

# **Atkins Diet Tips!**

**I have lost 55 pounds in 8 months on the Atkins diet. In that time I have learned a lot about the diet, which foods are good and bad, how to eat out safely, products to avoid, etc.**

**I put this manual together to share some of those tips I have learned during this time. I have tried to make it entertaining as well, so I hope you enjoy it.**

Release 1.0

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## Administrative Information

The information contained in this document contains the common sense approach to the Atkins diet that I use. It has worked very well for me and others that I know. However, everyone's body is different so your results may vary from mine. Regardless, there are many helpful tips in this document that I am sure you will find useful.

This document does not attempt to explain the Atkins diet. There are numerous books and Internet resources that do that. This document contains information on how I do the Atkins diet.

There are many brand names listed in the document that are trademarked or copyrighted by various manufacturers. I use those names here solely to provide my opinion of them.

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## Introduction

Damn! What happened to you? How much weight have you lost? If you loose anymore weight, you're going to blow away. Have you been exercising? I never thought I would hear these comments made to me. And oddly enough, I do not seem to be getting tired of hearing them.

Hello and welcome to my latest writing effort. Most of my previous documents were DIY (Do It Yourself) instructional manuals that I sell on eBay and on my web site at [www.TheLebos.com](http://www.TheLebos.com). I am venturing out a bit with this manual, because it is not really about a DIY project. But then again, the only real way to loose weight is to Do It Yourself!

Anyway, my typical answers to the questions above go like this:

*What happened to you?* I've been on the Adkins diet.

*How much weight have you lost?* About 55 pounds so far.

*If you loose anymore weight, you're going to blow away.* Yeah, right.

*Have you been exercising?* Not really. I have started walking a bit (and not just to the refrigerator.)

This is almost always followed with them asking for more information on the Atkins diet, of which I am only too happy to share. Hence, this document.

Now, for a little background on myself. I am a 37 year male and have been overweight for most of my life. I married my wife when I was 19, and that time I was around 170 pounds, and wore size 34 pants. Over the years, thanks to her cooking and my life as an IT guy, I slowly added more and more pounds and inches.

About three years ago, I took a job that enabled me to work from home. While this was a great opportunity, the lack of activity caused my weight to increase faster. By December of last year, I was at 235 pounds, and wore size 44 pants.

About this time, my wife's aunt came to visit us for a week. When she arrived, she was much thinner than I had ever seen her. Turns out that she had been on the Atkins diet, which had obviously worked for her. So, I started doing research on the diet.

There were a lot of elements of this diet that made sense to me. Although I am not a doctor, the whole discussion about how your body processes

carbohydrates and fat made a lot of sense to me. However, of paramount importance was that fact that I could eat when I want and not be hungry.

To be blunt, I like to eat. I hate being hungry. Being hungry is very distracting and it makes me grouchy. I snap at the kids and my wife, and if I talked to myself, I would probably snap at me too. So, I absolutely refuse to be hungry at any time during the diet. I think that is the primary reason I have been able to stay on the diet for as long as I have.

The more I learned about the diet, the more I wanted to give it a try. So I did! In fact, I picked the absolute worst time to start, a week before Christmas. I figured that if I could make it through the rest of the holidays, it would be clear sailing from there. And, it has been.

Like I said, I started at 235 pounds, and now, 8 months later I'm down to 180. That's a total of 55 pounds!

Over the course of those months I learned a lot about what works and what does not. For example, diet sodas contain 0 carbohydrates, so they should be good right? Well, not for me and many others. The Aspartame in the drinks acted just like sugar for me and one would kick me out of ketosis. There are other diets sodas with other sweeteners that do not have this effect. I provide a list in chapter 2.

I also learned how to eat properly at restaurants, and I provide a lot of tips in chapter 4 this. For example, one of my favorite places to eat is Don Pablo's. I love the chips and salsa, and especially the cheese dip. As I'm sure you know, tortilla chip are a definite no-no on Atkins. However, pork rinds are perfectly acceptable! I take a bag with me when we go, and use them. Mmmmmm, tasty.

I have even included a section on "cheating". I'm sorry, but there some foods that I just have to have once in a while. Pizza, ice cream, spaghetti, lasagna, cheese cake, etc. I found a way to include them that does not significantly impact my progress.

So, please read on and I will provide the insights I have gained so far with this diet. I feel confident that this manual will pay for itself many times over. Especially if it helps you avoid some of the "low-carb" food products that I tried and quickly threw away.

