

Tips For Success When Starting The Keto Diet or Low Carb Lifestyle

I just have to tell you about our [Low Carb Inspirations Facebook group](#) because this is exactly where we got all of these tips for success when starting the Keto diet! Special thanks to Donna L for creating this amazing reference for all of us. Grab the printable version of this information at the very bottom of this post.

Newbies to Low Carb Dieting or new to the Ketogenic Diet... set yourself up for success! There are a few differences for Low Carb vs. the Keto Diet and I will point those out below.

Here is a list of my ideas to help you get started.

The hardest part of making a salad is searching for and pulling out all the ingredients, and then having to put it all away again. So make a Salad basket for the fridge.

Vegetable Weekly Prep Idea

Once a week, cut up onion, celery, carrot, peppers, tomato, cabbage etc. and put them all in separate ziplock bags. Olives too. (Carrots are Low Carb, not Keto)

Place all these bags into the basket so you can just pull out the basket and it's all there and you don't have to dirty a knife. (I cut them in slices and chopped so I have a choice depending on the meal plan).

Make a soup. Heck, all the veggies are already cut, just add meat and spices.

When cooled, put single servings into zip lock bags and lay flat in the freezer. They defrost really quick and are a great backup plan when a quick meal is needed or to add with a meal.

Make meatloaf and meatballs at the same time and freeze them. Grab a slice or a few Balls for quick meals. (I use crushed pork rinds, grated cheese, and spices) Check out our **Keto Cheese Stuffed Meatballs recipe** here.

Bacon... Cook several lbs of Bacon at a time on cookie sheets in the oven.

(Lay bacon close together and bake at 400 for about 10 mins depending on how you like it) Then drain it on paper towels and slip them all into a gallon size freezer bag then freeze. They can be eaten frozen as a snack, or heat in mic for 10 secs.

Save the bacon grease for cooking with later. It's a great way to incorporate extra fat into your diet. It's yummy too!

Hard boiled eggs... Keep them on hand. Good Omega 3 and great to snack on.

TIP: Costco sells precooked bacon (50 to a bag) and hardboiled eggs in bulk!

Turkey is not just for Holidays. Cook one, debone it, put in ziplock bags, lay flat in freezer. Take out slices as you need them. Add some turkey to your soups! (give the pets the gross parts except for the bones.) They need real food too.

Artificial coffee syrups, Use sparingly! They not only slow down weight-loss but they give you diarrhea. (same goes for sugar-free candies)

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Snacks... Make ham and cheese roll-ups, cream cheese stuffed celery sticks and deviled eggs. Put them on a pretty plate as if it was a holiday. Food tastes better when it's pretty! Be sure to check out our **Top 10 Keto Snack Ideas** here too!

Change the way your fridge looks inside. Move the 'not worthy' stuff to a bin and display the low carb things loud and proud!

Make sugar free jello and put in pretty little dessert dishes. Just grab and top with REAL whipped cream.

I like to eat meals approximately the same time every day. It tells my body not to go into starvation mode and that food is on the way. Now knowing when that time is, whether I'm hungry or not, I can go get my salad made and food prepared before I'm ravenous. This assures I will eat properly.

Always make extra when you cook so you can freeze or have for lunch the next day.

Butter is your friend so top all your hot veggies, eggs, meats etc. with it. Seriously, I had to train my brain that butter was a good thing.

Less cheese, more non-starchy veggies (no one ever got fat from veggies!) Be sure to keep veggies low on the Keto Diet because those carbs (even though good for you can add up quickly)

Don't eat 2 hours before bed.

Drink water but don't go stressing over it. It flushes out nutrients, it stretches your stomach and it should not be with meals because it dilutes your stomach acids which you need to digest all the fat and proteins.

Fat is not water soluble so it's a myth that it flushes out the fat. Drink normal amounts all day (and very little within 2 hours after a meal).

And for heaven's sake TAKE VITAMINS AND MINERALS! This is NON-NEGOTIABLE

Grab this free printable: **Keto Sample Menu 7 Day Plan** too!

Pantry Prep Work

Failing to plan is planning to fail!

Clean out the Pantry. (It REALLY needs it anyway!)

Put all The UN-WORTHY foods in a plastic tote in the garage or better yet, give it to a needy friend. It's harder to cheat if it's not readily available. If a cheat happens outside of the home it's much easier to get back on track once your home.

