

[IMAGE]

Low Carb or Low Fat: Which Is Better for Heart Health?

By Editorial Staff

The diet craze is in full force these days, but many diets seem to focus not on balanced nutrition so much as macronutrient extremes: high or low protein, carbohydrates and/or fat. Debate rages on as to which dietary strategy can best achieve weight loss, but let's go beyond the pounds to address an even more important issue: Which is better for your heart?

For the purpose of this discussion, we'll compare low carb vs. low fat, and use results from a study in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* for our conclusions. Researchers selected nearly 150 men and women (without cardiovascular disease, kidney disease or diabetes at the start of the study) and assigned them to one of two dietary groups for comparison: low carbohydrate (less than 40 grams per day) or low fat (less than 30 percent fat, with less than 7 percent consisting of saturated fat).

nutrition facts - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark After one year, people following the low-carb diet experienced greater weight loss and reductions in fat mass, ratio of total to high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol, and triglycerides compared to low-fat diet participants. Low-carb dieters also has greater increases in HDL cholesterol than low-fat dieters. All of the above represent improvements in cardiovascular disease risk factors as a result of adhering to a low-carb diet vs. a low-fat diet.

Keep in mind that this study did not compare a low-carb or low-fat diet with a more balanced diet also known to promote heart health, such as the Mediterranean diet. Talk to your doctor for more information on the right nutritional strategy to achieve your health and wellness goals.

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