## Chapter 1 – Where to start?

I will give the same standard advice that all books about diets give; “Never start a diet without first consulting with your doctor.” There, having said that, you will probably ignore that advice (as I did), and just try the diet. Well, that is up to you. I recommend that you consult with your doctor.

This document is not intended to explain the Atkins diet. Its purpose is to just lay out how I went about doing the diet. So, feel free to get Dr. Atkins’ New Diet Revolution to learn all the details. I bought it, but never read much of it. I did buy his recipe book, Dr. Atkins’ New Diet Cookbook. It has a really nice, short introduction to the diet.

That is how I began. I read the section of the book that outlined the diet and started from there. Then I started looking for all the low-carb products I could find and let me tell you, there were plenty of choices out there. And, of course, since they were diet foods the prices were extremely inflated. But I figured, hey my health is worth it, so I gave them a try. Well, about 90% of the low-carb products ended up in the trash.

There was no way I was going to eat that stuff. It either tasted like cardboard, had the texture of cardboard, smelled like cardboard or felt like cardboard. In fact, I would have been better off eating the cardboard box they came in. I wasted a ton of money on this stuff. Hopefully, this document will help you avoid the same costly mistakes I made.

There were some winners however. In the next chapter I go through the list of the winners. I also provide a list of products that I use on a regular basis.

During this trial and error process, I discovered that my whole approach to the diet was flawed. I was determined to find replacements for all of the types of food that I was eating before. Some of my favorite foods included pancakes, chocolate, French toast, potato chips, chocolate, bread, yeast rolls, beer, cereal, chocolate, etc. Did I mention chocolate?

The mistake was trying to replace all of my favorite food with their low-carb counterparts. What I learned to do was embrace other foods that were naturally low in carbohydrates. Not only did they taste much better, they cost a heck of a lot less. Chapter 3 details my typical daily menu. While it may not be quite as varied as my previous diet, it has brought a lot of order to my life and helped me loose a ton of weight.

Don’t get me wrong, I was able to find low-carb replacements for many of my favorite foods listed above, but I consume a lot less of them than I used to.

## Chapter 2 – Low-carb Products, the Few I Like

This chapter provides a list of products that I have tried and liked. The rest I tried were awful. There is not much of a middle ground with this stuff.

Carbohydrates discussed in this section are net effective carbs. If you are unfamiliar with this term, net effective carbs are those that you have to count. Some carbs, in the form of fiber or artificial sweetener do not count, as they are not broken down in the body and converted to sugar.

### Grain Products

Most of the products in this category are pretty bad. The bread products tasted horrible to me and the texture was like eating a dry sponge. For that reason, most of the grain products are on my “don’t waste your time and money” list.

In fact, I have only found two products in this category that I liked.

The first is Carbsense Pancake Mix. Even though they do not taste quite like real pancakes, they are close enough. And with some real butter and the proper maple syrup, they are down right tasty.

This may be hard to find, so you may need to order it from an online source. Check out the appendix for some sources.



I know this is not a grain product, but what are pancakes without syrup?

Be careful which syrup you buy, however! Most of them taste OK, but I have only found one brand that was not as thin as water. To the left is Joseph's Lite All Natural Pancake Syrup.



This stuff is very thick and tastes like the real thing. My local grocery stores do not carry it, so I order it online.

The second is Nature's Own Reduced Carbohydrate Premium Wheat bread. This can be found at your local grocery store or Walmart. It has 5 net effective carbs per slice, which can add up if you are on the induction phase of the diet. So, be careful.

It too has a spongy texture to it, but it is not so bad and is pretty easy to get used to. It also makes excellent toast to go with those eggs and bacon in the morning. This one is definitely recommended.

## **Sugar Substitutes**

Let me start out by stating that sugar substitutes affect people differently. Many people, including myself, have had bad experiences with Aspartame (NutraSweet).

Early on, I made a dessert from Dr. Atkins's cookbook that used an artificial sweetener. I used NutraSweet and the desert came out great. Unfortunately, when I started eating the desert, my weight loss stopped. My ketone test strips did not show me passing any ketones, which was confusing as I was being very strict with my carb intake at the time.

I was confused, so I discontinued the desert and within a few days, I was back to normal, passing ketones. I did some research on the Internet and found others who had similar experiences with Aspartame. From that point on, I have not used it at all.

Now I only use sucralose (Splenda). I made the dessert with this sweetener, and did not have the problem again. So, now when I shop I only look for products that contain sucralose.

