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Key Keto Diet Challenges Solved!

Embracing a new diet can be tricky at first. You're changing the types of foods you're eating, the amounts you're allowed to have and often experiencing a new way of cooking. Then there's deciding which type of diet regime you want to follow, which actually dictates most, if not all, of the decisions above. Amid a marketplace brimming with pound-shedding solutions, one diet approach continues to reign supreme. This as registered dietitians have yet again anointed keto as "King" in the annual Pollock Communications and Today's Dietitian "What's Trending in Nutrition" survey.

Even with keto maintaining its stronghold on the No. 1 spot as the most popular diet in America for 2020, many struggle with common challenges associated with the diet. To address the top three, including the best ways to solve them, below are insights from Rami and Vicky Abrams—authors of the 'Keto Diet For Dummies' and 'Keto in Five' cookbook series who also founded the Tasteaholics portal encompassing everything related to the keto diet:

Challenge No. 1: Tracking Net Carbs

The Problem: It's easy to think of keto as merely getting rid of all carbs, but that isn't entirely accurate. Carbs can be divided into two types: total and net. Total carbs include every single gram that's classified as a carbohydrate, and that's easy to calculate as it's stated clearly on most nutrition labels. Net carbs get a little more complicated: Typically, you would subtract any fiber and sugar alcohols from total carbs. Keto operates on net carbs for a simple reason: Your body doesn't break fiber and sugar alcohols into glucose and pass them on to your bloodstream (like it does with regular carbs); they're passed through the digestive system virtually intact, having little-to-no effect on blood glucose.

Unfortunately, it isn't as simple to count net carbs as it is total carbs. Nutrition label standards and rules differ depending on the country and their accuracy can vary. Dieting apps often neglect to subtract or display sugar alcohols making tracking difficult. Eating out is also problematic: Restaurants are getting much better at creating keto-friendly options and publishing more complete nutritional information, but more often than not, they'll still only print the calories rather than breaking them down into their individual macronutrient parts.

The Solution: Three things can make your life easier. First, maximize the amount of home cooking you do. Eating out, consuming processed foods (even if keto-friendly) and excessive snacking can make staying healthy and on-track much more difficult. Knowing what and exactly how much goes into your food will ensure accurate caloric intake. Second, use recipes that include macro information. There are dozens of excellent low-carb sites on the internet with thousands of recipes that fit this category.



Third, get a dedicated keto tracking app. Calculating macros manually is an exercise in frustration, so program-specific apps like the Total Keto Diet can drastically simplify the process. This specialized kind of app allows you to track hundreds of thousands of foods, provides thousands of in-app keto recipes and can even generate customized keto meal plans. What's key is that users can track net carbs accurately for virtually any food, providing a far easier means of differentiating between net and total carbs.

Challenge No. 2: Customizing Keto to Fit Your Body Type

A: The Problem: Even a brief exposure to the dieting world reveals that there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach. Although keto is a relatively simple diet, there are numerous factors that affect what your goal food intake should be. You should factor in gender, weight, body fat percentage, daily activity level and fitness goals (e.g., weight loss, maintenance or muscle building). As you achieve your target weight goals, you'll need to continue to adjust your dietary intake. The macros you need for weight loss at 190 pounds aren't the same macros you'll need to keep burning fat at 175 pounds. Each variation introduces dietary adjustments you have to take into consideration.

The Solution: The first step is to release yourself from the pressure of perfection. Dieting, fitness and health are journeys, not destinations. Remind yourself that it's normal to adjust your food intake based on where you are and what's happening in your life. You don't have to get it perfect the first try; in fact, there's really no such thing as "perfect"—there's only progress.

The next step is identifying your objectives: What do you want to achieve? I'm a huge fan of SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound. This will drive everything you do, from the food you eat to the exercise program you choose. Many people fall into the trap of creating vague goals ("I want to lose weight") or starting without any goals at all. This is a recipe for disappointment. Identifying how you want your body to change is foundational to customizing your diet.

Finally, choose a consistent source. If you run the same data through three different keto macro calculators, you'll end up with three different sets of macros; they'll be close, but won't be identical. Find a resource that will offer everything from recipes to diet instructions to articles on the science behind keto. Whatever resource you choose, emphasizing consistency will decrease the chances that you experience frustration.

Challenge No. 3: Designing a Program that is Sustainable and Enjoyable

The Problem: One of the most common criticisms of the ketogenic diet is that it's difficult. There's legitimacy to this complaint: In a world obsessed with carbs, emphasizing fat first can feel like swimming upstream. Depriving yourself of sweets and eating different foods can create feelings of social isolation as you see everyone around you enjoying carb-laden treats.

The Solution: The solution is deceptively simple: Make your diet enjoyable, which starts with a fundamental shift in perspective. Rather than focusing on what you can't have, concentrate on exploring all the new options that are available to you. Keto is unique in that it doesn't primarily rely on reducing calories to achieve weight loss; instead, you're changing metabolic pathways to change how your body approaches nutrition as a whole. This

allows you to enjoy the full spectrum of tasty possibilities: from appetizers and entrees to seasonal dishes for special occasions.

Also, endeavor to embrace the keto lifestyle with enthusiasm. Be proud of your diet. We love sharing our food with people who aren't on the keto diet and encourage you to do the same. It's rewarding to see someone who criticized the low-carb lifestyle go back to the dessert table for seconds after tasting one of the keto creations. You'll be on your way to a better you, and with a little help, anyone can experience a better, healthier lifestyle.

Rami recalls the considerable number of challenges he and his wife faced when embarking on their own keto diet journey, finding and then parsing through one website after another, amassing a piecemeal patchwork of resources. That frustration led them to launch the Tasteaholics.com platform—a one-stop-shop for everything related to the keto diet. Today, this centralized, feature-rich portal includes automated meal planning tips, thought leadership-rich blog posts, an array of useful products, educational books and cookbooks and more.

"One of the reasons my partner, Vicky, and I created Tasteaholics was to provide a single platform where keto dieters can run macros, find hundreds of recipes and meal plans, and access the robust Total Keto Diet app used by over 2 million—all of which utilize the same databases, resources and calculations," Rami said. "Vicky and I also recently published Keto Diet For Dummies because we wanted to write a no-nonsense guide to starting and sustaining a successful keto diet."

All told, the Abrams are single-handedly helping keto dieters worldwide—and those interested in possibly trying the diet approach—overcome challenges and easily garner the information they desire so that it can be applied to their life sooner and without annoyance. A tasty endeavor indeed.

About Merilee Kern, MBA

As the Executive Editor and Producer of "The Luxe List," Merilee Kern, MBA is an internationally regarded brand analyst, strategist and futurist. As prolific consumer trends, lifestyle and leisure industry voice of authority and tastemaker, Merilee keeps her finger on the pulse of the marketplace in search of new and innovative must-haves and exemplary experiences at all price points, from the affordable to the extreme.

The best-of-the-best across all product, service and travel categories—as well as noteworthy marketplace change makers, movers and shakers—are spotlighted in her exclusive cross-media platform that reaches multi-millions each month through several syndication channels: print and online publications as well as broadcast TV and terrestrial radio.

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