Mark LC (Low Carb) foods with black marker on the front of the packages so you can easily see the carb amount without searching for glasses. (Example: 1/4 c = 2 carbs) and do the same for the Keto Friendly foods too.

Meal Planning the Day Before

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Plan your menu at least a day in advance and remove from the freezer tomorrow's meals. Hunting and searching for what you want to eat isn't any fun when you're hungry, and waiting for something to defrost is even worse!

Deli Sandwiches CAN be frozen. (Low Carb unless you are using a keto friendly bread)

When you pull out all the cold cuts to make 1 sandwich think ahead. Make several! (no veggies) Then wrap each one in a paper towel, (Paper towel keeps it from getting soggy) place in separate Ziplock bags and stack in the freezer. (Mustard freezes fine but Mayo doesn't). Then grab one and go to work, by lunchtime it will defrost and be as fresh as the day it was made.

Bring the veggies in a separate bag or container. This works great for kids lunches too. (PB&J, meatloaf, chicken etc. pretty much anything without mayo)

Fresh Herbs

Do you have a somewhat sunny window sill?

It should be crowded with small pots of Basil, Sage, Parsley, Green Onions, Etc...

Lots of herbs can be grown in low sunlight indoors. Fresh herbs not only add a lot of flavor to our meal, they're also packed with those healthy things they say we need.

Re-Grow your green onions. See the process on [How to Re-Grow Green Onions](#) here.

Scallions as some call them are a tasty garnish and have lots of nutrients.

When cutting the scallions, leave the bottom white part and root intact. Use the green part for cooking now and Plant the white part (leaving a little sticking up above the soil) in a small pot on the windowsill and keep it well watered. It will grow again and you get more bang for the buck! Just clip off what you need when cooking. (It will also grow in just a glass of water, but change the water every 2 days).

This also works with celery and romaine lettuce. Leave a couple of inches of the stem/core intact and plant it. (buy organic when possible)

When Going Out to a Party

Don't go to a party hungry. Eat before you go (Unless you know the menu is safe) and bring a bag of pork rinds for you to enjoy with Dips and cheese platters.

Donna's Low Carb/Keto Recipes

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Basic Soup Recipe

sauté chopped onions, celery, and carrots in olive oil (Omit Carrots for keto recipe)

Add ...

water (I do 6 cups)

chicken bouillon to taste (1 cube per cup of water)

chopped frozen spinach, (any other veggies you like... chopped cabbage, zucchini, or cauliflower)

garlic powder to taste

cooked shredded chicken or chopped raw chicken (just cook soup longer)

some tiny spoon size meatballs (I make them when I make the meatloaf)

Simmer till all veggies are tender and chicken is cooked

Serve topped with Parmesan cheese. (Optional)

Chicken Cordon Bleu with Gravy

Preheat oven to 350

With a sharp knife poke a hole into the side of a chicken breast moving knife side to side to create a cavity.

Be careful NOT to poke through any of the other sides.

Roll a slice of Swiss cheese or a stick of your favorite, then roll a slice of deli ham around the cheese. Stuff this into the cavity of the chicken. Then close the hole with toothpicks.

Rub the chicken with bacon grease and coat with crushed pork rinds. Place on crinkled foil and Bake for 30 to 40 mins. till juices run clear. Let rest 10 mins before serving.

Top with LC gravy #2 and serve with cauliflower and a side salad.

Low Carb Gravy Recipes

#1 Alfredo style.... Heavy Whipping Cream (HWC) and Parmesan cheese (or Parm and Romano blend) simmer till dissolved and creamy. Add a squirt of lemon (optional) Serve over chicken and Zoodles

#2 HWC, chicken bouillon, and American cheese. Heat till creamy. Serve over Chicken Cordon Bleu.

#3 Stroganoff style ... In butter, brown Mushrooms and a little chopped onion, add HWC, and Beef Bouillon simmer till hot then take some of the warm liquid and whisk it into a little sour cream then add that back into the gravy and serve over cauliflower and burger or steak slices.

#4 Newburg style ... HWC, enough tomato paste to color it pink, a splash of Sherry, tarragon, salt and pepper to taste. Heat over low heat and serve over seafood.

TIP: Place spoonfuls of left-over Tomato paste on parchment paper or in ice cube trays and freeze. Once frozen drop into a ziplock bag, so you can grab a dollop another time when needed.

