

# Your Low Carb Kickstarter Guide

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Learn how to flip your metabolic  
switch today

↳ Assoc. Prof Caryn Zinn



PREKURE™



Associate Professor Caryn Zinn, PREKURE's resident dietitian and leading academic, is a voice of authority in the low carb community and knows how difficult it can be to kickstart your low carb lifestyle. Do you want to flip your metabolic switch and get the most of your diet but don't know where to start? Read on as she shares the basics of low carb diets and how you can get started. Here you will find tips, tricks and recipes that can be used to optimise your diet and get better health outcomes for yourself, your family or your clients/ patients.

At PREKURE we believe in keeping at the cutting edge of evidence-based science to live a happier, healthier life. This kickstarter guide is a treasure trove of information, tips and tricks and delicious recipes to help you kickstart your low carb lifestyle with minimal fuss. This is an example of just some of the types of resources we will arm you with in our advanced nutrition courses and certificates.



## What is LCHF?

Unless you have been living under a rock, you've probably heard about low carb diets in some way, shape or form in the past few years. It's also likely you've heard the acronym LCHF. This typically stands for Low-Carb, High-Fat, but I think a more appropriate definition is Low-Carb, Healthy-Fat. This better reflects what it's all about. While you will find that you eat more fat than you are probably used to, the emphasis is on healthy sources of fat. LCHF is not a 'diet'; it is a way of life. The LCHF lifestyle encompasses a way of eating that embraces whole foods – foods that are minimally processed and generally don't come in packages. If you truly embrace this way of eating, it will naturally end up being lower in carbohydrate and higher in fat than the current, mainstream way of eating. LCHF is a fulfilling and satisfying way of eating that is full of benefits for health. While there is an element of restriction (as there is with whatever you do in life), it is not about deprivation.

## Why should you give LCHF a go?

LCHF has many different advantages, both for yourself, your family and your clients/patients. Here are the top five you might identify with. Do you want to:

- 1. Lose weight and keep it off for good?** Have you tried to lose weight before and for a moment believed you were successful, but then put the weight back on again (along with some more)?
- 2. Have a healthy relationship with food?** Do you constantly feel hungry and beat yourself up when you eat foods you 'shouldn't'?
- 3. Improve inflammatory health conditions?** Do you suffer from aches and pains and inflammation for which you have to rely on medications for improvements?
- 4. Break free of that 'tired and run-down' feeling?** Do you have a busy lifestyle, feel permanently exhausted and regularly end up reaching for quick, unhealthy food?
- 5. Live better for longer?** Do you simply want to 'be the best you can be' in health and in life? Do you want to be able to provide food for yourself and your family that is tasty, nourishing and easy? If you find yourself nodding your head when you read this list, then LCHF is definitely for you.

## How does LCHF work and is it a fad?

If you gain weight easily, feel lethargic, stressed and are out of shape, the chances are you are insulin resistant and intolerant to carbs. LCHF is the best lifestyle approach for managing insulin resistance. When you can control your blood sugars and the hormones that control your energy levels and weight (especially insulin), your body will respond by working as it was designed to – as a fat-burning machine! Weight control will become effortless, your energy levels will be better and you will feel great – free at last from the low-fat calorie-counting way of living that left you hungry, sick and tired. What raises glucose and insulin levels? Carbohydrate, of course. We all vary in how we respond to and tolerate carbs. Finding your particular carb-tolerance level means your blood sugar and insulin will be well controlled.

Although it seems as though low carb diets sprung into existence in recent years, they have actually been around for well over 100 years [7]. In the early 1900's very low carb diets (VLCDs) were used as the first line treatment for epilepsy and type 1 diabetes [7]. There are people who still believe that low carb diets are fads that have weak scientific evidence to back them up; however, this is not the case. There is a growing body of research that illustrates that restricting carbohydrates in the diet has positive effects on metabolic health, weight and cognitive function [7].

Reducing carbohydrate content is most effective in those with poor metabolic health (i.e. insulin resistant) because it acts as a way to reverse this process and help the cells recognise insulin once more [7]. While there are still concerns related to saturated fat and red meat consumption and their impact on the risk of developing chronic diseases like heart disease, the evidence for this hypothesis is weak [7]. It appears that diets high in carbohydrates (specifically ultra-processed acellular carbohydrates) and poor quality meat that is high in hydrogenated fats may be the real issue. Again, we find ourselves confronted with the importance of diet quality.



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## What can I eat?

That all sounds good and well, but what do you actually eat if you are on a low carb or keto diet? And do you need to track carbs and calories? Well, research shows that increasing the amount of fat and protein in the diet often leads to a natural reduction in the amount of food eaten [7]. Scientific studies have shown that on a low carb diet, when participants are instructed to eat ad libitum (or eating till full) their total calories consumed decreases [7]. This is likely due to the satiating nature of protein and fats and (if you focus on a whole food approach) the fibre you will get from vegetables, nuts, seeds and berries. Basically, the short answer is focus on food quality rather than calories and you should find yourself in a great place.

