



CARNIVORE DIET

What is The Carnivore Diet?

The carnivore diet can be beneficial for individuals suffering from digestive disorders due to its simplicity and elimination of potentially irritating foods. By cutting out complex carbohydrates, fiber-rich plants, and other common triggers for digestive issues, the carnivore diet aims to provide the digestive system with a break from potentially problematic substances. For individuals with conditions like irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) or inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), eliminating these triggers may lead to reduced inflammation, bloating, gas, and discomfort.

Moreover, the carnivore diet's emphasis on animal-based foods provides easily digestible sources of protein and essential nutrients that are vital for gut health. Animal proteins are rich in amino acids necessary for tissue repair and muscle maintenance, which may support the healing process in the digestive tract. Additionally, certain animal products like bone broth contain collagen and gelatin, which are believed to promote gut integrity and reduce inflammation in the digestive system.

Furthermore, by removing plant foods that contain potential irritants such as lectins, phytates, and FODMAPs (*fermentable oligosaccharides, disaccharides, monosaccharides, and polyols*), the carnivore diet may help individuals pinpoint specific food triggers and better manage their digestive symptoms. This elimination approach can serve as a form of dietary therapy, allowing individuals to identify and avoid foods that exacerbate their digestive issues. However, it's essential to approach the carnivore diet for digestive disorders with caution and under the guidance of a healthcare professional, as individual responses to dietary changes can vary, and nutritional deficiencies may arise without proper planning and supplementation.

What Foods Are Permitted on a Carnivore Diet?

On the carnivore diet, the primary focus is on consuming animal-based foods while excluding most plant-based foods. Here is a list of foods typically permitted on the carnivore diet:

Meat: Beef, lamb, pork, chicken, turkey, duck, venison, and other game meats.

Fish: Salmon, trout, mackerel, sardines, haddock, tuna, and other fatty fish.

Organ meats: Liver, kidney, heart, and other organ meats, which are nutrient-dense.

Eggs: Both chicken and duck eggs are allowed.

Certain dairy products: Some versions of the carnivore diet permit high-fat dairy products like butter, cheese, and heavy cream, although others may exclude dairy entirely.

Bone broth: A nutritious broth made from simmering animal bones, which is rich in collagen, gelatin, and minerals.

Salt: Many carnivore diet practitioners include salt to help maintain electrolyte balance.

Water: While not a food, water is essential for hydration and is typically allowed on the carnivore diet.

Why Is It Important to Eat Organic Foods?

Eating organic foods can play a crucial role in efforts to clean up the gut and alleviate digestive disorders. Organic foods are grown or produced without synthetic pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, genetically modified organisms (*GMOs*), antibiotics, or growth hormones. By choosing organic options, individuals can minimize their exposure to potentially harmful chemicals and additives that may disrupt the delicate balance of the gut microbiota and contribute to digestive issues.

One significant benefit of organic foods is their higher nutrient content compared to conventionally grown counterparts. Studies have shown that organic fruits, vegetables, and grains tend to contain higher levels of essential vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and phytonutrients. These nutrients are vital for supporting the health and function of the digestive system, promoting gut integrity, and reducing inflammation.

Furthermore, organic farming practices prioritize soil health and biodiversity, which can have positive effects on the gut microbiome. The gut microbiota, composed of trillions of microorganisms, plays a crucial role in digestion, nutrient absorption, immune function, and overall health. Exposure to pesticides and other synthetic chemicals commonly found in conventional agriculture can disrupt the balance of beneficial bacteria in the gut, potentially leading to dysbiosis and digestive disorders.

In addition to reducing exposure to harmful chemicals, choosing organic foods may also help minimize the consumption of antibiotics and hormones commonly used in conventional animal agriculture. Antibiotics, when overused in livestock farming, can contribute to the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, which may pose a threat to human health. Hormones used to promote growth in animals may also disrupt endocrine function and contribute to hormone imbalances in humans. By opting for organic meats and dairy products, individuals can avoid these potential sources of gut disturbances and support a healthier digestive system overall.

Who Are The EWG?

The EWG stands for the ***Environmental Working Group***, a non-profit organization based in the United States that focuses on research and advocacy concerning environmental and public health issues. The organization was founded in 1993 by Ken Cook and Richard Wiles and has since become widely recognized for its work in providing information on environmental contaminants, advocating for policy changes, and empowering consumers to make healthier choices.

One of the primary functions of the ***Environmental Working Group*** is to conduct research and analysis on a wide range of topics related to environmental and human health. This includes studying the impacts of pesticides, pollutants, chemicals, and other substances on ecosystems, wildlife, and human populations. The EWG publishes reports, databases, and consumer guides based on its research findings, aiming to raise awareness about potential health risks and promote solutions for a healthier environment.

One of the most well-known initiatives of the EWG is the publication of the annual "*Dirty Dozen*" and "*Clean Fifteen*" lists. These lists highlight the fruits and vegetables with the highest and lowest levels of pesticide residues, respectively, based on analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration. The EWG also provides resources such as the Skin Deep database, which evaluates the safety of personal care products based on their ingredients.

Overall, the Environmental Working Group plays a significant role in advocating for policies that protect public health and the environment, while also providing valuable resources and information to consumers to help them make informed choices about their health and well-being.