#5 Sausage and gravy... Brown chopped breakfast sausage in a pan then add HWC and American cheese. Heat till creamy and serve with eggs.

#6 Chinese style... In a large skillet with Butter, BROWN 1 lb Ground pork, 1/4 c chopped onion and 1 small can mushrooms (or fresh). Then add fresh chopped garlic (or powder) Add HWC, (amount depends on how much gravy you want) and low salt soy sauce (still very salty so taste as you add) Simmer to reduce a bit. Serve over Veggies.

Notes:

#1 HWC and Cheeses do have carbs so use just enough gravy to flavor and moisten the meal.

#2 Low carb bread or tortilla has 4 to 6 carbs. Don't make a habit out of them. You will lose weight much faster if you use those carbs on veggies. (grains are no keto friendly)

#3 Bring a low carb pita in your purse when you go out to lunch. I always ask the waitress if they offer a low-carb bun for their burgers. I know they don't but if people keep asking they will eventually carry it.

Meatloaf/Meatball recipe:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees

2 lbs ground Beef

1 lb ground pork (or more beef or even ground chicken (cook longer with chicken))

4 eggs

2 cups crushed pork rinds (I do this in the Magic Bullet)

1 cup of grated cheese

Garlic powder, Onion Powder, parsley, salt, and pepper.

Optional adds:

Grated zucchini (press the water out between paper towels)

Chopped mushrooms (in Bullet also)

Chopped onion (Not in bullet, that makes it bitter)

Mix all together.

The oven is heated so cook a couple of meatballs for a Taste test. *Don't mind if I do!*

Decide if it needs more spices. If it's good, divide batch.

Meatloaf Batch: I add a little-reduced sugar ketchup. (ketchup is not keto friendly)

Put in loaf pan or casserole of choice. Spread a bit more ketchup on top and bake at 350 for about 40 to 50 mins or till the juice runs clear.

Meatball batch: Roll into desired size balls and brown under the broiler till done. These don't take long, maybe 5 to 10 mins each side. (Depending on the size)

To freeze: Let cool and lay separate on freezer paper on cookie sheet and place in freezer.

Once frozen, put them in ziplock bags.

Appetizer meatballs: Make Meatballs then roll in a mix of crushed pork rinds and Parm cheese.

Fry in oil till done and crispy. Serve on toothpicks with a dipping sauce of choice. (Tomato, Alfredo, melted cheese, the possibilities are endless)

Cheese Ball

1 block cream cheese softened to room temp.

Chopped scallions or chives

Finely chopped green bell pepper (optional)

Chopped deli Ham

½ - ¾ cup of chopped walnuts or almonds

Mix top 5 ingredients well and form a ball shape.

Refrigerate an hour then roll in the nuts to coat the outside.

Serve with pork rinds or on celery.

Liverwurst

Mash the Liverwurst with mayo and a small squirt of mustard. Mix well and serve with pork rinds or celery.

Middle East Recipes:

Tabouli salad:

Chopped fresh parsley

Chopped fresh mint or dried

Chopped fresh tomato

Chopped onion

Raw Cauliflower grated on small holes

Lemon juice
Garlic
Olive oil
Salt and pepper
Mix and chill for an hour.
Serve as a side with chicken, or with pork rinds or with Kibbeh.

Kibbeh

Preheat oven to 350
½ lb ground beef
½ lb ground lamb
¼ cup Onion finely chopped
½ Cauliflower raw and grated
2 cloves Garlic, crushed, chopped
1 teaspoon Allspice
1 teaspoon Cumin
Salt and pepper to taste
Pine nuts (optional)
Olive oil
Mix together and spread flat in baking dish (about 1" to 1 ½" thick)
While raw, cut diagonal lines making diamond shaped indents.
Drizzle a little olive oil over the top and bake at 350 for about 30 mins.
Serve with tabouli, cucumber slices, and sour cream. (Great in a low-carb wrap as a Gyro)
Low carb "maple walnut ice cream" DELISH!!! So simple and it only takes about 5 to 10 minutes to make.

