

Low carb diet may help Parkinson's; modified Paleo can boost weight loss

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High fat low carb ketogenic [diets](#) have been shown to help [autoimmune diseases such as multiple sclerosis](#) as well as boost [weight loss](#). Now a new study hopes to discover whether the same approach can provide relief for Parkinson's patients, reported the Portland Business Journal [on Aug. 28](#).

Legacy Health and the National College of Natural Medicine (NCCM) will start a clinical trial in January. It is designed to compare the Standard American Diet, which contains 30 to 35 percent fat, to a [ketogenic diet](#), which contains 80 percent fat, 15 percent protein and 5 percent carbs.

"It's such a complicated diet for people to follow," noted Angela Senders, assistant director of research at NCCM and a licensed naturopathic physician. However, the [high fat low carb ketogenic diet](#) has been used successfully for decades to control seizures in children.

Dr. Alar Mirka, Legacy's director of clinical research at Legacy Health Institute, initiated the trial. He is hopeful that it will work because of the mechanism involved in nutritional ketosis.

High fat low carb ketogenic diets are designed to force the body to use fats for fuel. The brain uses the ketones that result as its energy source, which causes higher levels of the molecule adenosine. Nerve cells of Parkinson's patients are deficient in adenosine.

But Senders advised being cautious when it comes to the sources of fat. Rather than eat bacon constantly, for example, she suggested avocado and a salad topped with olive oil. Nuts can provide nutritious snacks rather than sausage sauteed in bacon grease and topped with cheese, she said.

And it's precisely the issue about excess fat and protein that have some dietitians arguing against the Paleo and [low carb diet](#) trends. One option, say some nutrition experts, is to modify the [Paleo diet](#) and make it more of a vegetarian or vegan plan. That's what registered dietitian Alexis Joseph proposed in [an Aug. 28 interview](#) with the Huffington Post.

"The most quality sources of protein for vegetarians are prohibited on the Paleo diet," Alexis contended. No soy, dairy, peanuts or quinoa means it's challenging to get what she calls "good" protein.

So she has come up with what she considers a compromise. While she agrees with the sugar-free, gluten-free, no-processed-foods principles of the Paleo diet, Alexis suggests adding in vegan proteins such as lentils, quinoa and beans.

As for the [weight loss potential of Paleo diets](#)? It depends who you ask. Paleo purists disagree with the notion of adding in any type of grains or lentils, because they contend that those foods are toxic and detract from the metabolism-boosting benefits of eating animal protein.

However, those who advocate increasing your fiber intake point to the high fiber content of beans, legumes and quinoa. It's another case of YMMV: Your Mileage May Vary. What both groups do agree: By following the Paleo principles of eliminating sugar, gluten and processed foods, you can lose weight more easily.