

## What to Expect When Beginning the Atkins Diet

Minimizing the quantity of carbohydrates that you eat is one of the keys to achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. This the aim of the Atkins Diet. Although the concept of using low carbs to lose weight is not new, following the Atkins method teaches a person how to carry out a proven effective, easy to use plan that enables you to eat great foods and still satisfies your craving for carbohydrates.

The Atkins plan consists of several phases. If you need to lose a significant amount of weight, the first phase is especially important. This introductory phase jump-starts your weight loss by limiting your carbohydrate intake to about 20 grams daily for at least two weeks. During this phase your diet should consist of protein-rich foods such as whole eggs, chicken, cooked beef, and a variety of fish. You also need foods that are rich in good fats such as those found in olive oil and dairy products. For your allotted carb meal, you may have a green salad with a low-carb dressing such as olive oil. You may also choose foods such as broccoli and green beans.

The second phase of the Atkins program is called the ongoing weight loss phase, or the OWL. During the OWL phase, you must continue eating foods that are high in protein and fat. The biggest difference about this phase is that you begin adding five grams of net carbs to your previously-allowed twenty grams per day everyday per week, until your weight loss ceases. That means that you are allowed between 20&ndash;25 grams per day the first week, 25&ndash;30 grams a day the following week, 30&ndash;35 grams daily the following week until you cease losing weight. At this point, you should reduce your carbohydrate intake by 5 grams per week again until you calculate how many grams of carbs you can consume while maintaining weight loss. For the average person, this usually equals between 40 &ndash; 60 grams per day. You should remain at this level until you lose approximately 5-10 pounds.