SAADI AKADEEMIA

Free guide · Low-carb

Is a low-carbohydrate diet right for you?

9 questions to help you assess whether and how to get started.

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SELF-ASSESSMENT

Is a low-carbohydrate diet right for you?

A low-carbohydrate diet does not suit everyone in the same way. This test helps you understand whether it might suit you and what to discuss with your doctor first.

For each question, choose one answer that best describes you over the past month. Write down the points and add them up at the end. This takes about 5 minutes.

Question	0 points	1 point	2 points
1. Does your blood sugar fluctuate, and does your hunger return quickly?	☐ No	☐ Sometimes	☐ Often
2. Do you have abdominal fat or signs of insulin resistance?	☐ No	☐ Don't know	☐ Yes
3. Do you eat a lot of white bread, pasta or sweet foods?	☐ Rarely	☐ Sometimes	☐ Every day
4. Are you willing to cook your own meals?	☐ Yes	☐ Sometimes	☐ Rarely
5. Do you eat enough vegetables?	☐ Yes	☐ Sometimes	☐ Rarely
6. Have you tried a low-carbohydrate diet before?	☐ No	☐ Yes, briefly	☐ Yes, for a long time
7. Do you sleep for 7–9 hours?	☐ Yes	☐ Sometimes	☐ Rarely
8. Do you have energy after lunch?	☐ Yes	☐ Sometimes	☐ Rarely
9. Are you willing to monitor your fluid and salt intake?	☐ Yes	☐ Don't know	☐ No

Educational material—does not replace medical consultation, diagnosis or treatment.

RESULT

What your score indicates

Add up the points for all your answers. This test is not a diagnosis—it helps you identify which areas may need attention and what to discuss with your doctor.

Points	What this generally means
0–5	Your current diet seems to be working. Make changes only if there is a clear reason.
6–11	A moderate reduction in carbohydrates may help. Start with white bread and sugary drinks.
12–18	A change may be beneficial. If you take diabetes medication, be sure to discuss the change with your doctor beforehand.

If you have symptoms that interfere with everyday life, or you take medication, discuss your result with your family doctor. The Academy is an educational platform and does not provide personalised medical advice.

Read the article again: saadiacademy.ee/akadeemia/teemad/low-carb

HOW IT WORKS

Low-carb and keto – what is the difference?

Eating pattern	What it means	Who it is more often suitable for
Moderate reduction	Less white bread, sweets and sugary drinks; vegetables and legumes remain.	A starting point for most people.
Low-carbohydrate (low-carb)	Carbohydrates mainly from vegetables, berries and dairy products.	People with signs of insulin resistance.
Ketogenic	So few carbohydrates that the body mainly uses fats and ketone bodies.	With your doctor's knowledge and a specific goal.

In studies, low-carbohydrate diets have improved blood glucose and triglycerides in many people. In the long term, weight loss results are often similar to those of other dietary approaches – what matters most is that the eating pattern fits your life.

Two scientific perspectives

One model emphasises the role of insulin in fat utilisation, while another emphasises energy balance. Both have support from research.

If you take diabetes medication (especially insulin or SGLT2 inhibitors) or blood pressure medication, discuss reducing carbohydrates with your doctor first – medication doses may need to be adjusted. During pregnancy or if you have an eating disorder, keto is not suitable without medical supervision.

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A PRACTICAL PLAN

A gradual approach over 4 weeks

Week	Focus	What to do
1	Sugary drinks and white bread	Cut out sugary drinks and juices, and reduce white bread and pastries.
2	Your plate	Fill half your plate with vegetables, include protein at every meal, and have smaller portions of potatoes and pasta.
3	Fluids and salt	Drink enough; fatigue and headaches may occur at first – fluids and salt help.
4	Listen to your body	Monitor your energy, sleep and hunger. Find a level that suits you in the long term.

Shopping list

Group	Examples
Vegetables	Cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, courgette, lettuce, cucumber, peppers, mushrooms
Protein	Eggs, fish, chicken, beef, quark, legumes
Fats	Olive oil, butter in moderation, nuts, seeds, avocado
Berries	Blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, cranberries
Dairy products	Plain yoghurt, kefir, cheese

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SAMPLE MENU

One low-carbohydrate day

Meal	Example
Breakfast	Omelette with vegetables and a handful of berries, or plain yoghurt with nuts
Lunch	Large salad with fish or chicken, olive oil and seeds
Evening	Oven-roasted vegetables, salmon or minced meat, sauerkraut
A snack if needed	Cheese, boiled egg, nuts

Common mistakes

- Too few vegetables – digestion suffers.
- Only processed meat and cheese – fat quality matters.
- Too little fluid and salt at the start.
- Starting too abruptly – a gradual approach is easier to stick with.

We discuss nutrition and insulin in the book “Veresuhkru ohtlikud saladused” (Varrak): varrak.ee

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WORKSHEET

Myths and a 7-day tracker

Myth	What science says
“Keto is suitable for everyone.”	Suitability varies from person to person; it is not suitable for some.
“Low carbohydrate = lots of meat.”	Vegetables form the foundation, with moderate protein intake.
“Keto fatigue is dangerous.”	It is often due to a lack of fluid and salt – discuss persistent symptoms with a doctor.
“Fruit is forbidden.”	Berries also fit well into a low-carbohydrate diet.

Daytime	Vegetables (servings)	Energy (0–3)	Hunger (0–3)	Fluid (l)
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				

The Ainevahetuse Kood course helps you find the right level for you: saadiacademy.ee/kursused

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WHAT NEXT

Explore the topic in more depth at the Academy

We discuss nutrition, insulin and ketosis in the Ainevahetuse Kood course and the book “Veresuhkru ohtlikud saladused”.

Step	What it is	Where to find it
Free resources	Practical guides with worksheets: blood sugar, sleep, the vagus nerve, inflammation, lab tests.	/tasuta-materjalid
Webinars	One topic at a time, with questions and answers.	/veebinarid
Dr Saadi Club	A video lecture, a protocol and a live stream every month. A Facebook community.	/klubi
Ainevahetuse Kood	An 8-week core course for understanding metabolism and developing a daily plan.	/kursused
Book	“Veresuhkru ohtlikud saladused” (published by Varrak).	varrak.ee

Questions: kursused@synage.ee. We will respond as soon as possible. All articles: saadiacademy.ee/artiklid. © Saadi Akadeemia (OÜ Süsivesik). Sisu üle vaadatud: 2026 · järgmine ülevaatus 2027.

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