

Introduction

The menus and recipes in this book are based on the low carbohydrate diet, which is described and explained in detail in "This Slimming Business".* If you haven't read this, or don't want to bother with it, then you will I hope find it useful to read this Introduction. I don't believe in simply telling people what to do without trying to explain the reasons.

In spite of the spate of special pills, exercises, bath salts and similar "slimming aids", there can't be many overweight people who really do believe that they can get slim except by changing their diet. Equally, they know that the changed diet is a diet with fewer calories than they are now eating. So the problem is to decide which foods you are going to reduce, or cut out altogether. Just think of the enormous range of foods that now go into our mouths between the time we get up and the time we go to bed, all of them containing calories. So there is clearly an infinite number of ways in which you can manipulate these foods so that they add up to fewer calories. No wonder that we constantly see new diets in the newspapers and magazines. If you want to find your way through this maze, then you should begin by deciding what you really want your diet to do.

These then are the criteria that you should bear in mind:-

- (1) Your new diet should contain fewer calories than there are in the food and drink you are now taking.
- (2) After you have become slim, you want to *stay* slim. So your new diet should be able to become your permanent diet.
- (3) For it to become permanent, the diet must be reasonably attractive. If it is too boring or too restrictive, you will be tempted to give it up.
- (4) For permanence, the diet must also be nutritious. Even though it gives you fewer calories, that is a smaller amount of food than you had before, it must nevertheless still contain all the protein, vitamins and mineral elements that you need for health.
- (5) For it to be permanent, the diet should be sociable. It must therefore be made up of the ordinary foods that the rest of the family is eating, and that you can find in restaurants and cafés, and at parties.
- (6) Finally, your new diet is unlikely to be permanent if it is so complicated that you have to go around with a book, and calculate every item of food and drink that you put into your mouth.

All this may sound - if I may say so - a bit of a mouthful. But in

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practice the low carbohydrate diet all comes down to a diet in which you only have to keep an eye on a fairly small range of foods, and you can let yourself go on a large number of other foods.

The key is to keep your mind only on those foods and drinks that contain carbohydrates, or alcohol. The carbohydrates are starch and sugars, mostly found in bread, pasta, cakes, biscuits and confectionery – and of course the sugar in ordinary soft drinks or that you put into tea or coffee. And alcohol – well, I don't have to tell you where you'll find that.

To make it easier for you, I have combined the calculations for alcohol with those for carbohydrate, and given values for what I call "carbohydrate units". Naturally, foods and drinks without either carbohydrate or alcohol have a value of zero.

The basis of the diet is that, if you *consciously* restrict items with carbohydrate and alcohol, those that contain fat and protein are *automatically* restricted. With little carbohydrate or alcohol, you just cannot take too much meat or fish or eggs or poultry, which contain fat and protein but no carbohydrate. As a result, you will find yourself having less food and drink than before, so you will lose weight. But it also turns out that you won't eat too little, so that when your weight gets where it should be, you stop losing.

Here is a list of "unrestricted" foods: those, that is, which you don't have to limit but which limit themselves. They are meat, poultry, fish, eggs, butter, margarine, cream, leafy vegetables. In addition, you should take between half and one pint of milk a day, up to half a pound of fruit, and up to two ounces of cheese. You can see that a diet containing all of these foods can hardly be called boring or uninteresting. You only have to look at some of the menus and recipes in this book to see that you can have a wide range of extremely tasty meals. Nor do you have to prepare different menus for the rest of the family; the active and actively growing teenagers may well require many more calories than you do, but they will get these either by automatically having larger portions of what you eat, or by taking more bread and potatoes and other starchy foods that you are being careful of.

You will notice too how easy it is to keep to your diet while you are eating with the family. You do not have to eat special foods, you simply have to avoid eating the wrong foods or too much of them. You don't need to eat cake or biscuits, or drink soft sugary drinks. And you don't need to eat lots of bread or pasta.

Moreover, it so happens that the carbohydrate-free foods are rich in nutrients, whereas the foods that have lots of carbohydrate have either no nutrients at all, or very little in relation to their high calories. Meat, poultry, fish and eggs, and milk and cheese, are rich in high quality protein, and in all of the B vitamins. Between them, they also provide lots of iron, calcium, and several other mineral elements including all

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the trace elements, as well as vitamins A, D, E and K. Leafy vegetables provide vitamin C and additional amounts of mineral elements and several other vitamins. So you don't need vitamin pills or any other sort of special supplements; the chances are in fact that *your* diet will be a more nutritious one than the carbohydrate-rich diet that so many people are eating nowadays.

I have to say, too, that the low carbohydrate diet has other health virtues in addition to its high nutritional content. If you are taking a total of say 10 or 12 carbohydrate units a day, your intake of carbohydrate will be 50 or 60 grams. Some of this will be in milk and some in fruit, so that there will be not more than 30 or 40 grams of "carbohydrate" in the starch, sugar and alcohol you are allowed in addition. Even if all this were sugar, which is unlikely, this will be very much less than the daily 130 or 140 grams of sugar taken by the average Englishman or American, and certainly far, far less than the 350 or 400 grams that some people take. By now, there is a very great deal of evidence that sugar in these sorts of quantities produces many disturbances in the body and its metabolism - lots more evidence than we had when I wrote "Pure White and Deadly"* some five or six years ago. So an additional bonus of the low carbohydrate diet is that it inevitably results in a much lower consumption of sugar than most people are taking, helping them to avoid its many ill effects.

One last point. I have said that the low carbohydrate diet is a pleasant and palatable diet that you can live with for always, but of course if you are overweight, this new diet will be different from the way you are eating now. Since the way you are eating now is the way you yourself have chosen because you like it best, it must follow that any new diet is, at least to begin with, less attractive than your old diet. But that only means that your old diet, the one that made you put on weight, is a bad habit that you have to change. And when you *have* changed, you will have learned a new appreciation of the tastes and flavours that real and good food has. You will also be rewarded not only by a better figure, but by better health.

*Penguin Books

*Davis-Poynter