Here's a quick guide to what's in and what's out when you are looking to go low. Remember, this is just a snapshot of the types of foods you can include in your diet when going low.

Things in green can be eaten until you feel full, things in yellow should be moderated and the items in red should be avoided. As with anything, taking an 80:20 approach will allow you to live a low carb lifestyle without it feeling like a massive social burden. It is worth noting that nowadays, most cafes and restaurants will happily swap out your regular rice for cauliflower rice or exchange your fries for a hearty salad or some roasted veg. Remember, if you don't ask, you'll never know.

Yes	In Moderation	No
<p>Above ground vegetables: lettuce, spinach, asparagus, olives, avocados, eggplants, cucumbers, capsicums, kale, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, brussel sprouts, zucchini and green beans.</p>	<p>Below ground vegetables: carrots, onions, kumara, yams, potatoes, pumpkin, beetroot, parsnip, celeriac, butternut.</p>	<p>Any deep fried vegetables or vegetable snacks like edamame snaps.</p>
<p>Berries: raspberry, strawberry, blackberry, blueberry (fresh or frozen).</p>	<p>Watermelon, clementine, orange, peach, apple, plum, kiwi, pear, grapes, banana, mango, pineapple.</p>	<p>Candied or dried and sugared fruit or fruit snacks.</p>
<p>Any nuts: brazil, peanut, pine, almond, hazelnut, pecan, macadamia, walnut or good quality nut butters.</p>	<p>Cashew nuts.</p>	<p>Candied nuts or nut-based convenience snacks that contain sugar and hydrogenated oils.</p>
<p>Any fish, poultry or meat that is frozen, fresh, or canned.</p>		<p>Crumbed or reconstituted meat, poultry or fish products.</p>
<p>Cheese, cream, butter, ghee, Greek yoghurt, sour cream.</p>	<p>Be mindful of milk</p>	<p>Sweetened or flavoured dairy products</p>

# Top Tips for Getting Started



## How do I get started?

Great question! Now that you have an idea of what LCHF, how it works and the types of foods you can eat, you're probably looking for some sort of framework that you can use to implement these changes in your life. Here are 10 easy rules that will help you seamlessly transition to an LCHF lifestyle:

- 1. Go low 'HI'** by replacing processed foods with stuff that was recently alive – foods low in the Human Interference (HI) factor. Real, actual food is the foundation of the LCHF lifestyle. This includes not getting caught up with low carb bars and processed snacks.
- 2. Cut the carbs** (down... not out). Sugar and grains are not good for you (yes, that means bread, even if it is wholegrain). Just how low you go depends on your personal tolerance to carbs, or degree of insulin resistance. As a benchmark, 130g of carbs or less a day is considered 'low carb' and 50g of carbs or less a day is considered 'keto'. The choice is yours. You can start by tracking the number of carbs you currently eat and then incrementally reducing this each week or you can just choose a number and cut your carbs down immediately.
- 3. Virtuous vegetable.** Vegetables are good for you. Eat lots of them, at each meal if possible. The good news

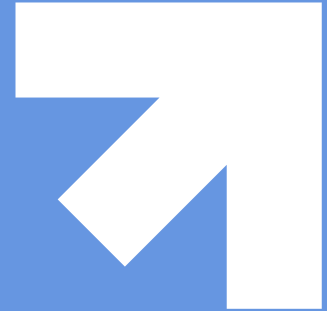
is you can add fats such as olive oil or butter to make them taste even better. Spinach, kale and lettuce make great bases for salads but they don't need to be your whole salad. Top them with homemade dressings, roast vegetables and nuts and seeds for a delicious lunch, dinner or side for your next social gathering.

- 4. Make fat your friend.** Sugar is out, total carbs are low, protein is moderate, and, because you have to get your energy from somewhere, fat is in. This means avocado on salads, nuts and seeds tossed across the top of meals, olive oil based dressings and cooking your meat in butter, lard, ghee or olive oil.
- 5. Prioritise protein.** You need protein for life and it is an essential part of feeling satiated. Protein options include eggs, meat, poultry and fish. A great go-to lunch is a salad topped with tinned tuna. It's low cost (especially if you rely on seasonal vegetables) and you don't need much time to make it.
- 6. Eat on cue.** The whole point of LCHF is that your body will now be able to send and receive the messages it needs to stay in shape, to tell you when you are full, and to energise you.

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7. **Sort your support.** Surround yourself with helpers, ask for support, and don't be afraid to request exactly what you want when you are out and about. There are plenty of health professionals who now believe in this way of eating and living and online social support groups you can join.
8. **Diligence, not effort.** Relying on your 'won't power' (effort) – like avoiding the chocolate cookies in your pantry – is futile. Instead, rely on being organised and having a ready supply of the right foods around you (diligence) in the first place.
9. **Adopt the '3-meal' rule.** There are three meals a day, 21 meals in a week. Let's get most of them right, knowing that three meals off the wagon a week is okay.
10. **It's not just about the food.** Other things also affect your health – exercise, booze and cigarettes, drugs, stress, sleep and much more. We will help you understand how these fit (or don't fit) into the LCHF lifestyle in our online courses if you'd like to learn more.



