

RANDOM HOUSE  BOOKS



New Atkins for a New You

Dr Eric C Westman, Dr Stephen D Phinney
and Dr Jeff S Volek

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About the Book

New Atkins for a New You is an alternative to the original Atkins diet, which allows you to lose weight successfully and emerge with a healthier, firmer body. This new diet offers all the benefits of the original diet, including the freedom to eat luxuriously and feel completely satisfied, a metabolic boost giving you more energy and weight loss that never comes back, but it also has these enhanced benefits:

- More flexibility in what you eat
- Allows you to include carbohydrates in your diet
- Trains your body to burn fat for energy rather than banning fats altogether
- Includes more options for vegetarians, vegans and those who want to limit their meat intake

This breakthrough new diet provides all the benefits of the original Atkins diet in an improved, simplified form that can be tailored to your individual needs and sustained for the rest of your life.

About the Authors

Dr Eric C. Westman is the Director of the Lifestyle Medicine Clinic at Duke University. He is an expert in low carb diets, diabetes and obesity, and insulin resistance.

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Dr Jeff S. Volek is an Associate Professor of Kinesiology at the University of Connecticut. He is an expert on low carb diets, exercise and nutrition, weight loss and dieting, and dietary supplements.

The late Dr Robert C Atkins established the nutritional principles that remain the core of the Atkins Diet. This innovative thinker worked tirelessly to help people understand how to improve their health by implementing these principles. With every passing year, independent research continues to confirm the wisdom of his ideas. We are proud to carry on Dr Atkins's legacy as we explore new frontiers in the low-carbohydrate dietary approach.

NEW
ATKINS
**FOR A NEW
YOU**

**The ULTIMATE DIET for SHEDDING WEIGHT
and FEELING GREAT**

Drs Eric Westman,
Stephen Phinney
and Jeff Volek

Vermilion
LONDON

Foreword

That which seems the height of absurdity in one generation often becomes the height of wisdom in another.

—*John Stuart Mill*

WHEN DOES A treatment once considered alternative become mainstream? Is it when thousands of overweight people shrink themselves and improve their diabetes control with a low-carbohydrate way of eating? Does it require years of an obesity epidemic in the setting of a lifestyle increasingly reliant on high-carbohydrate and processed foods? Possibly, but for physicians deciding whether to recommend a low-carbohydrate diet instead of a low-fat diet to their patients, it comes down to one thing: *science*.

Books, newspaper articles and websites are wonderful ways to share new information; however, the ultimate way to change minds on a large scale is to do research. When study after study shows the same startling proof, physicians start to realise that what they previously regarded as unjustified is now scientifically verified.

In my work as a paediatric neurologist at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland, in the US, caring for children with uncontrolled seizures, I have had the pleasure of witnessing a similar revolution in thinking over the past fifteen years. The ketogenic diet, similar to a low-carbohydrate diet, was created in 1921 as a treatment for epilepsy. Before the 1990s, even at major teaching

hospitals in the United States, this dietary approach was often discarded as 'voodoo', unpalatable and less effective than medications. Today, it is a widely used and universally accepted treatment worldwide. Scepticism is now rare, and almost all doctors acknowledge the effectiveness of the ketogenic diet. How did the perception of this treatment undergo such a radical change in just a decade and a half? Was it lectures at national meetings, parent support groups or television coverage? They all certainly helped, but, again and even more important, research and hard scientific proof transformed disbelievers into advocates.

In *New Atkins for a New You*, you will discover how in the same time frame science has similarly transformed the Atkins Diet from what was once considered a 'fad' into an established, medically validated, safe and effective treatment. This book also offers a wealth of new advice and insights into doing the Atkins Diet correctly, including numerous simplifications, making it easier for people everywhere to achieve the benefits of a low-carbohydrate lifestyle than ever before. As you will soon see, the volume you hold in your hands is far more than a typical how-to diet book. Not only have Dr Eric C Westman, Dr Jeff S Volek and Dr Stephen D Phinney summarised the hundreds of research studies published in top medical journals, they have also authored many of them. In more than 150 articles these three international experts on the use of low-carbohydrate diets to combat obesity, high cholesterol and type-2 diabetes have led the way in repeatedly proving how a low-carbohydrate approach is superior to a low-fat one.