Splenda can be found at most grocery stores these days. It is great in coffee and tea. It is also great for cooking.



I have also used saccharin (Sweet'n Low) with no ill effects. Since it is no longer considered a cancer causing agent, I use it when we are out to eat in my iced tea and coffee.

## Ice Cream

Up until a few months ago, it was hard to find a low-carb ice cream. The Atkins brand has been in some of our local stores, and while it was good, it was also very expensive. It had just four ½ cup containers in the box and costs about \$5.00. It was just not worth the price.

Enter Breyers! In just the past few weeks, our grocery store (Walmart) has started stocking Breyer's new CarbSmart ice cream. And let me tell you, it is the best thing since low-carb sliced bread. It comes in three flavors and is the standard Breyer's ice cream cost, about \$3.00 for half a gallon. With only 4 net carbs per serving, this is a winner. Caution, it is hard to eat only one serving!

**Vanilla!**



**Chocolate!**



**Strawberry!**



If you want a real treat, grab some Walden Farms Chocolate Syrup. I can not find this locally, but it is orderable online. It tastes more like fudge topping than chocolate syrup, and it is simply amazing when put on top of the Vanilla ice cream above. It is combinations like these that make the Atkins diet so easy.





## Sodas

Soda drinkers beware! Most of the popular diet sodas contain Aspartame. However, there are two brands that are made with sucralose (Splenda). The first, which is distributed nationally, is Diet Rite Cola. This makes good substitute for Coke.

A second brand, distributed on the east coast, is called Waist Watcher. They make a great selection of drinks and is what I drink when I want a soda. I like the Diet Vanilla Cream Soda the best. Look in the appendix for the website for Waist Watcher.

Diet Rite cola is made with Splenda.  
Great substitute for Diet Coke.



Waist Watcher Brand. This stuff is great.  
Flavors in two liter bottles are:

DIET CREAM  
DIET GINGER ALE  
DIET ORANGE  
DIET ROOT BEER  
DIET COLA  
DIET LEMON UP  
DIET RASPBERRY GINGER ALE  
DIET BLACK CHERRY  
DIET CHERRY COLA  
DIET CITRUS FROST  
DIET CHOCOLATE FUDGE  
SELTZER

Flavors in 12oz cans are:

DIET CREAM  
DIET GINGER ALE  
DIET ORANGE  
DIET ROOT BEER  
DIET COLA  
DIET LEMON UP  
DIET RASPBERRY GINGER ALE  
DIET BLACK CHERRY  
DIET GRAPE  
DIET CITRUS FROST



## Candy

When I first started the Atkins diet, there were not many low-carb candy choices available. Now, less than a year later, they seem to be everywhere. New brands and flavors seem to arrive every week.

Most of the candy that I have tried is pretty good, and I will list the ones that my wife and I like the best. The thing to be careful of here is the price. Candy bar prices vary greatly from store to store, so shop around. Walmart seems to have good prices most of the time. And don't waste your time mail ordering them, you can almost always find them cheaper locally.

When you look for these in the store, do not look in the regular candy section. This candy is usually in the diet section of the store. It may also be close to the pharmacy with the diabetes supplies.

The selection of candy, as with all of the other low-carb foods should continue to get better and better as more people make the low-carb switch and demand new products. More demand means more competition and lower prices. So, spread the word, go low-carb.

This is one of the Carborite brand candy bars. It was the first candy bar I found, and at the time it was only carried by Walgreen's in my area. They charged \$1.29 per bar, but occasionally have them on sale for \$1.00. Target now carries them for \$0.99.

This is still my favorite candy.

1 net carb per bar.



This is my wife's favorite candy. It is a great M&M substitute.

0 net carbs per bag!



This is a newer brand that Walmart has started carrying. It is made by Pure De-lite and is a Belgian Chocolate Truffle Bar. This one is real good with a cup of coffee.

2 net carbs.



Another Pure De-lite selection. This one is a Dark Chocolate Bar. It tastes as good as the real thing.

0 net carbs!



Russell Stover is getting in to the act with their low-carb candies. This one is a toffee bar. Very tasty.

0.4 net carbs per bag.



Another Russell Stover selection. This one is called Pecan Delights. (Can you say Turtles?)

2.4 net carbs per bag.



Like I said before, these are our current favorites, but more keep coming out and we keep trying them.

The one rule I follow is not to eat more than one of these per day. The carb count is very low, so it is probably safe to eat more, but at a dollar a piece, the costs add up quickly.

