

# What Is Being in Ketosis Like?

From chapter 11 (“Are You in Ketosis?”) of Dr. Don Colbert’s new book, *Beyond Keto*.

Ketosis is simple and yet complicated, all rolled into one. To most people on a keto diet, ketosis is simply that sweet spot where they lose weight. But ketosis is much more than that.

## What is Ketosis?

Ketosis is that healthy and natural state where your body is burning fat for fuel rather than burning sugar for fuel. The standard high-carb American diet burns glucose or sugar, while a low-carb keto diet burns fats as fuel. When your metabolism shifts from sugar burning to fat burning, that is ketosis.

## What Makes Ketosis Happen?

Ketosis happens when you reduce your carbs to around 5–15 percent of your daily food intake. Some people may need to go even lower than 5 percent, but usually 5–15 percent is low enough for ketosis to occur.

## How Does Ketosis Benefit You?

It is the state of ketosis that provides you with the benefits of a keto diet. The many benefits of a keto diet stem from the fact that you got your body into ketosis, where you can enjoy

- weight loss
- increased energy
- mental clarity
- lower blood pressure

- clearer skin
- lower inflammation in your body
- controlled food cravings
- lower risk of cancer
- reduced and even eliminated seizures
- reduced or reversed PCOS (polycystic ovary syndrome)
- improved and reversed type 2 diabetes<sup>1</sup>

### **How Long Does It Take to Reach Ketosis?**

If you are healthy, ketosis will usually occur within two to seven days after you lower your carbs to around 5–15 percent of your daily food intake. If you are insulin resistant, prediabetic, or diabetic, it may take longer (often four to eight weeks) to enter ketosis. Rest assured, you will eventually reach ketosis.

### **How Do You Feel in Ketosis?**

Pay attention to your body as you eventually shift into ketosis. Try to listen to how your body feels. Here are six common feelings that most people in ketosis have:

1. You should feel satisfied throughout the day because fat and protein burn more slowly than carbs.
2. You should feel like you have a steady supply of energy rather than the ups and downs throughout the day that carbs offer.
3. You should feel more mentally focused because your blood-sugar levels are usually under better control.
4. You should feel in control of your appetite (rather than it controlling you) because the hunger hormone (ghrelin) is no

longer telling you, "I'm starving!"

5. You may feel like you can skip a meal because you still feel satisfied several hours after your last meal.

6. You should feel lighter because you are losing weight!

### **How Long Can You Stay in Ketosis?**

You can remain in ketosis as long as you like. It's healthy. I recommend that you stay in the fat-burning state of ketosis until you reach your desired weight or have treated any sickness or disease you are fighting. Then shift over to the Mediterranean-keto lifestyle.

### **Will Ketosis Burn Your Body Out Eventually?**

Our bodies usually have more than 40,000 calories stored away as fat and around 2,000 calories stored in carbohydrate form as glycogen in the liver and muscles (approximately 400 calories in the liver and about 1,600 calories in the muscles), so there is no risk that being in ketosis will burn you out.<sup>2</sup> What's more, the foods you eat will continue to provide your body with more fuel, so ketosis can continue indefinitely.

### **How Do You Know You Are in Ketosis?**

If your daily carbohydrate intake is down around 20 grams, then you will eventually be in ketosis, usually in two to seven days if you are not insulin resistant. If you are insulin resistant, it may take you four to eight weeks before you enter ketosis. If you feel like you are in ketosis and have the positive symptoms that match, then you are probably in ketosis. If you are losing weight, then you really most likely are in ketosis. You can also take a test that will measure the ketones in your system.

### **How Is Ketosis a Lifestyle?**

Fat-burning is a lifestyle that everyone wants. But not many people are willing to stay on a strict keto diet for years and years, even if it is a constant fat-burning machine. This is the time, whether it has been three months or three years, when many people revert back to their old high-carb diet.

That can bring about some very bad results, especially if they have been eating too many saturated fats on their keto diet and then mix that with a high-carb diet.

The answer, and the goal all along, is to shift over from the keto diet to the Mediterranean-keto lifestyle or to rotate between the healthy keto diet and the Mediterranean-keto lifestyle. It's a natural transition.

When you have used a healthy keto diet to get your body where you want it to be, whether it's losing weight or fighting some sickness or disease, it's time to move over to the Mediterranean-keto lifestyle.

In the Mediterranean-keto lifestyle, the macronutrients look more like this:

- 50–55 percent fats
- 20–25 percent proteins
- 20–25 percent carbs

You can tweak them yourself as you go to maintain your own health goals, but here is the beauty of it: your body usually continues to burn fat rather than sugar. Your body adjusted to ketosis (as our bodies naturally do) and became efficient at it.

With the Mediterranean-keto lifestyle of low carbs, high healthy fats, and moderate proteins, your body will cycle in and out of ketosis. To me, it's like a flying fish; it lives in the ocean, yet it can glide over the waves for long distances, then land back in the water and then zoom out

again.

Your body will continue to burn fat as its main fuel source. Some days more so, some days less, but you continue to control the fat-burning engine by what you eat. That is how ketosis can be a lifestyle.

Ketosis is where it's at. That's where the action is. On a pretty strict keto diet, your body will basically remain in the state of ketosis morning, noon, and night.

When you shift over to the Mediterranean-keto lifestyle, you will drift in and out of ketosis. You will still get the health benefits and some of the weight loss benefits of a keto diet, but things will be more relaxed in your food regimen. Ketosis is the healthiest place that your body can be. As a diet and then as a lifestyle, it makes perfect sense.

For more information on Beyond Keto, check out .

Footnotes:

1. Cole, Ketotarian, 22-23.

Jeff S. Volek and Stephen D. Phinney, *The Art and Science of Low Carbohydrate Performance* (Lexington, KY: Beyond Obesity, 2012), 7. {eoa}

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