



Treating Epilepsy with the Modified Atkins Diet

TWH



Are medications alone not working to reduce your seizures?

Did you know that changing your diet can help?

Ask your doctor about the **Modified Atkins Diet** and if it can be used to treat your epilepsy and reduce your seizures along with your current medications.

Read this pamphlet to learn more about the Modified Atkins Diet and the Toronto Western Hospital Adult Epilepsy Diet Clinic.

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What is epilepsy?

Epilepsy is a condition of the brain that causes seizures.

There are many different causes of epilepsy and often medications help to control seizures. When your seizures cannot be controlled by medication there are other ways to reduce them.

What is the Modified Atkins Diet?

The Modified Atkins Diet is a way of eating that includes high fat, low carbohydrates and enough protein with every meal. Eating this way may help to reduce your seizures.

Is this treatment right for me?

You may be considered for this treatment if you:

- are taking your medications and still having trouble controlling your seizures
- have tried other treatments and they haven't worked
- are willing to follow an eating plan and continue to take medication

Basic guidelines of the diet:

- Eat no more than 20 grams of carbohydrates every day.
- Eat either 3 regular meals a day or 4 to 5 smaller meals a day.
- Do not skip meals or go more than 6 waking hours without eating.
- Drink at least 8 glasses of water each day to hydrate your body and avoid side effects. Each glass should be about 8 ounces.
- Take a multivitamin and calcium with vitamin D supplement every day.
- Eat enough to satisfy your appetite. Eat until you feel full.
- Add fat to every meal.

How do I start?

This is a medically supervised diet and should only be done with your medical team. Ask your neurologist if this treatment is right for you.

If your neurologist agrees, ask to be referred to the Toronto Western Hospital Adult Epilepsy Diet Clinic.

What to expect

Before your first appointment, the Epilepsy Diet Clinic team will review your file and ask you to do any blood, urine or heart tests (ECG) that you may need.

Be prepared to come for a 3-hour appointment on your first visit. You may wish to bring a family member or friend for support.

You will see members of the Epilepsy Diet Clinic team, which includes a neurologist, dietitian and/or nurse.

Toronto Western Hospital is a teaching hospital. This means that during your visit you may be seen by students doing their medical training. Your case will be reviewed fully by the doctor and dietitian to make sure that you have the best possible care.

Also, the Epilepsy Diet Clinic team may be leading a research study and you may be asked to take part. **Taking part in any clinical trial is voluntary.** Ask your doctor or dietitian for more information if you have any questions.