As a member of the Atkins Scientific Advisory Board, I have admired the work of these three clinician-scientists. It has been helpful to be able to call on each of them for their willing advice, and in a way now you can too, through this book. Their common-sense approach to starting and maintaining a low-carbohydrate diet is evident throughout the book, and their vast knowledge is especially evident in

[Part IV](#), 'A Diet for Life: The Science of Good Health'. I know that I will often refer my patients to this section.

I find it sad that Dr Robert C Atkins did not live to see his diet so strongly validated both in scientific research and in this new book, which so heavily bases its recommendations on that research. Many of his ideas, personal observations based on thousands of patients and philosophy, which appear in *Dr Atkins' Diet Revolution* and his other books, have been validated in this book with science to back them up. When the first edition of *Diet Revolution* was published in 1972, the low-carbohydrate concept was not one that doctors embraced, nor did they think that it would prevail. In Dr Atkins's lifetime his dietary approach was subject to scepticism and disbelief by much of the nutritional community. Perhaps there is no greater tribute to his memory than that this is typically no longer the case today.

I foresee exciting times ahead for the Atkins Diet. Already in my field of neurology, low-carbohydrate diets, researchers are studying its application for epilepsy in adults, as well as for Alzheimer's disease, autism, brain tumours and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). There is published evidence from Dr Westman and others that these diets help not only obesity and type-2 diabetes, but possibly even schizophrenia, polycystic ovarian disease, irritable bowel disease, narcolepsy and gastro-oesophageal reflux disease (GORD). Obviously, there is growing evidence that low-carbohydrate diets are good for more than just your waistline! I am also personally hopeful that the Atkins Diet will become an accepted tool to combat the growing worldwide epidemic of childhood obesity. With its new content and firm underpinning of research, *New Atkins for a New You* will also enable researchers to use it as a 'bible' to develop correct protocols in low-carbohydrate studies.

I urge you to use this book not only as a guide to a healthier lifestyle but also as a scientific reference for your

bookshelf. Friends and family may question why you are following the Atkins Diet, and even some doctors who have not read the latest research could discourage you from trying this approach. Although your personal results in your appearance and laboratory tests may change their minds within a few weeks, even before that, please let this book help you to enlighten them. Drs Phinney, Volek and Westman suggest at the beginning of [Chapter 11](#) that 'You may want to share these chapters with your healthcare professional'. I could not agree more. Be sure to also point out the more than a hundred references at the end.

So I ask again, when does a treatment believed to be 'fad' science turn into an accepted fact? When does one man's 'diet revolution' become the status quo for people committed to leading a healthier lifestyle? The answer is ... now. Enjoy all the advice, meal plans, recipes, success stories and - most important - science this book has to offer our generation and our children's generation.

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Introduction

WELCOME TO THE new Atkins.

You have a lot on your plate. Between holding down a job and/or raising a family and other activities, you're probably long on responsibilities and commitments and short on time. No doubt your to-do list grows with every passing day. So the last thing you need is a dietary approach that's complicated or time-consuming. Instead, you want an easy-to-follow way of eating that allows you to slim down quickly and stay there, address certain health problems and boost your energy.

Atkins is the programme you've been looking for.

Maybe you've heard about Atkins before. Maybe you've even tried it before. If so, this book will show you a whole new way to live the Atkins lifestyle that's easier and more effective than any previous book has offered. Welcome back. You'll love the updated Atkins.

Or perhaps you're new to the Atkins programme. Read on and find out why the Atkins lifestyle is the key to not just a slimmer body but also a healthier life. Not only is doing Atkins easier than ever, a growing number of researchers have recently conducted experiments aimed at better understanding how carbohydrate restriction impacts health. In the last few years more than fifty basic and applied studies have been published which, in addition to validating the safety and effectiveness of the Atkins Diet, also provide new insights into ways to optimise the Atkins lifestyle.

We'll tell you how the right foods will help you take charge of your weight, boost your energy and generally make you feel better. You'll learn everything that you need to know now and for a lifetime of weight control. You'll also come to understand that:

- Excess weight and poor health are two sides of the same coin.
- The quality of the food you eat affects your quality of life.
- Atkins is a way of eating for life, not a quickie weight-loss diet.
- Activity is the natural partner of a healthy diet.

