

Ketogenic very low energy diet

Lose weight using a Ketogenic Very Low Energy Diet

Ketogenic Very Low Energy Diets (KVLEDs) are specially formulated low energy (low kilojoule or calorie) diets that are a modified form of a fast. Unlike a true fast that provides essentially no food or energy, KVLEDs provide some energy (less than 3,400 kilojoules (800 Calories) a day) plus the fibre, vitamins, and minerals your body requires for general health maintenance. This helps reduce feelings of hunger, weakness, and fatigue that you would normally experience when fasting, plus it also helps preserve muscles and other essential organs.

Unlike other Very Low Energy Diets, KVLEDs are very low in carbohydrate, providing less than 50 g of carbohydrate (starches and sugars) a day, which makes the body switch from using carbohydrate as a fuel to using ketones, which come from fats.

How does it work?

Weight loss can only occur if we eat and drink less energy than our body needs so that our body's energy stores (e.g., glycogen (a kind of carbohydrate) and fat) are used as energy sources instead. VLEDs are by definition very low in energy, to help people to lose weight more rapidly than other kinds of diets, but safely because they are nutritionally balanced. Additionally, they are generally higher in protein, to help prevent the body using its muscles and other organs as an energy source.

What are ketones?

A very low carbohydrate VLED is important for the production of ketones as a fuel source. Ketosis results when carbohydrate is in short supply in the body, leading to increased concentrations of ketones (β -hydroxybutyrate, acetoacetate and acetone) in the blood, which are produced in the liver from the metabolism of fats. Ketosis is thought to be a key factor in helping to prevent an increase in appetite despite the very low energy content of a VLED, allowing people to lose weight rapidly without feeling excessively hungry.

How much weight loss?

If the KVLED is used as directed, you will lose between 1.2 and 3.2 kg each week. The actual amount you lose depends on your sex, body size, initial dietary habits, and how physically active you are.

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In general, people lose the most weight in the first couple of months, with the rate of weight loss decreasing over time.

How long does Phase 1 last?

The length of time you are on Phase 1 depends to a large extent on how overweight you are when you start. In order to lose at least 7.5% of your body weight, it will take the average person 8 weeks. People that are heavier than average will take longer to reach this target – up to 12 weeks.

When you have lost at least 7.5% of your body weight it is time to move on to Phases 2 – 4 of the KnowDiabetes Type 2 Diabetes Prevention & Remission Plan.

How long do Phases 2 – 4 last?

Phases 2 – 4 are each 3 weeks long, so it takes a total of 9 weeks to complete them all. They are designed to slowly re-introduce healthy foods back into your diet, while minimising weight re-gain:

- Phase 2 includes 2 VLED meals plus dinner each day;
- Phase 3 includes 1 VLED meal plus lunch and dinner each day;
- Phase 4 includes breakfast, lunch and dinner each day.

What happens after I have finished the KnowDiabetes Type 2 Diabetes Prevention & Remission Plan?

If you feel you need further support, you can consult a KnowDiabetes Accredited Practicing Dietitian or Exercise Physiologist.