on your blood sugar.

Your goal: Include protein when eating carbs. This slows the rise of blood sugar following a meal or snack. Opt for lean or plant-based protein sources.

Fats

Fats help your brain and nervous system work, and add great flavor and texture to food. When eaten alone, fats will not raise your blood sugar.

Your goal: Choose foods that contain healthy fats (polyunsaturated and monounsaturated). Limit saturated fats and avoid trans fats. Saturated and trans fats can raise your bad (LDL) cholesterol levels. Trans fats also lower your good (HDL) cholesterol levels. Replacing saturated and trans fats with unsaturated fats can reduce your risk for heart disease.

Getting to know the low-carb plans

When a person says they are eating “low-carb,” they could mean a number of things. Often, low-carb dieters focus on one of the most popular plans: the standard low-carb diet, the paleo diet, or the keto diet. Here’s what you need to know about the top three:

Standard low-carb diet:

This plan limits foods containing carbs like grains, starchy veggies, and fruit. It is focused on foods that are higher in protein and fat. There is no consensus on how many carbs are allowed on a low-carb diet, but less than 130 grams per day is typical. A standard low-carb diet generally allows for small amounts of nutrient-dense, carb-containing foods.

PROS:

- + May improve blood sugar management
- + Can promote weight loss

CONS:

- May be lower in fiber
- If you have kidney disease, eating too much protein can harm your kidney function. Check with your doctor or health coach to find out how much protein is safe for you to eat.

Coaching tip: Choose healthier sources of protein like fish, lean meat, eggs, nuts, and tofu.



Getting to know the low-carb plans

Paleo diet:

Short for “Paleolithic diet,” this plan focuses on foods that were available to our Stone Age ancestors. Lean meats (like grass-fed beef), fish (wild caught), fruits, vegetables, and nuts and seeds are mainstays. Grain foods, dairy, legumes, and refined sugars are avoided. Overall, this diet is higher in protein, moderate in fat, and low in carbs. It is also generally high in fiber and low in sodium and refined sugars.

PROS:

- + May improve blood sugar management
- + Can promote weight loss

CONS:

- Is more restrictive
- Focus is on pricier foods
- Can be difficult to maintain over the long run
- If you have kidney disease, eating too much protein can harm your kidney function. Check with your doctor or health coach to find out how much protein is safe for you to eat.

Coaching tip: Watch your calories and carbs; Paleo treats made using ingredients like nuts, nut butters, and honey can add up.

Keto diet:

This very low-carb plan focuses on fat to supply as much as 90% of daily calories. It requires fewer than 50 grams of carbs per day as well as limited protein, which sends your body into a state of ketosis. This causes the body to burn stored fat as fuel instead of carbohydrates. High-fat foods like nuts, seeds, avocados, olive oil, coconut oil, ghee, and butter are encouraged in high amounts.

PROS:

- + May improve blood sugar management
- + Can promote weight loss

CONS:

- May be more likely to raise cholesterol than other low-carb plans because of increased intake of saturated fats. New research suggests this could be linked with cardiovascular events in the future.
- The most restrictive of the low-carb plans
- May cause liver, kidney, and constipation issues
- Can be difficult to maintain over the long run
- Long-term exclusion of food categories can increase the risk of nutrient deficiencies

Coaching tip: Focus on eating polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats; eat less saturated fat and avoid trans fats.

If you want to try a low-carb plan but aren't sure which one is right for you, an expert coach can give you more information and personalized guidance. Always talk to your doctor before starting any new plan.



Putting low-carb plans on the plate

Depending on the plan you choose, the proportion of foods on your plate may look a little different. Here are examples of plates that meet the requirements of standard low-carb, Paleo, and Keto plans.

Standard low-carb plate:

50%

Non-starchy veggies

Salad, broccoli, asparagus, zucchini, bell pepper

30%

Proteins

Fish, poultry, tofu, lean beef

20%

Carbs

Quinoa, brown rice, sweet potatoes



Putting low-carb plans on the plate

Paleo plate:

50%

Non-starchy veggies

Salad, broccoli, asparagus, zucchini, bell pepper

25%

Proteins

Fish, grass-fed beef, poultry, eggs

25%

Carbs

Sweet potatoes, white potatoes, plantains



Keto plate:

60%

Fats

Avocado, nuts, seeds, olive oil, ghee, olives

25%

Proteins

Poultry, fish, eggs, full-fat dairy

15%

Non-starchy veggies

Salad, broccoli, asparagus, zucchini, bell pepper



Understanding food labels

Learning how to read food labels can help you make healthier choices. Use this guide to help you make the most of the Nutrition Facts label.

Keep in mind that the healthiest foods, like fruits and veggies, don't have food labels.

Step 1: What's in a Serving?

- Read the number of servings per container.
- Learn the size of each serving.
- Remember, the numbers below are for ONE serving
- If you're eating more than one serving, multiply the numbers below by that amount.