Before telling you more about *New Atkins for a New You*, let's establish the logic of a low-carbohydrate lifestyle.

BEAT THE EPIDEMIC OF OBESITY

Here's a pop quiz for you. When eaten in large amounts, which macronutrient raises your blood levels of saturated fats and triglycerides: protein, fat or carbohydrate? You're probably tempted to answer *fat*. But the correct answer is *carbohydrate*. Second question: Which of the three *lowers* your HDL ('good') cholesterol? Again, the answer is carbohydrate.

In the last four decades the percentage of overweight American adults and children has ballooned, and the same is true in the UK. As Albert Einstein once remarked, 'Insanity is doing the same thing over and over, but expecting different results'. In this time frame the medical and nutritional establishment has told Americans and Brits to follow the Food Guide Pyramid, skimp on calories, avoid fat and focus on eating carbohydrate foods. We now consume less saturated fat than they did forty years ago but have replaced those calories - and added another 200 a day - with carbohydrates. Clearly something is seriously wrong with the way we eat.

So has the American and British population become thinner? Quite the contrary! Today, more than 65 per cent of American adults are overweight. Likewise, the prevalence of type-2 diabetes has skyrocketed. And the same trend can be seen in the UK. Are you a part of this statistical nightmare? Or are you at risk of becoming part of it? If so, this book provides the tools to escape that fate. But it's not just enough to read the words, you must also truly take responsibility for your health. Remodeling your eating habits – like making any major life change – takes commitment. But if you're truly ready to exchange your old habits for new ones, your reward will be the emergence of a slimmer, healthier, sexier, more energetic person – the new you!

New Atkins for a New You will make clear that doing Atkins isn't about eating only beef, bacon and butter. Rather, it's about finding how many carbohydrates you can tolerate and making good choices among carbohydrate-, protein- and fat-rich foods. In terms of carbohydrates, that means a wide array of vegetables and other whole foods. And if you choose not to eat meat or fish or any animal protein – whether for personal or other reasons – or to minimise their intake, you can still do Atkins.

CHANGE IS GOOD

In its almost forty-year evolution the Atkins Diet has seen a number of modifications reflecting emerging nutritional science. This book reflects the latest thinking on the diet and nutrition and introduces several significant changes including:

- A daily requirement of a substantial amount of high-fibre 'foundation vegetables'.
- An easy way to reduce or eliminate symptoms that sometimes accompany the initial conversion to a low-carb approach.

- Ways to smooth the transition from one phase to the next, ensuring the gradual and natural adoption of healthy, permanent eating habits.
- Detailed advice on how to maintain weight loss, including a choice of two paths in Phase 4: Lifetime Maintenance.
- The ability to customise the programme to individual needs, including variations for vegetarians and vegans.
- An understanding that we eat many of our meals outside the home with detailed suggestions on how to plan for them and what to eat on the road, in fast-food places or in different kinds of restaurants.

The book is full of other small but significant updates, again based on recent research. For example, we now know that consuming caffeine in moderation actually modestly assists fat burning. So your eight daily cups of fluid can include some coffee and other beverages in addition to water.

Simplicity, versatility and sustainability are essential for any dietary programme to succeed – long term. Atkins meets all three challenges.

1. **Simplicity.** Above all, the goal of this book is to make Atkins simple to do. In a nutshell, here it is: The key to slimming down and enhancing your health is to train your body to burn more fat. And the way to do that, quickly and effectively, is by cutting back on sugars and other refined carbohydrates and allowing fat – including your own body fat – to become your primary source of energy. (Before you know it, you'll understand why fat is your friend.) This book will give you all the tools you'll need to make this metabolic shift.
2. **Versatility.** Atkins now allows you to personalise the programme to your lifestyle and food preferences. If you've tried Atkins before and found it too difficult, too

restrictive, you'll be very pleasantly surprised with the updated approach. For example:

- You determine which phase to start in and when to move to the next phase.
- You can eat lean cuts of meat and poultry – or none at all, if you prefer.
- You can do Atkins and still honour your own culinary heritage.
- You choose when to begin a fitness programme and what activities to pursue.
- You select one of the two approaches to Lifetime Maintenance that better suits your needs.