Basic Vanilla Ice Cream

Heavy whipping cream (I made a small batch with 1 cup)
LC Sweetener of choice (to taste)
Pure Vanilla extract (1 cap full)
Pinch of salt
1-quart size freezer bag
1 Gallon freezer bag
Kosher salt
Ice

Put first 4 ingredients into the small bag taste for sweetness and adjust if needed. Seal bag.
Fill large bag ½ full of ice and about ¼ cup of kosher salt, shake to mix.
Put small bag inside the bag of ice then seal.
Using a towel or gloves to protect your hands, start shaking the bag. SHAKE, SHAKE, SHAKE, SHAKE YOUR BOOTY!
After about 5 mins or so of shake exercise, YOU HAVE ICE CREAM. Rinse the salt off the small bag before opening. Serve, Eat and enjoy.
You can add cocoa powder, nuts or unsweetened chocolate chips, strawberries, etc. to the top 4 ingredients before shaking if you want.
I made "maple walnut" by chopping a handful of walnuts and toasting them briefly in a pan then added them to the cream along with some "sugar-free maple syrup".
The amount of cream used doesn't matter, just taste and adjust the flavor to your liking.
If you have kids, each can have their own little bag and have a family shake party.
It's much cheaper than buying ice cream, no fillers and low carb.

Other tips to consider

Add vinegar to your higher carb salad dressings. It will add flavor and thin it down so you'll use less.

TIP: Crinkle up aluminum foil then gently open it flat leaving peaks and points in the foil. Place pork rind breaded meats or fish on top of the peaks for cooking. This keeps them above the juices and stops them from getting soggy.

Breakfast Ideas

I have 3 eggs every morning with sausage, Bacon or Ham.

If I get bored with that I add a little mayo or Low sugar Ketchup on my eggs or Sugar-free Maple syrup on the sausage. (ketchup is not keto friendly)

Lunches Ideas

Salad pockets....Cut up deli meats and feta cheese mixed with chopped lettuce and salad dressing. Cut a low carb flax pita in half and stuff both halves with salad. (If you are bringing this to work keep bread and dressing separate till ready to eat).

Roll-ups... Low carb tortilla or flatbread (grains are not keto friendly)

Lay a slice or 2 of each Genoa salami, cooked ham, sandwich pepperoni and provolone cheese.

Add thinly chopped onion, chopped lettuce and "Wickles Hoagie and Sub relish" (it's hot and spicy, I get it at Lowes foods) Then roll up and serve with a dill pickle.

Basic Soup recipe (listed above) And a low carb sandwich of choice. (use [cloud bread recipe](#) for keto)
Tuna salad, egg salad, Ham n cheese etc.

Pizza: Take a low carb pita and top with Tomato sauce, provolone or mozzarella.

Pepperoni, onions, mushrooms or peppers. Put in the oven at 400 degrees for about 8 to 10 mins. serve with salad. Or make this [Low Carb Keto Friendly Pizza recipe](#). You can make the dough ahead of time and freeze it as needed. I tend to make 6 pizza dough recipes ahead of time and freeze the dough before I bake it. It thaws in about 20 minutes and makes life super easy when you've had a busy day.

Dinner Ideas

Italian ideas:

#1

Side salad, Ricotta Side salad, Ricotta cheese and Meatballs (hopefully they're in the freezer already) top with pasta sauce. (go easy on Tomato sauce it's a bit high in carbs)

1/2 can of French style green beans or zucchini (I use a mandolin slicer and make zoodles)

Top veggies with butter and parm cheese.

#2

Side salad, sweet Italian Sausages (Brown in pan on all sides then cover and lower heat. Slow cook for 1 hr.

Top with Garlic powder and crushed basil)

Add zucchini, bell pepper, and onion to the sausage drippings in pan and sauté to desired doneness. (This can also be topped with Tomato sauce another night)

#3

Fettuccini Alfredo

Side salad, Zucchini sliced like noodles (use Mandolin or a potato peeler)

1 pt. Heavy whipping cream and approx. 1/2 cup parmesan cheese in a pan heat on low till all the cheese is dissolved add salt, pepper, and crushed parsley. (optional, a squirt of lemon)

serve over cooked chicken and zoodles.

#4

Buffalo chicken... Mix franks red hot sauce with butter and garlic powder and put in the mic for 10 secs. put over cooked chicken and serve with salad, celery sticks and dressing of choice.