Step 2: Aim for Less:

- Saturated fat
- Trans fats
- Sodium (below 2,300 mg per day)
- Carbs
- Sugar
- Added sugars

Step 3: Aim for More:

- Fiber
- Protein
- Polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats (Keto plan)
- Nutrients like vitamin D, iron, potassium, and calcium

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size	2/3 cup (55g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	230
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 8g	10%
Saturated Fat 1g 5%	
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	13%
Dietary Fiber 4g 14%	
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars 20%	
Protein 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg 10%	
Calcium 260mg 20%	
Iron 8mg 45%	
Potassium 235mg 6%	

Step 4: Check the Ingredients List (separate from the Nutrition Facts Panel)

- Ingredients are listed in order by quantity, from highest to lowest.
- Avoid food additives like "monosodium glutamate," "sodium nitrates," and "food coloring." These are likely processed foods.
- Avoid items with ingredients that contain the word "hydrogenated" — this means trans fat. Avoid added sugars, often listed as "high fructose corn syrup," "dextrose," "sucrose," "honey," and "molasses."

Smarter low-carb snacks

Having a snack between meals can curb hunger throughout the day. Well-planned snacks can also keep you from eating too much at meals. Here are some low-carb snack ideas to keep you satisfied until mealtime.

LC = Low-Carb

P = Paleo

K = Keto



2 hard-boiled eggs, halved and sprinkled with everything bagel seasoning

LC P K



Trail mix: Almonds, pecans, pumpkin seeds, and coconut flakes

LC P K



Cottage cheese topped with sliced almonds and cinnamon

LC K



Sliced turkey breast rolled around a pickle spear

LC P K



Guacamole and red bell pepper slices

LC P K



Peanut butter and celery sticks

LC P K



Lettuce wraps filled with tuna salad

LC P K



Steamed edamame

LC P

If you're craving a snack, check in with your body. Are you low on energy? Is your stomach empty? Avoid eating when you're bored or stressed. Instead, save snacking for when you need extra fuel to make it to the next meal.

1-Day standard low-carb meal plan



Breakfast:

Eggs in pepper rings (Makes 1 serving)

Calories	Fat	Sat. Fat	Sodium	Cholesterol	Carbs	Fiber	Sugars	Protein	Potassium
335	20 g	5 g	150 mg	1238 mg	23 g	6 g	7 g	15 g	1143 mg

INGREDIENTS

2 ¼-inch bell pepper round slices (any color)

2 eggs

½ medium avocado

PREPARATION

Heat a nonstick skillet sprayed with cooking spray over medium heat. Add pepper slices. Crack an egg in the middle of each ring. Cook until set, and flip. Cook until desired doneness. Serve with ½ avocado, sliced.

Serve with 1 cup grapes.

Flavor boost:

Sprinkle with red pepper flakes and cumin.



Lunch:

Romaine tuna wraps (Makes 1 serving)

Calories	Fat	Sat. Fat	Sodium	Cholesterol	Carbs	Fiber	Sugars	Protein	Potassium
422	17 g	2 g	775 mg	51 mg	24 g	6 g	4 g	42 g	693 mg

INGREDIENTS

1 5-oz can chunk light tuna in water

1 Tbsp mayonnaise

2 Tbsp chopped celery

½ carrot, chopped

4 pieces romaine lettuce

1 Tbsp lemon juice

PREPARATION

Drain tuna and flake with a fork in a small bowl. Add mayonnaise, celery, and carrot, and mix well. Distribute between romaine lettuce pieces, and drizzle with lemon juice.

Serve with ¼ cup roasted chickpeas and ½ cup carrot slices.

Flavor boost:

Top with sriracha.



1-Day standard low-carb meal plan



Dinner: Lemon sheet-pan chicken & vegetables

(Makes 4 servings)

Calories	Fat	Sat. Fat	Sodium	Cholesterol	Carbs	Fiber	Sugars	Protein	Potassium
357	11 g	2 g	475 mg	38 mg	27 g	7 g	10 g	38 g	480 mg

INGREDIENTS

1¼ lb boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into bite-sized pieces

1 small head broccoli, cut into small florets

1 zucchini, cut into bite-sized pieces

1 yellow squash, cut into bite-sized pieces

2 Tbsp olive oil

2 Tbsp lemon juice

2 tsp Italian seasoning

1 tsp each garlic and onion powder

¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese

PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 400°F. In a large bowl, mix together chicken, broccoli, zucchini, squash, olive oil, lemon juice, Italian seasoning, garlic powder, and onion powder. Spread mixture onto sheet pan and bake for 10 minutes. Toss ingredients and return to oven for another 10 minutes, or until chicken is cooked through and vegetables are tender. Sprinkle with Parmesan and serve.

Serve with ½ medium baked sweet potato.

Flavor boost:

Add chili powder to chicken mixture before baking.

