

Resolve to choose a diet that fits lifestyle, preferences

How can I make a new year's resolution to eat healthy and lose a few pounds without starving myself? Each year I tried a keto diet, but I felt awful. — RK, Winterville

Sydney Kelley, a senior ECU dietetics student wanted to answer your question. She has loved ones who have tried a new year's resolution to lose weight and struggled. She hopes this information will help others. Happy new year to all.

No diet for healthy living is one size fits all. Every person's body has different needs. If you feel awful when you try a certain diet with similar principles is probably not for you.

Fortunately, there are a plethora of different evidence-based health weight loss diets you can try with varying levels of structure, rigidity and health benefits. The most important part of choosing a diet is to ensure you pick one that you can stick with long-term, fits your lifestyle and preferences.

Yo-yo dieting involves switching back and forth from dieting and losing weight to not dieting and gaining weight again and again. Some people gain back more weight than they lost.

I know that Dr. Kolasa would not recommend the keto diet unless you are following it under



KATHY KOLASA

the supervision of your physician or registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN). And, if it was thought to be beneficial for you, following it would be just a kick-start to your weight loss until you could transition to a safer and healthier way of eating.

If a keto diet has proven detrimental to your quality of life, then you probably do not want to try any of the other low-carb, high-fat diets such as Atkin's, Paleolithic, or South Beach diets. Other diets you could try are a low-eating approach, the Mediterranean way, one of the various kinds of vegetarian or vegan diets, or intermittent fasting.

A low-fat diet is a diet that follows the current dietary guidelines for Americans, which states that daily fat should account for 20 to 35 percent of the calories you consume.

There are also diets with more structure to them than just restricting a single macro-nutrient, such as fat or carbs. One example is the Mediterranean diet. This diet derives most of its calories from fish and plant-based foods, with an emphasis on polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs) and monounsaturated fatty acids (MUFAs) for the kinds of fat consumed. A great place to see if it's for you is at www.medinsteadofmeds.com.



ANTONINA VLASOVA/SHUTTERSTOCK

The Mediterranean diet derives most of its calories from fish and plant-based foods, with an emphasis on polyunsaturated fatty acids and monounsaturated fatty acids for the kinds of fat consumed.

There are also a variety of vegetarian diets, one of which is the vegan way of eating that has no animal products in it. The lacto-ovo-vegetarian diet consists of plant foods and some animal products such as eggs and dairy, but no meat. The lacto-vegetarian diet consists of plant foods and dairy products, but no eggs or meat. The ovo-vegetarian diet consists of plant foods and eggs, but no dairy or meat products.

If you are interested in starting a vegetarian diet, it would be good to investigate the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, as they have several sections that discuss how to ensure sufficient nutrient consumption. The vegan diet

is the most different vegetarian-type diet, with it consisting of all plant-based foods and no animal-based foods which includes but is not limited to meat, eggs, dairy, and honey.

The dietary guidelines unfortunately do not offer a plan for vegans as it is quite difficult to plan for all nutrients. However, the National Health Service in the United Kingdom provides a well-crafted guide on which nutrients may be lacking in a vegan diet and what vegan foods you can find them in at <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/how-to-eat-a-balanced-diet/the-vegan-diet>.

There is also the Pescatarian

diet, which consists of fish and other seafood as the only meat and may or may not include eggs and dairy alongside the core of plant-based foods. But following any of these diets may or may not lead to losing weight. If you eliminate any food group, we encourage you to seek the assistance of RDN to make sure you get all the nutrients you need to stay healthy and avoid chronic diseases.

There is also the idea of calories in versus calories out, which means that if you eat fewer calories or burn off more calories you will lose weight. If you do not feel as though you are ready for a major diet change, try small changes to reduce your caloric intake. Even a small adjustment such as switching the chips you have at lunch to carrots or switching from whole fat milk to low-fat milk can add up over time to help you lose weight and live a healthier lifestyle.

Limiting your intake of ultra processed foods might lead to fewer calories. Persistence is the goal when trying to obtain long-term results. Whatever you decide to do this in the new year, the better you can keep up with it the better you will be able to lose weight to reach and maintain a healthy weight for the long term.

Professor emeritus Kathy Kolasa, a registered dietitian nutritionist and Ph.D., is an affiliate professor in the Brody School of Medicine at ECU. Contact her at kolasaka@ecu.edu.

ASK THE DOCTORS

Diet, hydration are best for electrolytes

My husband was given a small jar of an electrolyte powder by a friend and has decided to take it on a daily basis. He is 76 years old, sedentary, a bit overweight and has high blood pressure. Might taking electrolytes cause him problems?