#5

Pork Chops

Crushed pork rinds, (crush with a rolling pin or a cup or in a food processor) Mix spices into the pork rinds such as sage, poultry seasoning, garlic and onion powder.

or for Italian style use garlic and onion powder, basil or oregano and parm cheese.(this is the mix I use in my meatloaf and meatballs)

Rub the chops all over with Bacon grease and coat with the pork rinds on all sides.

Bake on 350 till done and juices run clear. (time depends on thickness of chops)

serve with cauliflower and side salad (*see a trend here?*)

#6

Fried chicken .. yes u guessed it, coat with bacon grease and crushed pork rinds. Bake or fry it's your call. serve with yup... side salad and LC veggie with Butter.

gravy? Heavy cream with chicken bouillon. (spices of choice optional).

simmer on low to reduce and thicken.

Serve over the chops or chicken.

#7

Meatloaf and meatballs (I make it all at the same time)

Meats of choice like 3 lbs of ground beef or 1/2 of it ground pork

3 eggs

1 cup crushed pork rinds

Pepper, Garlic and onion powder to taste

1/2 cup Parm cheese

mix it all up.

Divide the mix in half.

Put half in a meatloaf pan (top with low sugar ketchup, optional)

Bake at 350 for 1 hour. (till juices run clear) remove from oven and cover, let rest 15 to 20 mins before cutting. Slice and freeze leftovers for quick meals.

With the other half of the mix, make the meatballs!

place on a cookie sheet into the oven with the meatloaf. These will cook for 20 mins. check for doneness. cover and let cool before freezing in a ziplock bag.

#8

Low Carb Mexican Burritos (make sure you use a keto friendly tortilla recipe for this one)

On a low-carb tortilla, spread shredded cheddar and Cut up cooked chicken (leftovers from the other night)

Roll up, top with Frank's hot sauce if desired, cover and place in mic for about 2 mins. Then top with a little salsa, lettuce, sour cream and ...Guacamole... I buy single-serve pouches at Wal-Mart and freeze them.

When I want one I drop it into a glass of warm water and it defrosts in 5 mins.
Serve with side salad or veggie

#9

steak topped with butter and salad - *Need I say more?*

#10

Cheesy Bacon Burger or [Butter Burgers](#) on salad.

#11

Hot dogs with low sugar ketchup (not keto friendly) or mustard.
sauerkraut or cauliflower and cheese...side salad

#12

Large roasts go a long way. Pot roast, pork roast, whole chicken, Turkey. Make on Sunday and munch all week or freeze in convenient size portions. I tend to bbq meats on Sunday for this reason too!

Snacks

Celery stuffed with cream cheese

Sugar-free Jello with whipped cream

Devilled eggs

Cucumber slices with sour cream and onion soup mix (onions are high so go easy on the dip)

Bacon right out of the freezer

Any cauliflower leftovers in the fridge? Mash with a fork, put in mic till warm, sprinkle with cinnamon and LC sweetener of choice, top with whipped cream. (Tastes like rice pudding)

Russell Stover's sugar-free candy.... I know you're looking for sweet but tread lightly with these because they will cause you to soil your pants. 1 sugar-free candy you're safe, 2 your playing with the devil, 3 or 4 the Devil wins! *Just warning you!*

Strawberries are pretty low and healthier, top some with whipped cream and enjoy.

If you miss milk, try almond milk or coconut milk or even some heavy cream mixed with water to a milk-like thickness. It's great.

Make a smoothie with heavy cream and fresh or frozen strawberries in a blender add water to adjust thickness. (don't overdo it) Hello, [Sugar Free Passion Tea Latte recipe!](#)

Don't have more than 1 Low Carb bread/pita/wrap serving in a day.

In the beginning, you will look for anything and everything that resembles the high carb foods that got us fat to begin with. But the reality is, If you want to lose weight FAST, foods like fats, meats, and salads will get you there.

Keep your meals as simple as you can, It doesn't get any easier than meat and veggies!

Atkin's website gives a FREE starter kit with a carb counter book and some candy bars. Just sign up and you will have it in the mail in a few days. (no free candy if you opt for the download version).

Good Luck, we're in this together!!

Y'all head over to the [Low Carb Inspirations Group](#) (request an invite) and thank Donna L for all these wonderful tips she has shared with us! Her knowledge has been valuable to so many of us and we are extremely grateful she has shared it with us! Thank You, Donna!

You can [thank Donna on this original post thread](#) here once you are accepted into the group.