

Chatelaine

health // diet //

The Dukan Diet: Like Atkins, only healthier

The high-protein Dukan Diet has already taken Europe by storm. After trying it, we predict it will revolutionize eating here too — helping Canadians lose weight and quite possibly keep it off for good.

By Laurie Jennings Thu Apr 07 2011



DiETING is such a dirty word, isn't it? Maybe it's because it seems so hard and complicated. Maybe it's because by day three you're literally starving (nobody can survive on 800 calories a day). Or maybe it's because we're all sick of the roller coaster: Lose five pounds, gain 10 back.

But as tempting as it might be to throw up your hands, weight is a key factor in long-term health. And the reality is 52 percent of Canadian adults are overweight, as are about 20 percent of youth and 26 percent of children. When you consider that extra pounds are associated with cardiovascular disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and early death, it's fair to say our nation's weight is among today's biggest health epidemics.

If you've ever had trouble losing weight, the **Dukan Diet** is a new option that's both healthy and easy. My editor-and-chief and I both tried it — and we found it super-fun, motivational and easy to follow.

You can Dukan

Here's our crash course in the method — and yes, it gets easier with each phase.

Step 1: Eat only lean protein — a.k.a attack phase

This is the most extreme part, and the part that has some dietitians raising their eyebrows. "An all-protein diet helps fill you up and keep you full longer, so, yes, you will lose weight quickly, but I'd never recommend protein at the expense of carbohydrates. Our brains need carbs to function," says Tristaca Caldwell, a registered dietitian and professor in the School of Nutrition and Dietetics at Acadia University in Wolfville, N.S.

On the upside, this period is motivational since weight loss is quick. At Chatelaine, editor-in-chief Jane Francisco and I each lost about five pounds in less than a week, and never felt tired or hungry. Keep in mind that even Pierre Dukan, MD, acknowledges that half of every pound lost is water. But he says the drop on the scale creates an incentive to stick with it. The other bonus? This phase is short: only one to 10 days.

That's why Daphna Steinberg, a clinical dietitian at Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto, isn't too alarmed: "The evidence for low-fat vs. high-protein diets is pretty equal, but it's not sustainable. We all love fruit and bread and pastries. Do I think eating only protein in the short term is the end of the world? No. But I do think people will be constipated." That's why oat bran is recommended: It helps you get the fibre you need.

A typical day's menu:

Breakfast: Coffee or tea; one boiled egg.

Chatelaine

Lunch: Poached salmon with oil-free mayonnaise; non-fat yogourt.

Dinner: Shrimp sautéed in herbs; non-fat yogourt.

Snacks: Cottage cheese, lots of water and 1 1/2 tbsp oat bran.

Step 2: Add veggies to the plan — a.k.a. cruise phase

This is the time to reintroduce non-starchy vegetables by alternating between pure-protein days and protein-plus-veggie days. Continue like this until you hit your target weight.

A typical day's menu:

Breakfast: Oat-bran pancake.

Lunch: Stuffed mushrooms with three-pepper tuna; yogourt.

Dinner: Crab-stuffed eggs; sliced roast beef and hunter's sauce; yogourt.

Snacks: Grilled tofu, lots of water and 2 tbsp oat bran.

Step 3: Build in fruits & grains — a.k.a. consolidation phase

One of the hardest things about losing weight is not gaining it back afterwards. That's why the Dukan Diet includes this phase. Think of it as your weight-loss insurance policy. Do it for five days for every pound lost.

A typical day's menu:

Breakfast: Two slices of whole-wheat bread; one small apple.

Lunch: Sliced roast pork tenderloin; yogourt.

Dinner: Grilled fish with broccoli; yogourt.

Snacks: Chicken kabobs, lots of water and 2 1/2 tbsp oat bran. Plus two "celebration" meals each week where the sky is the limit.

Step 4: Live it for life — a.k.a. permanent-stabilization phase

This is an expanded version of the previous phase. Follow it as closely as possible forever and ever. And if you fall off the wagon, simply get back on.

A typical day's menu:

All of step three's meals, plus a total of 3 tbsp of oat bran daily.

