



Weight Gain & Keto

What happens when you don't lose weight and gain weight on keto? This may help:

Not enough fats

The goal of the ketogenic diet is to switch the fuel source from sugar/carbs to fat. If you're not eating enough healthy fats, there is a good chance you may be eating too many carbs and still be hungry and using sugar as fuel. Remember it's best to start with a high fat diet and adjust your fat intake to meet your body's needs.

Not eating right fats

When starting the keto eating plan many people gravitate toward highly processed fats like dairy from conventionally raised cows, which have been grain fed, raised in confined spaces and often given hormones and antibiotics. There are highly processed foods that contain cheap fats, refined seed and vegetable (soybean and corn) that are hydrogenated and they turn into trans fat which are inflammatory and inhibit weight loss. Some of these are cold cuts, sausage and bacon, so choosing products from sustainable raised animals and minimally processed is preferred. Bacon from Butcher box, or your local farmer that raises cattle and pork in a humane and sustainable method would be preferred. Some of the favorite brands include: Applegate is one of my favorite companies for bacon, sausage, pepperoni and found in most grocery stores, Target, Trader Joe's and Walmart.

Overeating protein

Another reason for weight loss stall or gain could be going overboard on protein. We don't need as much protein as we think unless you are a professional or college athlete that trains 4-6 hours a day. Typically 0.7g to 1.0g of protein per lean body mass would be ideal with lower amount for a sedentary individual and higher amount for an active individual.

Too much protein can lead to gluconeogenesis, which means you are converting protein into sugar. Once you are fat-adapted the amount of protein you consume may lean more toward the higher amount since there has been some change in the metabolic machinery of your body.

Not meal planning

Another common reason for weight gain when starting out with keto is not meal planning. When you don't plan your meals it's easier to go to fast food options or sugary snacks. You tend to graze throughout the day and not sit down and have meals. The body burns fat in the absence of food, in between meals when insulin levels are low or at night time.

Proper sleep

Lack of sleep, interrupted sleep or irregular sleep patterns can contribute to weight gain. A lot is going on when you are sleeping, especially fat burning and when your cycle is off, you create hormone imbalance. Two very important hormones are Leptin and Ghrelin. Leptin tells the body I am full and Ghrelin tells the body I am hungry. When there is poor quality and quantity of sleep, Leptin levels decrease (the body thinks it's not full yet so feed me more) and Ghrelin levels increase (telling the body I am hungry).

Most people function best on 7-9 hours of uninterrupted sleep in a dark cool room, free of electronics.

Overeating fats

Another reason for weight gain is overeating fats! This is a high fat diet however overconsumption of fats for a sedentary person can contribute to weight gain. Calories still play an important part in fat loss and the types of fats too.

Eating too much

Many people make the mistake of eating too many pork rinds, bacon, sausage, fatty coffees, butter when starting keto and go over board and to the opposite extreme from starvation to over indulgence. They tend to consume too many calories and calories still matter. My rule of thumb is to earn my food. The more active I am during the day the more flexibility I have with food quantity. The keto food tracker and journal works great for tracking so you can see where you may be going overboard.

Lack of potassium and magnesium and feel lethargic

A healthy electrolyte balance is essential in the ketogenic diet. Most people lose a lot of water weight, as carb intake decreases, in the beginning and tend to lose electrolytes with them especially the big players potassium, sodium and magnesium.

You begin to experience low energy levels and tend to give up on the keto diet or decrease activity level, which still plays an important role in weight loss.

Eating too many nuts

Nuts are a great go to snack on the keto diet, but they are also calorie dense and it's easy to over indulge on them.

Nuts can also create an inflammatory response and lead to weight gain.

Eating too much dairy

Just like nuts, when starting keto many people begin to eat foods they normally don't eat in high quantities, especially dairy and tend to result in GI distress. As grown adults we don't make lactase, which is the enzyme

that breaks down the lactose (milk sugar) and can create an inflammatory response. Inflammation will impede weight loss and promotes weight gain.

It's best to remove dairy from the keto diet for 30 days and slowly introduce raw dairy products from grass fed cows.

Eating dirty keto

Dirty keto refers to eating out at restaurants that prepare their foods with vegetable oils, sodium and poor quality food. It's mostly highly processed foods like cold cuts, bacon, sausage, pork rinds and fast food burgers. It's not just eating out, but choosing poor quality foods and virtually no vegetables to keep their carb macros low.

Dirty keto will tend to place stress on the liver and GI tract which play an important role in weight loss and hormone balance. Hormone balance dictates weight loss.

Too many carbs

There are many hidden sources of carbs including alcohol, prepackaged keto foods especially cookies, fat bomb, some nuts and vegetables.

Many people will have a cheat day and binge on carbs and stall the weight loss process.

Not enough calories

Women are notorious for not eating enough calories and the body will down regulate it's metabolic set point. You start to consume less and less calories and it's like your programming your body to burn less calories. When you don't consume enough calories you will also lack nutrients, vitamins and co-factors derived from food necessary for important bodily functions especially the thyroid, often referred to as the fat burning gland. I like to think of it as the CEO for fat burning and if it doesn't have the proper support (vitamins, minerals, co-factors) it's going to make weight loss difficult.

Menstrual period

Women tend to gain weight during the 2nd half of their menstrual cycle, due to the fluctuating estrogen and progesterone levels, promoting water retention.

STRESS

Stress is another reason for weight gain regardless if you are on a keto diet or not. When your adrenals respond to stress it releases cortisol to respond to stress, which causes you to hold onto weight instead of losing it. The body thinks it's in danger so it will hold on to weight as a protective mechanism.