

Famous French diet credited for slimming down royalty hits North America

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A diet that's already received an unofficial royal stamp of approval by Kate Middleton's mother and gained a legion of fans among French women arrived in Canada and the US Tuesday.

Often compared to the Atkins diet for its emphasis on protein and its shunning of carbs, The Dukan Diet, by French physician Dr. Pierre Dukan, has become a dieting bible for 1.5 million French women who enjoy an international reputation for being svelte and willowy. Both male and female followers in France even have a name: Dukannistes.

The book, which has sold five million copies and is published in 20 countries, made its North American debut Tuesday under publishers Crown Archetype in the US and Random House in Canada. The sales pitch for the North American version plays into the image of effortlessly slender French people: *The Real Reason the French Stay Thin*.

Dukan is hoping to achieve the same kind of success in North America that he's enjoyed in the UK, where sales of the book skyrocketed after reports that Carole Middleton had slimmed down by following the Dukan diet. The book was released last May in the UK.

Other celebrity disciples who have reportedly followed the diet include Jennifer Lopez and Gisele Bundchen.

Much like Dr. Robert Atkins's diet, which achieved phenomenal success in the US and Canada, the Dukan method is described as a high-protein, low-fat, low-carb diet where followers can eat as much as they want - from a set of prescribed foods. Where Dukan says he differs from Atkins is in his low-fat approach. The Atkins diet drew criticism for its generous allowance of fat.

But Dukan isn't without his detractors either.

In France, the diet was slammed last November by the French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety for being an imbalanced diet that deprived the body of certain nutrients like magnesium and being overly high in others, like calcium and sodium.

It is also said to come with a set of undesirable side effects like bad breath, constipation and fatigue.

The diet is divided into four stages. The initial phase is called Attack, and consists purely of protein. During the Cruise phase, users alternate between only protein, with protein and an allowance of vegetables.

Next, the Consolidation phase allows followers to gradually reintroduce forbidden foods and two "celebration" meals a week before entering the Permanent Stabilization mode, where they must adhere strictly to a set of three golden rules: consuming three tablespoons of oat bran a day, taking the stairs wherever possible, and devoting one full day to strictly protein.

The Dukan Diet will be fighting for shelf space against another high-protein, low-carb diet book, *The 17 Day Diet* by Dr. Mike Moreno, which was released recently and has also received widespread attention.

The Dukan Diet is available from online retailers including Barnes & Noble, Borders and Amazon.com and retails for \$26.