The website address for the Environmental Working Group (EWG) is <https://www.ewg.org/>.

What Is the EWG Clean Fifteen & Dirty Dozen?

Environmental Working Group's (EWG) "*Clean Fifteen*" and "*Dirty Dozen*" lists. These lists are compiled annually by the EWG to inform consumers about the levels of pesticide residues found on conventionally grown fruits and vegetables.

Clean Fifteen:

The Clean Fifteen represents fruits and vegetables that, according to EWG's analysis, have the lowest levels of pesticide residues when grown conventionally. These items are considered to be relatively safer choices even when not purchased organically. The Clean Fifteen list included:

1. Avocados	9. Broccoli
2. Sweet corn	10. Cabbage
3. Pineapple	11. Kiwi
4. Onions	12. Cauliflower
5. Papaya	13. Mushrooms
6. Sweet peas (frozen)	14. Honeydew Melon
7. Eggplant	15. Cantaloupe
8. Asparagus	

Dirty Dozen:

On the other hand, the Dirty Dozen comprises fruits and vegetables with the highest levels of pesticide residues when conventionally grown. These items are recommended to be purchased organically whenever possible to minimize pesticide exposure. The Dirty Dozen list included:

1. Strawberries
2. Spinach
3. Kale/Collard greens
4. Nectarines
5. Apples
6. Grapes
7. Cherries
8. Peaches
9. Pears
10. Bell peppers
11. Celery
12. Tomatoes

The causes behind the variations in pesticide residues among different fruits and vegetables are multifaceted. Conventionally grown crops are often treated with synthetic pesticides to control pests, diseases, and weeds. Factors such as the type and frequency of pesticide applications, the characteristics of the crop, and environmental conditions can influence the levels of pesticide residues found on produce. Additionally, some fruits and vegetables may have thinner skins or porous surfaces that make them more susceptible to pesticide absorption. The EWG's lists aim to empower consumers to make informed choices about their produce purchases, encouraging them to prioritize organic options for items on the Dirty Dozen list to reduce pesticide exposure.

Why Eliminate Nightshades from Your Diet?

Avoiding nightshade vegetables is part of dietary management for individuals with certain digestive disorders, such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), or autoimmune conditions like Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis. Nightshades belong to the Solanaceae family of plants and include commonly consumed vegetables such as tomatoes, potatoes, eggplant, and peppers (*bell peppers, chili peppers, etc.*). Here's why a provider might suggest avoiding nightshades:

Potential Irritants: Nightshade vegetables contain compounds such as solanine, capsaicin, and lectins, which some individuals may find difficult to digest or tolerate. These compounds can irritate the gastrointestinal tract and exacerbate symptoms like bloating, gas, abdominal pain, and diarrhea in sensitive individuals. For those with digestive disorders characterized by inflammation or heightened sensitivity in the gut, eliminating potential irritants like nightshades may help alleviate symptoms and improve overall digestive comfort.

Immune Reactivity: Nightshade vegetables contain glycoalkaloids and alkaloids, which can trigger immune responses in susceptible individuals. In autoimmune conditions, the immune system mistakenly attacks healthy tissues, leading to inflammation and tissue damage. Some individuals may have heightened immune reactivity to certain components found in nightshades, potentially exacerbating symptoms of autoimmune digestive disorders like Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis. Avoiding nightshades can help reduce immune system activation and mitigate inflammation in the digestive tract.

Alkaloids: Certain alkaloids present in nightshade vegetables, such as solanine and nicotine, have been associated with digestive discomfort and may interfere with normal gut function in sensitive individuals. These compounds can disrupt the balance of beneficial bacteria in the gut microbiome, contributing to dysbiosis and gastrointestinal symptoms. By eliminating nightshades from the diet, individuals with digestive disorders can reduce their exposure to these potentially problematic alkaloids and support a healthier gut environment.

What Foods Are Nightshades?

Tomatoes (including cherry tomatoes, heirloom tomatoes, and tomato products like sauce and paste)

Potatoes (including white potatoes, sweet potatoes, and yams)

Eggplant (also known as aubergine in some regions)

Bell peppers (including green, red, yellow, and orange varieties)

Chili peppers (including jalapeños, serranos, habaneros, and other spicy peppers)

Paprika (a spice made from ground dried peppers)

Cayenne pepper (a type of chili pepper commonly used as a spice)

Goji berries (also known as wolfberries, often consumed dried or in juice form)

Tomatillos (small green or purple fruits commonly used in Mexican cuisine)

Pepinos (also known as melon pear or sweet cucumber)

Cape gooseberries (also known as ground cherries or goldenberries)

Tamarillos (also known as tree tomatoes)

Naranjillas (also known as lulo or little orange)

Pimentos (a type of sweet pepper often used to stuff olives or in pickled form)

Garden huckleberries (related to tomatoes and often used in jams and desserts)

Ground cherries (also known as husk cherries or *Physalis* species)

Tobacco (while not consumed as food, tobacco is also a member of the nightshade family)

It's worth noting that not all members of the Solanaceae family are edible, and some, like tobacco, are toxic if ingested. Additionally, while many people consume nightshade vegetables without any issues, individuals with certain digestive disorders, autoimmune conditions, or sensitivities may choose to avoid them to manage symptoms.