

Position Statement for Rolling News – Dietitians NZ Public Website

There has recently been a lot of coverage in the media about the proposed benefits of the Low Carb High Fat (LCHF) diet. It is encouraging to see people interested in what they should be eating, and many may be left feeling confused. If elements of some of these new eating trends help to kick-start, or move an individual towards a healthier eating pattern, and improved food supply then it results in positive outcomes. However, based on the current evidence, Dietitians New Zealand maintains the following position regarding the LCHF diet.

Dietitians New Zealand considers there not to be any substantive evidence that saturated fat is good for you in the long term. Dietitians New Zealand also considers there not to be any long-term evidence that a diet high in fat and low in carbohydrates is more beneficial for overall health for both adults and children, or for sustained weight loss compared to any other dietary regimen that result in a lower intake of energy.

There is clear evidence to show that replacing saturated fats with unsaturated fats, particularly polyunsaturated fats, has benefits for heart health. Dietitians New Zealand emphasises the importance of choosing good quality fats in the diet - specifically that we replace saturated fats from foods like butter and coconut, with unsaturated fats from foods such as avocado, oily fish, nuts, seeds and healthy vegetable oils (e.g. olive oil). A range of fat intakes is acceptable provided there is emphasis on appropriate types of fat (mono and poly-unsaturated).

Both LCHF and the Ministry of Health's Eating and Activity Guidelines share commonalities such as placing an emphasis on eating mostly whole and less-processed foods and restricting the intake of sugar and refined carbohydrates. Vegetables and healthy fats are also promoted.

Dietitians New Zealand recommends people eat mostly whole and less-processed foods from the following food groups which can be combined in various ways to suit individual dietary patterns:

- Vegetables and fruits – with a focus on non-starchy vegetables**
- Grain foods – with a focus on minimally processed wholegrains**
- Legumes, nuts, seeds, fish and other seafood, eggs, poultry, and / or lean meat**
- Dairy products, mostly low and reduced fat**

Dietary patterns that support health reflect a range of fat, carbohydrate and protein intakes but share common features. These features include: fewer processed foods; plenty of vegetables and fruit; some other plant foods such as legumes, intact wholegrains (whole oats, bulgur wheat, brown rice and quinoa), nuts, seeds; and other sources of healthy fats

such as oily fish. They may contain non-processed lean meats or poultry, eggs and/or dairy. If people focus on eating good foods, and healthy ways of eating, the nutrients will take care of themselves.

Limitation of “free” or “added” sugars and alcohol is advised because they provide energy without other beneficial nutrients. Highly processed cereal based foods such as white rice, pasta, bread and flour should also be limited, for similar reasons, and replaced with wholegrains or vegetables where possible.

There is no one size fits all approach to nutrition. Nutrition science is always evolving, therefore, registered dietitians continually review evidence and adapt recommendations as required. Dietitians New Zealand recommends an approach that works for the individual; is safe and realistic; and is based on foods shown by the best evidence to support health in the long-term. Registered dietitians are able to provide individualised dietary advice to suit your specific requirements. If you would find this helpful, you can find a registered dietitian near you [here](#).