## Need some inspiration?

Here are my top 3 low carb recipes. These feature regularly in my weekly meal rotation. I like to keep it simple, choose a few recipes I really enjoy and then have those on repeat. It makes grocery shopping and food preparation much easier. In behavioural terms, by having a few key options to lean on, you reduce the friction and enhance your ability to make the best choice. You also free your brain up to think about other things!

1. [Cauli Rice Risotto](#)
2. [Low Carb Banana Bread](#)
3. [Caprese Salad](#)





If you're still on the fence and not sure if LCHF is for you, don't take my word for it, read Gary's story:

Gary Bridger | 63

Air New Zealand A320 Captain

Diabetes averted: 17 kg weight loss without effort

The triggers that led me to LCHF were a steady increase in weight and a rising blood-sugar count whenever I had my Commercial Pilot Licence medical check. Pilots are generally very health conscious; our continued employment depends on it. If you end up with diabetes, that's the end of being a pilot. Fellow pilot and long-term friend Gary Hayman convinced me of the perils of excessive sugar in our diet, so I started off by drastically cutting down on sugar.

The results were a 6 kg drop in weight, but little change to the rising blood-sugar levels. I was perilously close to Type 2 diabetes, and to being unemployed. It was only then that I visited Dr Caryn Zinn, who put me on a carb-restricted, healthy-fat diet to lower my blood sugar levels and further reduce my weight. She also got me to download an app for my iPhone for tracking my carb and protein intake (Easy Diet Diary). Following Caryn's eating plan, the results were immediate and dramatic.

After three months eating the low-carb way, I had lost another 11 kg (17 kg total) and my HbA1c blood-sugar reading had gone from 'pre-diabetic' to 'normal'. I have been absolutely delighted with the results and am committed to LCHF eating long term. Fortunately, I have had excellent support from my wife and family, who have also embraced the new way of eating. This whole experience has been a huge benefit to me. Just having my weight and blood-sugar levels under

control not only gives me the security of employment, but also makes me feel much more energetic than before. Because I have benefited so much, I have continued to spread the word among fellow pilots, family and friends. Many have taken up the challenge and all have had similar results.

The hardest part of LCHF eating for me was finding suitable meals at work and away from home. Many cafés simply don't offer LCHF options, but with a little imagination you can adapt. For example, a Caesar salad without the croutons is a good solution, or a burger and salad and just leave the bun and fries. I also take small packets of nuts with me as snacks to tide me over until I can find suitable meal options.

For favourite foods, I do enjoy breakfast with eggs, bacon or sausage, mushrooms and green vegetables for a good start to the day. That breakfast for me is the key, and keeps me going nicely until lunchtime. For lunch, always a salad at home, and the SumoSalad bar at the Auckland Airport domestic terminal is an oasis for LCHF eating! Family evening meal favourites include roast lamb and ratatouille with cauliflower mashed with butter, thickened cream and Parmesan cheese. Other favourites are lasagne with sliced courgettes instead of pasta and 'potato top' pie with mashed cauliflower instead of potato.

We have been eating more fish than before and, of course, more 'above ground' vegetables. I have also been cooking Malaysian (our favourite ethnic

food) chicken or fish curries with plenty of added vegetables and cauliflower rice instead of conventional rice – divine!



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**— Gary Bridger**

## Prevention is Cure. Lifestyle is Medicine.

PREKURE is a health education & training provider championing a Lifestyle Medicine Movement. Our society spends billions on sickness and very little on health. It's time we changed our 'medicine'. We see a new world of medicine as preventative, customer-centric and future-focussed. One where people thrive, not just survive.

### Are you with us?

The current health system is failing sufferers of chronic disease – we need passionate people to help solve the problem. By studying with us you can help yourself and others to make the critical lifestyle changes required to dramatically improve health and wellbeing.

Together we can change medicine for good. Learn more at [prekure.com](https://www.prekure.com)

## Do you want to learn about the therapeutic benefits of low carb and ketogenic diets?

Be the Health Professional your clients/patients deserve by understanding how to get the best out of their nutritional approach. In our PK201 & PK202 short courses delivered by a medical doctor, dietician and professor – you'll get an overview of different dietary approaches and the evidence supporting low carb and keto diets as well as practical guidance for incorporating these approaches into your practice. These courses are designed to help you understand the scientific evidence for and therapeutic benefits of lower carbohydrate diets and give you the confidence to advise clients and patients about them by understanding the nuances of practice. These courses will give you a sound understanding of topics like ketosis, protein on lower carbohydrate diets, fibre, adjusting medications and emerging research in areas like diabetes, cancer, and dementia.



Amazing breakdown of important information at a level that can be understood.

— *Stephanie, PK201 Student*





**PK201/202** *Your Low Carb Kickstarter Guide*

Prevention is Cure | Lifestyle is Medicine

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