3. **Sustainability.** Atkins doesn't just help you shed weight and leave you there. We know – as you do – that the problem with every weight-loss programme is keeping the weight off for the long term. Understanding the power of fat burning is equally essential to lifetime weight maintenance. Importantly, the fourphase programme trains you to gauge your personal tolerance for carbohydrates, so that you can tailor a programme that not only fits you to a T but also enables you to permanently banish excess weight and maintain improved health indicators. And once you find a way of eating that you can live with, yo-yo dieting will be a thing of the past.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Four sections allow you to get started on the programme quickly, complete with lists of acceptable foods and meal plans, plus provide a grounding in nutrition and the scientific foundations of the Atkins approach.

- [Part I](#) covers the basics of nutrition, looking at carbohydrates, protein and fats, and explains how and

why Atkins works. We'll introduce the four phases that form the continuum of the Atkins Diet:

- Phase 1: Induction
- Phase 2: Ongoing Weight Loss (OWL)
- Phase 3: Pre-Maintenance
- Phase 4: Lifetime Maintenance

You'll also learn all about 'Net Carbs' and how to count them. (For brevity, we'll often refer to carbohydrates as carbs.) Once you understand these basics and commit yourself to concentrating on whole foods, you'll find it easier than ever to slim down and shape up. You'll also learn how the wrong foods - think of those made with sugar and refined grains - keep you overweight, tired and sluggish and increase your risk for health problems.

- [Part II](#) tells you how to do Atkins on a day-to-day basis and transition easily from one phase to the next. We'll guide you through the process of exploring the amounts and types of food that are right for you, with extensive lists of acceptable foods for each phase, as you customise the programme to your needs. You'll find a wide variety of choices in the types of foods you can eat, whether dining in or eating out.
- [Part III](#) includes detailed meal plans, recipes for all phases of the diet and guides to eating out.
- [Part IV](#) is for those of you who want to learn how Atkins can improve cardiovascular risk factors, reverse metabolic syndrome (pre-diabetes) and manage diabetes. We'll give you the short course and provide lots of reference material in case you happen to love reading scientific journals or want to share these chapters with your physician.

Just as you can tailor Atkins to your needs, you can read this book as you wish. If you're eager to get started immediately, simply start with [Part II](#), but please circle

back later to learn how and why Atkins works. At the very least read the review sections at the end of the chapters in [Part I](#). As the ‘Success Stories’ sprinkled throughout the book make clear, until you understand the nutritional grounding of the Atkins Diet, it’s all too easy to regard it merely as a tool for quick weight loss – instead of a healthy and permanent lifestyle.

In [Part I](#) you’ll also make the acquaintance of the metabolic bully, which threatens your resolve to stay on the weight loss path, and its enemy – and your ally – the Atkins Edge. This powerful tool helps you slim down, without experiencing the hunger or cravings usually associated with weight loss. Other diets may come and go, but Atkins endures because it has always worked. As doctors, nutritionists and researchers, we’re committed to making Atkins simpler than ever. After all, the easier it is, the more likely you are to stick with it, and – bottom line – achieve success. We can assure you that Dr Robert C Atkins, who was a pioneer in low-carb nutrition, would approve of the science-based changes introduced in this book, particularly any that make the programme easier for you and enable you to keep excess weight off long term. The growing worldwide epidemics of obesity and diabetes mean that it’s not a moment too soon.

Stephen D Phinney, MD, PhD
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Part I

WHY IT WORKS:

It's All About Nutrition

Chapter 1

KNOW THYSELF

Any diet that skimps on natural fats is inherently unsatisfying, making it extremely difficult to sustain long term and almost certainly doomed to failure.

DID YOU ONCE delight in eating whatever you wanted without gaining a gram? Were you athletic in secondary school? Was your weight never a problem until after you got your first high-stress job, started your family or approached the menopause? Have you been diagnosed with high cholesterol, or are you at risk for type-2 diabetes? If you're reading this book and the answer to any of these questions is 'yes', it's a safe assumption that your days of carefree eating are long gone.

Or maybe you've spent a good part of your adult life on the diet merry-go-round. You hop on to lose some weight, then dismount as soon as you've lost it. When you regain the weight - as most of us inevitably do - you jump back on and so forth. You might have even done Atkins several years ago and banished that extra padding. But when you reverted to your habitual way of eating, the lost kilograms returned with a vengeance. Maybe you felt under the weather in the first week or two of Atkins, found the programme too restrictive or had some concerns about its healthfulness. Perhaps you simply got bored.