## **Chapter 3 – Daily Menu**

As you have seen, there are many low-carb products out there. When I started the diet, I tried to use them all. However, I quickly learned that there are plenty of naturally low-carb foods that cost much less. These foods became my staple items and the low-carb products in the previous chapter became my “treats”.

I will go through my typical daily menu next, so you get a feel for how I do the Atkins diet.

### **Breakfast**

When I started the diet, I tried different pancake mixes, hot and cold cereals and muffin recipes. Then I got real and just started eating eggs.

Now, every morning I eat 3 eggs, over-easy, and 4 pieces of bacon with a cup of coffee. Sometimes I eat sausage instead of bacon. That's it! When I started the diet I was very concerned about variety, but as it turns out, I love the consistency of knowing what I am going to have for breakfast. I thought I would get sick of eggs every morning, but instead, I look forward to them.

### **Lunch**

My lunch is more varied. If we have some left over meat from the night before, I will eat that. If not, I grill a hamburger or turkey patty. I also drink a Waist Watcher soda.

Walmart has a great deal on hamburger patties. They sell a box of 32 hamburger patties for \$10. That is about \$0.32 cents per ¼ pound patty. For lunch I usually cook two of them, put a slice of cheese on top and add a little Worchester sauce. That is a very cheap lunch.

You can also find frozen turkey and chicken patties at the grocery store. These make great lunches as well.

### **Mid-afternoon Snack**

Around 3:00 I seem to get hungry. That is when I grab my daily candy bar. It does the trick until dinner time.

## **Dinner**

Dinner is a little different in our home, because we have to cook for the kids as well. (Well, my wife does the cooking...) She always cooks an "Atkins" entrée; usually something like, Salmon or another fish, steak, pork chops, chicken, etc. She stays away from the high carb flavorings like Barbeque sauce when making the entrée.

For a vegetable, we typically alternate between green beans and asparagus. Occasionally we eat broccoli. A few times a week, I will have a small salad with Blue Cheese dressing.

Again, I usually drink a Waist Watcher soda, iced tea or water.

## **After Dinner**

This has always been my hardest part of the day. I am a late night muncher. No matter what I eat for dinner, I seem to be hungry again an hour later.

So, when I get hungry, I cut up some summer sausage and some cheddar cheese in to bite size pieces and eat that while I watch TV or work on the computer. They are both very low carb, and very filling.

Now and then, I will eat some of the Breyer's ice cream, if I have not had too many carbs that day.

## **Carbs?**

You may be wondering how many carbs I eat on a daily basis. After all, that is what this diet is all about, right?

Well, yes and no. Early on, I counted every carb I ate. I kept a list and tested my self for ketones every single day. Over time, patterns emerged. I was eating the same foods on a regular basis and my ketone level never varied. So why bother counting the carbs?

Now I do not count them at all. I just steer away from any food that is high in carbohydrates. The only thing I judge my success by is the bathroom scale, and my weight continues to get lower every week.

My goal, as Dr. Atkins alludes to in his books, is to not treat this as a diet, but as a life long change in my eating patterns. If I can integrate this new menu in to my lifestyle, then the weight should take care of itself, and it certainly has worked.

My advice in a nutshell, is to come up with a short list of foods that fit the diet and stick with them for a while. Not only will it make meal time easier, it will bring some consistency to your life.

You may also be wondering what phase of the Atkins plan am I on. Induction? On-going? Maintenance? To be honest, I do not really know. All of those phases seemed very confusing and required me to be very careful with counting carbs. Like I said before, I just started eating foods that are low-carb and the weight started coming off. I call it the simplified Atkins diet, because it is easy to follow and it works.

## **Chapter 4 – Restaurant Tips**

There are times when you have to (or want to) eat out. We eat out quite a bit so I thought it would be beneficial to include some of the tips we have learned.

### **Drinks**

I limit my drinks to water, iced tea or coffee. Most of the diet drinks in restaurants contain Aspartame. If you can tolerate Aspartame, feel free to indulge, but I can not.

### **All Restaurants**

Some restaurants just do not seem to have any low-carb choices. However, most will have some kind of grilled chicken Caesar Salad. Make sure you get the grilled chicken though. Many times they come with breaded chicken.

Another option is just to order a hamburger and ditch the bun, ketchup and BBQ sauce. Keep the cheese and bacon though!

