

Colleague of celebrity dietician shares FAQ on low-carb diets

SPECIAL TO THE LVN

When Dr. John Salerno — a protégé of “Atkins Diet” creator Dr. Robert Atkins — testified before the U.S. Department of Agriculture about plans for its most recent Food Pyramid revision, he spoke his mind: The food industry is corrupt and has supported recommendations that do not support the population's health.

“Hidden sugar, preservatives and highly processed white starch are what are really causing our health epidemic in the United States,” said Salerno, author of “The Silver Cloud Diet,” (www.thesilvercloudiet.com) “Obesity, diabetes, heart disease, cancer and Alzheimer's disease are killing this country, and it's not because people are eating too much organic natural fats.”

Since the initial popularity of the Atkins food plan some years ago, however, there have been critics of the low-carbohydrate diet. The science was and is sound, says Dr. Salerno, who worked closely with Atkins on research. The problem was that the diet itself was not sustainable.

“The basic principles needed revision both to make the diet sustainable and to take into account the foods available today,” he says.

How does a low-carb diet work? Salerno answers the most frequently asked questions:

- How is a low-carb diet today different from the Dr. Atkins plan? Thirty years ago, the food supply was less degraded. Now, low-carb dieters have to be more proactive about selecting chemical-free foods that are not highly processed. There are many more farming techniques today that introduce unnatural elements into our meats and vegetables, and there are many, many more highly processed foods on store shelves. We need to be vigilant about preservatives and additives; hormone-infused meat can wreak havoc on a body.

- What's the first step? The Fat Fast Detox quickly puts

one's body into fat-burning mode. Adhering to the carb-free diet for two weeks will have participants losing five to 15 pounds and two inches from the waistline. Breakfast, for example, could include two large organic eggs and a side of bacon, sausage or ham, which can be washed down with coffee or tea with cream and sweetener.

- What about eating out? Sustaining a low-carb diet is pretty simple when eating at restaurants. Take the burger out of the bread and skin the French fries. You're good to go

pork tenderloin, shrimp, scallops and pates.

- How can you eat on the run? A small amount of planning goes a long way. Boil eggs and keep them on hand for long car trips and office snacking. Add to that list jerky salmon, nuts and string cheese. These foods are dense with nutrients.

- Where can you find “clean” foods? Buy as “close to the ground” as possible, meaning choose organic produce, eggs and dairy. Inquire at farmer's markets where they grow crops. Find a local provider for meats and fish if possible.

- Can you eat cake on a low-carb diet? As your health and vitality improves with lost weight and increased activity, you can introduce more carbohydrates into your diet.

- Are low-carb meals safe for family members who do not need to lose weight? What's good for you — a broad and varied diet of unprocessed foods — is good for your family!

- When is the diet over? Eating foods that are healthy, unprocessed and natural is something you should never stop doing. However, if you feel you're starting to gain excess weight, go on a detox regimen by cutting out carbs completely for one week.

- So, fat is good for you? Natural fat is the most nutrient-dense food there is. It lubricates your joints and helps your brain function at its best. It also keeps your hair shiny and helps prevent wrinkles. When you cut out processed carbs from your diet, you don't need to worry about natural fat, which is an appetite suppressant.

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Bacon: The next health craze?

... And 4 more unlikely good-for-you foods recommended by celebrity dietician

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Bacon has always been popular, but now it's the standard by which many express affection with the ubiquitous online meme: I love you more than bacon.

It's considered by many to be the ultimate food indulgence, but according to Dr. John Salerno, a protégé of "Atkins Diet" creator Dr. Robert Atkins, bacon is one of the healthiest foods you can eat.

"Many think of bacon as one of the guiltiest pleasures possible, but it has also been shown to alleviate the effects of diabetes, heart disease and strokes," says Dr. Salerno, author of "The Silver Cloud Diet," (www.thesilverclouddiet.com). "Nitrate-free bacon is an excellent source of high protein, low-carbohydrate energy that helps to reset the metabolism, and it's filled with amino acids delivered without the risk of dangerous levels of mercury, which can be found in many fish."

Need more reasons to love bacon?

■ It has a 4:1 ratio of protein to fat;

■ It contains choline, which boosts memory and healthy brain function;

■ It's composed of monounsaturated fats, the kind that contains lots of healthy fat-soluble vitamins and minerals

■ It's a potent source of oleic acid and saturated fats, which help reduce levels of low density lipoprotein (LDL), lower triglycerides, and raise HDL – commonly referred to as the good form of cholesterol.

■ Dr. Salerno says there are other indulgent-yet-healthy foods out there, including the following:

■ **Butter:** Butter contains the highest amount of butyric acid found in a natural food source. Butyric acid is recognized for its roles in cellular health, antioxidant protection and metabolic properties; it also increases energy and may prevent cancer. Butter derived from natural, grass-fed animals is recommended.

■ **Barbecue:** Add sauces and your condiments and this American favorite will have more starch and sugar than Salerno recommends. But the main ingredient — meat — speaks to the heart of a low-carb, high-protein diet. Grass-fed hamburger meat and organic, hormone-free chicken provides the nutrients your body

needs. Stay away from the buns, sugary condiments, sauces and marinades, and you can enjoy a healthy barbecue.

■ **Omelets:** Eggs contain lots of cholesterol and saturated fats, which have been demonized throughout the latter half of the 20th century. Fortunately, we know there is such a thing as good cholesterol and fat. Packed with vitamins, minerals and one of the best-absorbed proteins we can feed our body, any negatives associated with eggs are far outweighed by the benefits. Natural, unprocessed cheeses and cream add to the nutritional value of an omelet.

■ **Chocolate ice cream:** Ice cream made with organic egg yolks, heavy cream and a small amount of stevia herb for taste, instead of sugar, is actually a healthy dessert. Fats are fine, with the exception of trans fats, so long as dieters control their carbohydrate intake. Humankind did not evolve with the vast amount of foods today that contain complex carbs and hidden sugar. Our bodies are used to high amounts of natural fat and a limited amount of unprocessed carbs.