Since you're reading this book, we trust that you're giving Atkins a second chance. Thanks to some significant

changes, you'll find that the programme is now far easier to do. And new research makes it clear that Atkins is a healthy way to eat. It's one of the few low-carb diets subjected to extensive independent research. In studies that compared people following a low-calorie programme to those controlling their carbohydrates, the groups that reduced their carbs showed greater weight and fat loss, better compliance, the ability to keep weight off long term and higher satisfaction with food choices. We'll circle back to some of the research later in this chapter.

Another possibility is that you're a veteran of the low-fat approach that left you unsatisfied, hungry, testy and fantasising about forbidden feasts, before ultimately giving it up. Or you've spent the last decade or so sampling every diet craze that came on the shelves only to regain the weight – and perhaps even a little extra weight – for all your efforts.

Whether you're new to Atkins, have returned after wandering in the dietary wilderness or are a confirmed Atkins follower interested in recent modifications, you've come to the right place. Atkins has never been just about weight, so there's also a seat at the table for already slim folks who want to improve their physique, increase their energy, overcome health problems or simply feel better. Whatever your story, it's time to get off the diet merry-go-round and on to a permanent path to lifetime slimness, vitality and good health.

TIME TO TAKE CONTROL

Does this sound familiar? Each time you've tried a new weight-loss approach or renewed your commitment to stick with a programme, you experience euphoria and a sense of empowerment. And you probably enjoyed some initial good results. But then you didn't follow through, and soon you'd find yourself in a downwards spiral. You blamed yourself

for your weakness, lack of control and inability to defer the momentary pleasure of a piece of chocolate or a packet of crisps for the long-term goal of a trimmer, more attractive you. And as all too many of you may have already learnt, the challenges of losing weight pale compared to the real work of keeping it permanently at bay. The American humourist Erma Bombeck was on to something when she quipped, 'In two decades I've lost a total of 789 pounds. I should be hanging from a charm bracelet'. But when it comes to your health and your psyche, the cycle of losing, regaining, losing and so forth is no laughing matter. Nor are the guilt, shame and sense of failure that accompany it.

By the end of this chapter, you'll have met the metabolic bully that stands in the way of your losing weight and achieving optimal health. We'll also introduce you to the Atkins Edge, the powerful tool that distinguishes Atkins from other diets and lets you outsmart the bully. The Atkins Edge converts your body to a fat-burning machine. Yes, we're talking about using your spare tyre, beer belly, thunder thighs, heroic hips, jiggling bum or wherever your fat deposits have landed as your primary energy source. Just as important, the process of literally restoring your body to its best shape will not only make you feel good about your body and proud of your resolve, you'll almost surely find that the sense of empowerment and confidence spills over into your personal and professional life. Feeling powerful is an aphrodisiac, so don't be surprised to find that your sex life also revives!

IS ATKINS FOR YOU?

To help you decide whether Atkins can help you slim down – and stay there – and address any health issues, consider the following questions.

ARE YOU HAPPY WITH YOUR WEIGHT? If so, congratulations! But even if you're content with your

appearance, you may find it an effort to maintain your weight, or you may have health problems that could be alleviated by changing your diet. Or perhaps you want to reconfigure your body by trading fat for muscle, as Atkins can do, especially if you also embark on a training programme. Bottom line: Atkins is an effective and sustainable way to shed weight – quickly and safely.

WHAT ARE YOUR WEIGHT-LOSS GOALS? If you have just a few pesky kilograms to lose, you can probably take them off in a month or so. Some people lose up to 7 kilograms (15 pounds) in the first two weeks on Atkins. Countless individuals have lost more than 45 kilograms (7 stones) – and you could, too. You’ll meet some of them in this book and can read more of their success stories on www.atkins.com. Naturally, individual results vary considerably, depending upon age, gender, activity level, metabolic resistance and other factors, plus – of course – how carefully you follow our instructions. Bottom line: You can lose a little or a lot on Atkins.