Sneak it in

Five Dukan tricks to manage weight, whether you're dieting or not:

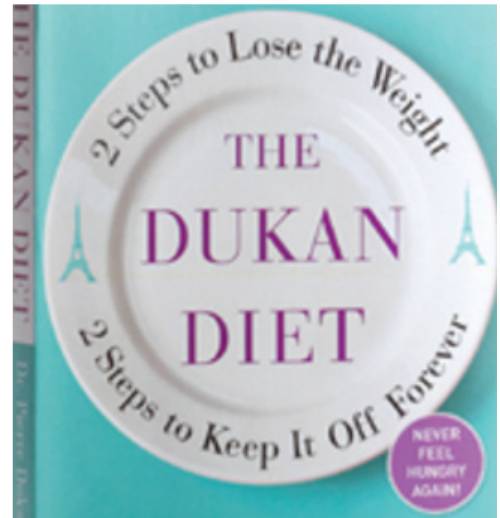
1. **Add oat bran to your diet.** This fibre-packed cereal is Dukan's secret weapon.
2. **Always eat breakfast** (bonus points if it's protein). Countless studies show that nibbling on something first thing in the morning results in lower calorie consumption throughout the day. Plus breakfast eaters have less trouble maintaining a healthy weight.
3. **Drink lots of water** — before, during and after all of your meals.
4. **Get enough sleep.** You're less likely to give in to cravings after a good night's rest.
5. **Never take an escalator again.** This is why the French have an easier time staying trim: They're active at least 20 minutes a day

Dukan's top foods:

- salmon
- oat bran
- yogourt (medium-fat)
- broccoli
- tomatoes

Dukan's five no-go foods:

- potato chips
- mayonnaise
- doughnuts
- vegetable oils
- hazelnut spread



Chatelaine

FAQ's

The doctor answers questions about our everyday cravings and vices.

Q: You prefer artificial sweeteners instead of sugar. Why?

A: "It's a complete misconception that sweeteners cause cancer. They're more tested than any substance. My preference is aspartame [Equal]."

Q: Can you drink tea or coffee on the diet?

A: "Coffee and tea are fine. But no sugar!"

Q: How about alcohol?

A: "I don't recommend any alcohol during the attack phase. When you move to the cruise phase, you can have some wine. But you lose one day. If you can't give up drinking, you have to pay for each glass with 20 minutes of walking, ideally done within one to two hours after."

Q: What about ditching your workouts?

A: "Exercise is very important. Twenty minutes of walking every day will help people achieve their weight-loss goals. Aim to do strength training at least twice a week to ensure you don't lose muscle mass or experience a drop in metabolism."

Four slimming secrets

Dr. Dukan shares his rules for guaranteed success. If you heed nothing else, follow these:

1. Not all calories are created equal: "There's a long tradition of thinking all calories are the same. That's not what I believe. Calories from fat, carbs and proteins are all different. And it's easier to lose weight when you eat more protein. That's because you burn more calories when you eat protein, and water is eliminated from your body more quickly than when you eat carbs, especially in women. You lose fat and you lose water."

2. Stand on both feet: "When you are standing — waiting in line or because there's nowhere to sit on the bus — don't lean on one side. Stand equally on both feet, because when you lean to one side, you're not using your muscles; you're putting pressure on your ligaments. This type of standing doesn't burn many calories. But if you stand equally on both feet, you immediately start burning. And you burn a lot more than you think, because it's the big muscles in your thighs and bottom that are working."

3. Oat bran is your BFF, especially when you're trying to lose weight: "Oat bran has physical properties that make it useful for weight loss, like absorption. If you put oat bran in water, it absorbs the liquid like a sponge. The same thing happens in our intestines. When food is broken down during digestion, it arrives in the intestines. In this place, the body comes and disintegrates it. But the fibre of the oat bran sticks to anything around. So around five percent of what you eat doesn't enter your bloodstream, it leaves your body. That's the reason I say you ought to eat three tablespoons of oat bran forever. You can have it in porridge, muffins, salad or bread — you can make your bread with oat bran, it's very good."

4. Fruit is a friend, but it can also be an enemy: "In North America, people think that fruit is optimum. For me, more than two fruits a day is not very good if you have a weight problem because it's quick sugar. It's a lot of vitamins, yes, but two fruits are enough vitamins. It's not necessary to have more vitamins, and more is too much sugar, and that's not good. I think apples, berries, melons and bananas are the best fruits."

Note: Always consult a doctor before starting any weight-loss program, especially if you have a cardiovascular or kidney condition or suffer from diabetes, depression or any type of mental illness.