Snack options:



String cheese stick



Celery with peanut butter



Jicama tossed with chili powder and lime juice

1-Day Paleo meal plan



Breakfast: Three-ingredient pancakes (Makes 1 serving)

Calories	Fat	Sat. Fat	Sodium	Cholesterol	Carbs	Fiber	Sugars	Protein	Potassium
387	22 g	3 g	72 mg	680 mg	33 g	6 g	15 g	14 g	585 mg

INGREDIENTS

- 1 banana
- 1 egg
- 2 Tbsp almond butter

PREPARATION

In a bowl, mash banana. Add egg and whisk together. Add almond butter and whisk until combined. Pour 1 large pancake or 3 small pancakes in a medium skillet over a low flame. When pancakes begin to turn brown, carefully flip and cook on the other side until browned.

Flavor boost:

Top with shredded unsweetened coconut.



Lunch: Crunchy chicken salad (Makes 2 servings)

Calories	Fat	Sat. Fat	Sodium	Cholesterol	Carbs	Fiber	Sugars	Protein	Potassium
560	35 g	6 g	599 mg	84 mg	31 g	6 g	23 mg	31 g	710 mg

INGREDIENTS

- Salad:*
- 5 cups slaw mix
 - 1 red bell pepper, cored and sliced
 - 1 medium orange, peeled and chopped
 - 7 oz grilled chicken breast, sliced
 - ¼ cup roasted cashews

- Dressing:*
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
 - 2 Tbsp rice wine vinegar
 - 1 Tbsp sesame oil
 - ¼ tsp minced ginger

PREPARATION

In a large bowl, combine slaw mix, bell pepper, orange, chicken, and cashews. In a small bowl, whisk together dressing ingredients. Toss salad and dressing together.

Flavor boost:

Squeeze with fresh lime juice.



1-Day Paleo meal plan



Dinner: Cauliflower rice taco bowl (Makes 2 servings)

Calories	Fat	Sat. Fat	Sodium	Cholesterol	Carbs	Fiber	Sugars	Protein	Potassium
429	32 g	4 g	543 mg	79 mg	19 g	10 g	9 g	16 g	1274 mg

INGREDIENTS

- 3 Tbsp olive oil (divided into 1 and 2 tablespoons)
- 18 large peeled and deveined shrimp
- 4 cups frozen cauliflower rice
- ½ tsp chipotle powder
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- 1 avocado, sliced
- ¼ cup cilantro, chopped
- ½ cup salsa

PREPARATION

Heat 1 tablespoon of oil in a medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add thawed shrimp when oil sizzles upon contact. Sauté until pink and opaque, around 4-5 minutes. Set shrimp aside. Lower heat and add the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil to the pan. Sauté frozen cauliflower rice with chipotle and garlic powders until cooked through, around 6 minutes. Divide rice between two bowls and top with shrimp, avocado, cilantro, and salsa.

Flavor boost:
Add hot sauce.

Snack options:



Almonds



Olives



Hard-boiled eggs



1-Day Keto meal plan



Breakfast: Scrambled eggs (Makes 1 serving)

Calories	Fat	Sat. Fat	Sodium	Cholesterol	Carbs	Fiber	Sugars	Protein	Potassium
414	38 g	7 g	710 mg	1257 mg	1 g	0 g	1 g	18 g	405 mg

INGREDIENTS

- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 eggs
- 1 oz smoked salmon

PREPARATION

In a medium skillet, heat olive oil over a medium flame. Scramble 2 eggs. Serve with smoked salmon.

Flavor boost:

Top with fresh herbs like basil and parsley.



Lunch: Avocado hemp salad (Makes 1 serving)

Calories	Fat	Sat. Fat	Sodium	Cholesterol	Carbs	Fiber	Sugars	Protein	Potassium
530	44 g	5 g	16 mg	0 mg	18 g	12 g	3 g	15 g	1215 mg

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ripe avocado
- ½ cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- ¼ cup shelled hemp seeds

PREPARATION

Cut avocado into chunks and toss with tomatoes. Drizzle with olive oil, lemon juice, and hemp seeds.

Flavor boost:

Top with smoked paprika.



1-Day Keto meal plan



Dinner: Mozzarella tomato chicken (Makes 2 servings)

Calories	Fat	Sat. Fat	Sodium	Cholesterol	Carbs	Fiber	Sugars	Protein	Potassium
501	43 g	6 g	534 mg	175 mg	4 g	1 g	0 g	26 g	821 mg

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Tbsp avocado oil
- 2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1 oz fresh mozzarella
- ½ tomato, sliced
- ¼ cup black olives, sliced
- ¼ cup fresh basil
- ¼ cup olive oil

PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 375°F. In a medium skillet, heat oil. Add chicken to the pan. Cook until seared, around 2-3 minutes. Flip and sear on the other side, around 2-3 minutes. Arrange chicken in one layer in a glass dish. Top with mozzarella, tomatoes, and olives. Bake for around 25 minutes, or until chicken is cooked through. Finish with fresh basil and olive oil.

Flavor boost:

Sprinkle with balsamic vinegar.

Snack options:



½ Avocado



Olives



Macadamia nuts



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