

# The BANTING Diet

**Similar also to:** *LCHF, Paleo, Atkins, and Ketogenic diets*

**Type of diet:** *Specific Macronutrient Ratios / Prescribed eating / Real Food / Structured*

**Main Benefits:** *Elimination of sugars*

**Cost:** *Doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. Keeping it simple is the secret to success.*

**Difficulty:** *Moderately easy to follow*

**Involves Exercise:** *Regular aerobic type exercise is suggested*

## What the Advocates Pitch

The Banting and Ketogenic diet, which was originally designed to help treat difficult-to-control epilepsy in children, are very similar. Both are forms of a Low Carb (LC) regime where limited carbohydrates are consumed, along with varying proportions of fat and proteins, depending on the variant followed. Most importantly, this way of eating eliminates the consumption of sugar, processed foods, grains and legumes. Eating this way causes your body to switch from burning carbohydrates, and utilising glucose for energy, to burning fat, with the process being called ketosis. With Banting, a low intake of carbohydrates, with a moderate level of protein and healthy fats is promoted over sugar consumption.

The Banting diet gets its name from a 19th-century London undertaker, William Banting, who experienced such extreme weight loss on the LC diet prescribed by his doctor, that "Banting" became synonymise with low-carb dieting. Prior to 1959, all major medical schools adopted the "banting" as the standard treatment for weight loss. However it was expunged from all medical & nutritional textbooks in favour of the high carb - low fat diet from the 1960's.

During the 1990's, South African Professor Tim Noakes discovered that he was "carbohydrate-resistant", with a predisposition to developing adult-onset diabetes, and switched to the "banting" way of life. His book based on this personal journey, called *The Real Meal Revolution*, subsequently created a dieting-regime that became very popular throughout his country. It is described as an eating lifestyle, not just a way to diet, and is considered a natural, real food way of eating. The recommended ratio for macronutrients is 70% fat, 25% protein and 5% carbohydrate (limited to around 50g per day) and no calorie restrictions.

## Perceived Benefits of this Diet

The Banting community consists of a number of differing groups and interpretations. There are those looking for weight-loss; those looking for a healthy lifestyle; and those who want a structured way of eating. Advocates maintain a major benefit of this diet is that it reduces hunger in a way that no other diet does, making it easy to follow and very effective for weight loss. Noakes states that there are people who can metabolise carbohydrates effectively - and those who can't, and as a result, tend to become fatter. He advocates the Banting diet for people with pre-diabetic and type-2 diabetes, as they will in particular, feel the benefit of the stabilised blood sugar levels this type of eating helps. This diet strategy has also been shown to increase sport performance, help build muscle, and aid in the warding off of a number of life-threatening diseases such as hypertension, high blood pressure and an excess of cholesterol.

## Food that is a part of this woe and food that is not

This way of eating is simple - avoid carbohydrates and eat whole, unprocessed foods. The guidelines for the original 19<sup>th</sup> century diet placed an emphasis on consuming meat, greens, fruit and dry wine, while avoiding sugar, starch, beer, milk and butter. However things have changed slightly since Noakes brought this back into popularity. While the diet still avoids things like sugar and starch, it promotes healthy, natural fats like whole milk, butter, olive and coconut oil, eggs and cheese. The only fat to be avoided is trans-fats. Although this is a LC diet, it is not a no-carb diet with the majority of carbs coming from meat products, fish, eggs and vegetables growing above ground.

To help a devotee stay with this way of eating, there are three prescribed food lists - Green, Orange and Red.

The Green lists items that contain less than 5% of carbs; the Orange, between 6-25g of carbs per serving (followed once on “maintenance”), and the Red lists items which are to be avoided. Alcohol isn’t encouraged, although spirits and dry wines are permissible in small quantities. Fruit is ok but inadvisable before your goals have been reached due to its high sugar content. Raw unsalted nuts are fine as snack foods but not peanuts or soya products as they are legumes. Ideally, eat no more than twice a day, and only when hungry. There is no counting of calories or weighing of food but taking note of food labels is advised.

### **The Downside and Contrarian Views**

Negative views of Bantings are often directed at Ketogenic diets as a whole as these diets consist almost exclusively of food from animal origins. According to the Association for Dietetics and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of South Africa, the fats consumed are mostly “bad” saturated fats and cholesterol, which in turn are linked to hyperlipidemia (high fat or lipid levels in blood) and therefore relate to an increase in heart disease and stroke risk. They maintain there is no proof that a low-carbohydrate diet is safe and healthy in the long term and insist this way of eating is a health risk for adherents. Additionally, a high reliance on animal and dairy protein is a suggested causative link to increased cancer risk, decreased bone mass, added stress on the kidneys and low moods which carbs elevate.

Another criticism focuses on the ethical concern that diets of the Banting ilk are causing supporters to move away from vegetarian diets that are more environmentally-friendly, “meat-light” ways of eating. Patrick Holford, a renowned nutritionalist supporting the low-GL diet, holds that as the Banting is a specific eating plan intended for diabetics, and not for the mainstream, this type of diet should only be instigated for a few weeks and under strict medical supervision. Others label the conversion of eaters to a Banting type diet is akin to a cult.

### **Adopting this Type of Eating**

When adopting Bantings, you need to be well organised so that you have enough “real food” in the pantry and a good resource of LCHF recipes to try. Incorporating some simple calorie-burners, such as regular aerobic exercise, such as brisk walking, jogging or swimming, into your everyday routine is also advised but this is not a criterion for Banting, Determine what type of physical activity best suits your lifestyle.

### **What does the Scientific Research Say**

Current research shows that it remains unclear at what level the dietary restrictions of saturated fat are beneficial or optimal and as a result scientific support for low fat dietary advice has fallen. A number of current studies show that LC diets, of which Bantings is a subset, make it easier to lose weight and control blood sugar. A yearlong US NIH trial on LC versus low-fat (LF) focused eating, with no limiting of calorie intake, showed that the low-carb group lost more body fat, improved lean-muscle mass and lost 3.6kg more on average than those in the LF group. The LC group’s markers of inflammation and triglycerides dropped significantly while their HDL (good cholesterol) rose more sharply than it did for the LF group. Blood pressure, total cholesterol and LDL (bad cholesterol) stayed about the same for both groups. A 2004 study comparing a modified low carbohydrate diet to the National Cholesterol Education Program (NCEP) diet showed a significantly greater weight loss was achieved on this diet. Other trials have also come to the conclusion that the LC diet does not just result in more weight loss, it also results in more fat loss.

Conversely a study by Stellenbosch University declared the “banting” diet neither healthier nor better for weight loss than a balanced weight-loss diet (a balanced weight loss diet restricts energy intake in *each* of the macronutrient categories, while maintaining the recommended ratio). One study also showed that when the amount of energy consumed by people following the LC diet and a balanced diet was similar - there was no difference in weight loss. Noakes argues that a high fat and protein diet reduces hunger, leading to less food intake and thus less energy intake. This equates with another study that showed the Banting diet resulted in weight loss by restricting caloric intake – not by lowering the amount of carbohydrates consumed.

### **Where to get more information**

**Books:** The Real Meal Revolution by Noaks; Banting Solution by Douglas & Allan; Low Carb High Fat Diet by Potter;

**Facebook:** Banting Buddies; Banting Support Group; The Banting Diet;

**Well Know Advocates:** Prof. Tim Noakes; Jack Osbourne; Gary Barlow; Demi Moore ; Sharon Osbourne;

**References for this Guide:**

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