DO YOU HAVE OTHER HEALTH ISSUES YOU WANT TO CORRECT OR HEAD OFF? Individual results vary, but generally, if you go easy on carbs and focus on vegetables and other whole food carbs, you’ll almost surely find that your triglycerides diminish, your ‘good’ cholesterol rises and your markers of inflammation improve. If you have high blood pressure, you should see your numbers drop. Those with elevated blood sugar and insulin levels will also see improvement. Most Atkins followers who once had to take medications and/or insulin for type-2 diabetes to control their blood sugar or diuretics to counteract fluid retention have been able, with their doctor’s help, to reduce their dosage and even stop taking the drugs once they’ve adapted to the Atkins programme. Atkins also addresses other health issues such as insulin resistance

and metabolic syndrome.^{1 2 3 4} Controlling carbs is also a time-tested and viable treatment for epilepsy.⁵ Bottom line: Atkins is a healthy diet and, for those with medical problems, is also a corrective diet that can significantly reduce the risks for disease.

WERE YOU SUCCESSFUL SHORT TERM BUT NOT LONG TERM ON OTHER DIETS? Any diet that's not sustainable is almost certainly doomed to failure. About 95 per cent of people who lose weight regain it - usually within a few years.⁶ The point is that once you've slimmed down, raw willpower alone is not enough for you to succeed in the long term. You also need an ally, and this is where the Atkins Edge comes in. Numerous studies show better maintenance of weight loss after one and two years with Atkins compared to low-fat diets.⁷ Bottom line: On Atkins, you lose the weight and can then maintain that loss, making it a diet for life.

ARE YOU UNABLE TO LOSE WEIGHT OR MAINTAIN WEIGHT LOSS BY COUNTING CALORIES AND AVOIDING FAT? A diet that skimps on natural fats is inherently unsatisfying, making it extremely difficult to sustain long term, as is a calorie-restricted diet that leaves you perpetually hungry. Atkins, on the other hand, allows you to eat many delicious foods that contain healthy fats. In fact, research shows that when people on Atkins eat as much as they want, most end up naturally eating a suitable number of calories.⁸ Bottom line: On Atkins, there's no need to skimp on fats or count calories.

ARE YOU ALWAYS HUNGRY OR PLAGUED BY CRAVINGS ON OTHER DIETS? A low-fat diet is almost always a high-carb diet, which quickly converts to glucose in your bloodstream, especially in the case of low-quality carbs. The result is a roller coaster of blood sugar highs

and lows that zap your energy and leave you craving another 'fix' of quickly metabolised carbs a few hours after a meal. Bottom line: Eating the Atkins way (which includes two snacks a day) means you need never go hungry.

ARE YOUR FAVOURITE FOODS DOUGHNUTS, SWEETS, CHIPS, CRISPS AND OTHER HIGH-CARB FOODS? The more of these foods you eat, the more you crave, setting up a vicious cycle of overeating foods that don't sustain your energy and have little nutritional value. A high-carb snack merely repeats the cycle. Bottom line: Eliminating sugars, refined carbs and other high-carb foods from your diet allows you to get off the blood sugar roller coaster.

DO YOU GAIN WEIGHT EASILY EVEN THOUGH YOU DON'T OVEREAT? It's a sad fact that some people put on weight more easily and lose weight more slowly than others.⁹ However, if you can't drop excess weight when you're truly not overeating, this may be an indication that your body doesn't tolerate carbs well, which can be a precursor of type-2 diabetes. Controlling your carb intake nips the problem in the bud. Bottom line: Doing Atkins allows your body to bypass problems handling carbohydrates.

WERE YOU INITIALLY SUCCESSFUL ON ATKINS IN THE PAST BUT REGAINED WEIGHT? If you regained weight after losing it, you'll learn how to refine the lessons you learnt about weight loss and apply them to the bigger challenge of slimming down for good. Bottom line: Atkins focuses on weight maintenance from day 1.

DID YOU GET HUNG UP ON INDUCTION AND DIDN'T MOVE THROUGH THE OTHER PHASES? All too many people confuse Induction, the first phase that kick-starts

weight loss, for the entire Atkins programme. Remaining in Induction may produce quick weight loss, but it doesn't teach you how to achieve permanent weight control. You may also become bored with the food choices, which could diminish your commitment to stay with Atkins. Bottom line: This time you can be comfortable exploring the range of foods that will enable you to keep losing weight – and ultimately maintain your new weight.