Steak is another good option, but leave off the baked potato. Pick the grilled vegetables instead (and do what I do, ignore them! Who eats squash?) I usually eat the salad and the steak and it is plenty.

### **Fast Food Restaurants**

At some point you are going to find yourself at a fast food place. There are some good options here too. McDonald's and Wendy's both have double cheeseburgers for less than \$1.00. Get two or three and a fork. Ditch the buns and eat the rest. Drink tea or water. Not only will you be very full, you will have just had a very cheap lunch.

Fast food restaurants are very good at providing the nutritional information for their food. Ask for a copy or check out there web site.

Beware of their salads though. Some are fine, but with others, you would be better off eating a Big Mac. When you look up their salads online, remember that the carb count include everything in the salad, including the croutons. (And, of course, we always ditch the croutons!) So make adjustments as necessary.



## **Mexican Restaurants**

These are hard. Everything comes in a tortilla, a taco shell, or some other grain type wrapper. The rice is deadly and the beans are bad.

Not to worry. Check out the fajitas. These are typically served as “build them yourself” with meat, tortillas, sour cream and vegetables. Instead of using the tortilla, just mix it all up on the plate and eat it that way. Very tasty and low-carb too.

If you read my introduction, then you already know the secret of chips and salsa. What would a trip to a Mexican restaurant be without chips and salsa? The salsa is not bad with regards to carbs, but the chips are. Instead, bring in a bag of pork rinds. They make an excellent replacement for the chips and are low-carb.

## **Buffets**

Buffets can be great or terrible. Some of them have a very limited meat selection which makes it difficult to find anything we can eat. They always have a lot of vegetables, corn and 27 kinds of potatoes. They do not usually have low-carb selections like green beans and asparagus though.

Occasionally you hit the jackpot though. Sometimes they have fresh fish, grilled chicken, roast beef and baked ham (watch out for the glaze). You will need to check out the buffets in your area to see, which are right for you.

## **Seafood Restaurants**

If you like seafood, then you are in luck. There are lots of choices at sea food restaurants, just stay away from anything breaded. Get the fresh fish, surf and turn, shrimp scampi, etc.

Try Red Lobster's Salmon New Orleans. Salmon with shrimp on top! But go during lunch, it's the same meal, just less expensive.

## **Italian Restaurants**

Do not waste your time. No pasta, no pizza on the Atkins diet, so why torture yourself. Sometimes they have a steak on the menu, but who goes to an Italian restaurant for steak? Instead, see the next chapter on cheating!

## Chapter 5 – Cheating – Why You Should!

There are some foods that are just forbidden on the Atkins diet. Foods like pasta, pizza, pie, cake, cheesecake, bread, donuts, etc. This is a list of foods that I really like and refuse to give up totally. But if I eat them, it is considered cheating, which is a no-no on any diet.

My solution was to schedule the occasional cheat meal. Every other weekend, I have a meal with anything I want. No limitations! Does this slow down my weight loss? Possibly, but it has never caused me to stop losing weight. Remember, I have lost 55 pounds in 8 months doing it this way (and still going).

There are some real benefits to this bi-weekly cheat meal. Keeping in mind that the Atkins diet is a life long food plan, it is important to have a way to include the foods that make life worth living (pizza). This way, I do not feel like I am missing out on anything. I can eat whatever I want, as long as I do it at one meal every other week.

I have read that carbs can stay in your body for up to 48 hours. So, two days after your meal, you are back to normal, burning the fat again. If you are taking the correct, long term approach to weight loss, then this should not be a concern.

I have found that after my cheat meal, I am still in ketosis, just at a lower level. However, if I eat two cheat meals close together, I fall out of ketosis and it takes me days to get back in. So, the moral here is only one cheat meal!

## **Good Luck**

The Atkins diet has been very good to me which is why I wanted to share the wealth with this document. If you have any questions please contact me at [coffee9@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:coffee9@tampabay.rr.com). I am always willing to lend an ear and give my opinion.

Good luck with the diet!

## **Appendix A – Links to Useful Sites**

Here are some web sites with more information. They are worth checking out.

[www.lowcarb.com](http://www.lowcarb.com) – Where I purchase my low carb products.

<http://www.adirondackbeverages.com/ad-ww.html> - Waist Watcher soda.

[www.mcdonalds.com](http://www.mcdonalds.com) – Nutrition information for their food.

[www.wendys.com](http://www.wendys.com) – Nutrition information for their food.

[www.TheLebos.com](http://www.TheLebos.com) – And, of course, my web site...