

Atkins and Intestinal Problems

The major complaint of those who use the Atkins diet is the intestinal problems that are associated with reducing carbohydrates. These problems can include constipation and diarrhea. These symptoms can happen to anybody at some point, but those who follow a low-carb diet are especially prone.

Most commonly dieters will experience diarrhea during the early days of induction. This is a result of the body getting rid of excess carbohydrates. It also marks the beginning of the ketosis process. So in actuality, experiencing diarrhea at the beginning of the diet is a good thing. It indicates that you are on the road to becoming a fat burning machine.

Constipation is a side effect of lack of fiber in the low carb diet. Whole grains, legumes and fruit are the normal sources of dietary fiber, and they are all restricted on the Atkins diet's initial phases.

However, you shouldn't be scared off from the low-carb way of life because of these issues. There are simple solutions that can prevent and help with these symptoms and allow you to continue with staying on the diet plan.

The first tip is to make sure to include the proper amount of low-carb vegetables in your daily diet. In the induction phase, you can eat up to 20 grams of carbohydrates per day. This is roughly equal to 3 cups of salad vegetables. Some people are tempted to use their carbohydrate grams on cheese or artificially sweetened soda. Eating acceptable vegetables is a vital part of maintaining intestinal health while following the Atkins plan. It's also important to drink a minimum of 8 eight-ounce glasses of water per day and get exercise. Both of these steps can help with intestinal programs.

If you are experiencing constipation specifically, then there are many methods for relief. When you switch from a diet full of processed and refined sugar products, your body will need some time to adjust to this new way of eating. You'll need to make sure to up your fiber intake with acceptable vegetables and fruits (certain fruits are allowed after the initial induction phase). You can also try a fiber supplement like sugar-free Metamucil.

Make sure you are eating enough fats and oils. Constipation can be a result of too little fat in your diet. Adding tablespoon of olive oil or flax oil to salads or other vegetables can help your intestinal health. Also, try to incorporate a variety of vegetables in your salad. Pale iceberg lettuce does not have much fiber in it. Try dark green lettuces or have a serving of dark green steamed veggies (broccoli, asparagus or spinach are good choices).

If these tips don't work, try cutting out all salt from your diet for a couple of days. This includes pickles, mustard, diet soda, ham, bacon and bottled salad dressing. This will decrease your fluid retention and sometimes helps with bowel movements.

Diarrhea should not be a problem after the first week of the Induction plan. However, on rare occasion, it does persist longer. First, analyze your diet. If you are eating low carb protein bars or other sugar free products, eliminate them. They may contain sweeteners like glycerine, sorbitol and malitol which are known to cause diarrhea and gas. Homemade low carb desserts may also be a cause of problems. Most of them use maltodextrin, an artificial sweetener used in baking. Maltodextrin is made from corn and can cause problems for some people.

If you are not used to eating raw vegetables everyday, this may be a cause of diarrhea. Understand that your body will adjust to the vegetables and the intestinal side effects won't last forever. Make sure you are chewing your raw vegetables thoroughly. Also, using lightly steamed vegetables rather than raw can be a solution to this problem.

Intestinal problems are common during the first portion of the Atkins diet. Keep in mind, however, that these problems will go away within the first few weeks of the new way of eating. If the problems persist, try the previously mentioned tips to get relief.

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