

Do low-carb diets damage the kidneys?

31 May 2012

Low-carbohydrate, high-protein diets-like the Atkins diet-have been popular among dieters for years. For just as long, experts have worried that such diets might be harmful to the kidneys. A study appearing in an upcoming issue of the *Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology* (CJASN) looks into these safety concerns.

Allon Friedman, MD, (Indiana University School of Medicine) and his colleagues compared the effects of a low-carbohydrate, high-protein diet versus a standard low-fat diet on a variety of kidney-related measures in 307 obese individuals without kidney disease over a two year period.

The researchers found that a low-carbohydrate high-protein weight loss diet did not cause noticeably harmful effects to patients' kidney function or their fluid and electrolyte balance compared with a low-fat diet. "These results are relevant to the millions of healthy obese adults who use dieting as a weight loss strategy," said Dr. Friedman.

The authors noted that further follow-up is needed to determine even longer-term effects of the diet on the kidneys. Additional studies should also evaluate the effects of the [diet](#) in different types of individuals, such as those with chronic kidney disease, diabetes, or hypertension, and those at increased risk of developing [kidney](#) stones.

More information: The article, entitled "Comparative Effects of Low-Carbohydrate High-Protein Versus Low-Fat Diets on Kidney Function," will appear online on May 31, 2012, [doi: 10.2215/CJN.11741111](#)

Provided by American Society of Nephrology

APA citation: Do low-carb diets damage the kidneys? (2012, May 31) retrieved 14 September 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-05-low-carb-diets-kidneys.html>

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