Electrolytes are minerals that, when dissolved in liquid, carry an electric charge. The main electrolytes are potassium, magnesium, calcium, sodium, phosphate, chloride and bicarbonates. They are found dissolved in blood, lymph, urine, sweat and other bodily fluids.

Many of the body's automatic functions, which you need to survive, are powered by a small electric current. That's where electrolytes come into play. The charge they provide is vital for proper nerve and muscle function, maintaining cardiac rate and rhythm, moving nutrients and waste across cell membranes, and managing blood pressure. Electrolytes also keep an optimal fluid balance in the body and maintain the proper pH level in the tissues and bodily fluids. That's extremely important, considering the human body is about 60% water.

You can get the electrolytes you need by eating a balanced diet. Minerals are found in vegetables, leafy greens, fruit, nuts, seeds, legumes, dairy products,



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with a simple urine or blood test, which can pinpoint the specific cause. Treatment focuses on replenishing missing electrolytes via supplements, medications and, in acute cases, IV fluids. The patient will also be counseled about diet.

When it comes to electrolyte powders, we have found quite a bit of variability in their composition. Some contain a lot of sugar, both real and artificial, and can also include additives that are not necessarily beneficial. Depending on the specific product, it is possible to inadvertently skew your electrolyte balance. If using one of these supplements leads to side effects such as swelling of the feet or ankles, dizziness, unusual weakness and changes to mood, it is wise to discontinue its use.

In the absence of the type of intense physical activity that leads to a copious loss of electrolytes through sweat, we advise leaving the powders, as well as the liquid supplements, alone. Unless your husband has been diagnosed with an electrolyte imbalance, staying hydrated and eating a balanced diet will provide the electrolytes his body needs.

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certain fish and seafood, and lean meats. Unless specifically fortified, like some breakfast cereals, you won't find electrolytes in processed and ultra-processed foods, which lean hard into sugar, salt, fat and refined carbohydrates.

We lose electrolytes in sweat and excrete them in urine. But unless you're engaged in prolonged or intense physical activity, the daily intake from a healthy diet balances out the loss. Electrolytes are also lost through vomiting or diarrhea. If either are excessive or prolonged, it can cause an imbalance. This is particularly true in children. In older adults, the ability to absorb and excrete certain electrolytes, including sodium, can wane. This can adversely affect fluid balance.

Symptoms of an electrolyte imbalance include fatigue, headache, nausea, muscle cramps or spasms, heart arrhythmia, changing blood pressure, numbness or tingling in the fingers or toes, irritability and confusion. Diagnosis is

Experts: Stop doing these things if you're over 50

KIERSTEN WILLIS

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Hitting the milestone of turning 50 comes with many benefits but there are some habits you may have continued over the years that you'll want to quit when you're 50 and older.

■ Eat This, Not That spoke to various health experts to find out what you should cut out of your life for good. Granted, some of these tips are things you shouldn't do at any age, but they're that much more important to take care of over 50.

■ Skipping health screenings

Dr. Aditi Springstubb wrote that osteoporosis can pose a major health hazard after 65. Because of that, Springstubb, who works in internal medicine with Hoag Medical Group in California, says a bone density exam is crucial. Vitals and bloodwork are also important, with the latter helping monitor cholesterol. That can inform changes you may need to make. Other screenings such as those for prostate cancer and lung cancer can also be required for men 50-70 and people ages 55-80, with the latter screening depending on smoking history.

■ Not being mindful of over-the-counter medications you take

Older adults can be at a higher risk of major drug interactions. Dr. Alexis M. Eastman, clinical medical director of UW Hospitals and Clinics' Division of Geriatrics in Wisconsin, provided the statistics. She said that patients on at least six medications have an 80% chance

of having a drug interaction. "Each time you add a new medication you're adding to your risk," she said. The Food and Drug Administration said you should speak to your doctor about your diet and any supplements and OTC drugs you take when you're being prescribed a new medicine.

■ Overly restricting your diet

"Healthy eating is important, but you shouldn't deprive yourself. As a dietitian, I often explain to clients the mental health benefits of a less-restrictive diet," registered dietitian Rachel Fine with New York City-based To The Pointe Nutrition told Eat This, Not That. "An 'eat less' mindset can set us up for a cycle of guilt when unfair expectations are not met due to the biological consequences of food restrictions (such as increased cravings)." Instead, life coach and intuitive eating counselor Rachel Cole told Well+Good you should focus on following your cravings and paying attention to how your body is feeling.

■ Not wearing earplugs

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says you should try to avoid loud noises and wear earplugs to protect your hearing. Tiny hair fibers are inside your ear and loud noise can damage them permanently over time. "Loud noises are the number one cause of hearing damage, even more so than old age. Hearing protection is the only way to keep your hearing from becoming prematurely damaged," Cary Audiology, based in Cary, North Carolina, noted.

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