HAVE YOU TRIED ATKINS BEFORE BUT DROPPED OUT BEFORE LOSING MUCH WEIGHT? If you found the programme too restrictive, you'll be pleased to know that it's now far more flexible. For example, you can now enjoy a satisfying variety of vegetables from the beginning. You'll also learn how to dine out easily and safely – on any cuisine. If you felt the food was too expensive, we'll help you avoid overeating protein and provide you with a list of meat cuts that won't break your budget. Bottom line: Anyone can do Atkins anywhere, and that includes vegetarians and vegans.

THIS TIME WILL BE DIFFERENT

If you're a veteran of the weight-loss wars, we can promise you that you're in for a surprise: this time will be different. But first of all you must understand that shedding weight and getting healthy isn't just a matter of willpower. There are biological reasons why you feel hungry – or not. Earlier in this chapter we mentioned the metabolic bully, which undermines your determination and tries to derail your efforts at weight loss. Because the glucose from carbohydrates must always be tapped first as a source of energy, there's rarely any need to access your body fat if you eat a typical carb-heavy diet. So eating lots of carbohydrates acts as a metabolic bully: it blocks your body from burning its own fat, just like a playground bully who keeps other kids from using the swings.

But don't despair. You now have access to a valuable tool that will allow you to burn your own body fat for energy and keep hunger at bay. When you cut back on carbs sufficiently, your body transitions to a primarily fat-burning metabolism, forcing the bully to step aside. The messages your body transmits to your brain will change dramatically. Instead of hearing, 'I'm tired and hungry. Feed me sweet, starchy foods this minute', that nagging voice will be blissfully silent. You'll actually find that you can go for several hours without even thinking about food.

Scientists refer to it as a fat-burning metabolism, but we call this ally the Atkins Edge. It enables you to stop the metabolic bully in its tracks so you lose fat weight without experiencing undue hunger, cravings, energy depletion or any sense of deprivation. When you burn fat for energy all day (and all night), your blood sugar remains on a relatively even keel. Without question, the Atkins Edge makes it easier to stay the course and succeed in meeting your goals. Now that you know that eating too much sugar and other refined carbohydrates stands in the way of losing weight and restoring your energy, we ask again, is Atkins for you? Perhaps the more logical question is: Why wouldn't Atkins be right for you?

NO CARBS, NOT!

The most persistent misconception about Atkins is that it's a no-carb diet. From the first printing of *Dr Atkins' Diet Revolution* in 1972 onwards, the advice has always been to limit – not eliminate – carbs. In fact, this first version of the programme included salads from day 1. Over the years, the number and amount of vegetables permissible in Phase 1 has increased significantly, in large part because of a better understanding of the benign role of fibre in carbs. Atkins is actually about ultimately discovering

which whole foods, including vegetables, fruits, nuts, pulses and whole grains – all of which contain carbohydrates – you’re able to eat without interfering with weight loss, weight maintenance or metabolic health. Finding out how much fibre-rich carbohydrate you can eat while still maintaining your Atkins Edge is key to your long-term success.

GROUNDED IN RESEARCH

Now that you realise the power of the Atkins Diet, let’s take a brief look at some of the recent research that has evaluated its safety and efficacy. This newer research builds upon older information on carbohydrate-restricted diets, including the use of low-carbohydrate diets by a variety of Aboriginal hunting cultures that persisted for thousands of years. In the last decade a multitude of studies on restricted carbohydrate intake has dramatically changed the research landscape. Among these are seven studies lasting from six months to two years, usually comparing the Atkins Diet to other common weight-loss strategies.¹⁰ In terms of total weight loss, in each case individuals on Atkins did at least as well as – and usually better than – than those on other diets, despite the fact that they could consume as many calories as they wanted to as long as they stayed within the carb guidelines.

Moreover, risk factors such as high blood triglycerides, low HDL cholesterol levels and elevated blood pressure consistently showed improvement with carbohydrate restriction. Whether over months or years, the various parameters were as good, and in most cases better, with the Atkins Diet. In no case did Atkins worsen any important parameter. It’s worth mentioning that in each of these seven studies, the subjects received varying degrees of ongoing dietary support after the first few weeks or months. And they didn’t select the diet that appealed to