

LCHF? PALEO? PRIMAL? ARE YOU CONFUSED?



Paleo Breakfast -Eggs, Bacon, Brussel Sprouts, Liver, Black Pudding, Tomatoes, Avocado & Seed Bread with Butter.

From talking to people I can see there is definitely **confusion as to what "low carb" means** and no doubt this is because it can mean such different things to different people.

Here's what I consider to be the most important thing to understand about what it means to eat "LOW CARB":

"Even if you did nothing else but just eliminate processed foods, you would naturally end up with a diet lower in carbohydrates and higher in fat than the current, mainstream way of eating. ...To cut a long story short, if everyone just forgot about the words 'carbs', 'fat', 'protein' and just didn't eat foods that came in packages... then the confusion just slips away." (Caryn Zinn - Registered Dietician)

So, I could describe how we eat as being Paleo (with limited full fat dairy) or Primal (which is basically Paleo with dairy) or LCHF (low carb high/healthy) fat). The common denominator is that we avoid as much as possible highly refined processed foods or to put it another way we try to just eat real food.

We don't limit carbs significantly in so far as starchy carbs are concerned (we eat plenty of starchy veggies like sweet potato and pumpkins) and of course we eat loads of fibrous carbs (all the veggies). I haven't taken particular note of what we're eating recently but I would estimate its around the 100-125gram mark.

SO this means that, in comparison to the mainstream where carb intake is high then what we eat would be considered "low carb". (And we don't eat any "crappy" carbs - refined wheat/processed foods etc). You might not realise this but the average New Zealand carb intake is 300 grams for females and 330 grams for males!. However in so far as the LCHF movement proper is concerned we would be eating moderate to higher amounts of carbs.

On the fat side of things - we don't so much seek out extra fats as just eat them to satiety as part of our meals. So we don't cut the fat off our meats, we cook in oils (like coconut) or fats (like lard or tallow) and we eat real butter and add fats to our veggies. We do not shy away from fat (which in a previous low fat life I did).

My understanding is that there are basically three types of carb intakes that might be referred to as "LCHF":

1. You avoid most processed foods and in particular refined sugar and refined wheat (which are in the majority of processed foods) therefore you'll naturally end up with a "lower carb or low carb" intake - most likely at around 100 to 150 grams of carbs a day (this is what we do);
2. Because of your particular metabolism or medical condition (such as diabetes) you are very mindful of and/or avoiding eating most/all starchy carbs so probably eat around 50 to 100 grams of carbs a day; and
3. By choice or for reasons of metabolism and/or other conditions (e.g. epilepsy / cancer) you follow an extremely restricted intake of carbohydrates - i.e. "ketogenic" eating. In this version of LCHF you would likely be eating less than 50g per day of carbs.

Hope this helps you understand a bit more about LCHF!

As always: If you have any specific questions please ask a health professional (preferably one that is up to date with LCHF/ancestral diet ideas). In Auckland we recommend [Dr. Sarah Ballantyne](#) (dietician) and [Dr. David Williams](#) (nutritionist).