

Quality of low-carb diets affects weight change in U.S. adults, finds study

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The quality of low-carbohydrate diets (LCDs) is associated with weight change among U.S. adults, according to a study published online Dec. 27 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Binkai Liu, from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health in Boston, and colleagues conducted a [prospective cohort study](#) to examine associations between changes in LCD indices and weight change among healthy participants at baseline from the Nurses' Health Study (NHS; 1986 to 2010), Nurses' Health Study II (NHSII; 1991 to 2015), and Health Professionals Follow-up Study (HPFS; 1986 to 2018).

Five LCD indices were examined: total LCD (TLCD); animal-based LCD (ALCD); vegetable-based LCD (VLCD); a healthy LCD (HCLD); and an unhealthy LCD (ULCD). Data were included for 123,332 participants (83.8% female).

The researchers found that during four-year intervals, the mean weight gain varied from 0.8 to 1.8 kg in the HPFS and NHSII, respectively. Each 1-standard deviation (SD) increase in TLCD score was associated with 0.06 kg more weight gain over the four-year periods after adjusting for demographics and baseline and concomitant changes of selected lifestyle factors.

For each 1-SD increase in ALCD and ULCD score, the corresponding increases were 0.13 and 0.39 kg. In contrast, each 1-SD increase in VLCD and HCLD scores was associated with 0.03 and 0.36 kg less [weight gain](#), respectively. Among obese individuals, these associations were more pronounced.

"Overall, the study findings argue against the sole focus of macronutrient quantity for [weight management](#) and suggest the crucial role of nutrient quality in maintaining a healthy body weight," the authors write.

More information: Binkai Liu et al, Low-Carbohydrate Diet Macronutrient Quality and Weight Change, *JAMA Network Open* (2023). DOI: [10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.49552](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.49552)

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