

80 Grams – A Day in the Low Carb Life



There is no number set in stone that tells you how many grams of carbs you can eat per day before you begin to gain weight. It all depends on your body; your height, weight, activity level and metabolic rate. Everyone wants a number, but you can't have one. For each of us that number is unique.

I will tell you this though. Over the past few years I have come to know that the average human, (male or female) can usually consume, on average, about 80 grams of carbs per day and stay in a safe zone.

Some people are fanatic and get off on keeping the number as low as possible. Nothing "carby" passes by their lips. To them I say... Bravo.

Other people find that lifestyle too restrictive and without room to maneuver.

I'm somewhere in the middle.

What I thought I'd do today is lay out what an average day of eating and carb count looks like for me NOW and what it looked like in the 'old days' (before I developed Plan Z, the diet by

Zola). There are some startling differences I think you'll be interested in and then you can do a similar analysis on your own consumption choices.

So here's an example of my morning. I love full fat Greek yogurt. I find it keeps me full all morning and gives me an opportunity to eat a meal that looks more like dessert than breakfast. I take out a bowl and put in a cup of PLAIN yogurt. I sweeten it with about a $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp of stevia and a tsp of vanilla. Stir that up and you now have sweetened yogurt without all the sugar you find in all those crazy flavors you find on the grocery shelves. Top that off with a handful of berries. I use a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of raspberries on most occasions but I do switch it up too. Then I toss on a $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of nuts. Most of the time I used roasted peanuts. I'm not a nut purist and I like the saltiness of the nuts in contrast to the sweetness of the yogurt. Ice water is my drink. I drink a lot of water. Over 100 ounces a day.

Let's tally that up. In terms of grams of carbs I'm at 18 grams. Now, in the 'old days' I would not have been counting carbs. I would have been totally obsessed with calories instead. I NEVER would have chosen this kind of breakfast. I'd have seen it as too caloric at 443 calories. I'd have had a heart attack! And besides it is not low fat. I thought everything had to be low fat.

In the 'old days' my breakfast would have been a half of a large banana, and a small glass of skim milk. My attitude was always to save my calories for later in the day. So my breakfast would come in at 207 calories.

Now look at the carbs. My old breakfast had 43 grams of carbs compared to the 18 I eat now. That's startling! Look at how little food I ate and where the carb count came out. Every

nutritionist told me to drink skim milk for my bones and that the banana was a good potassium choice. No account was made for the carb count.

Now, let's look at lunch.

I used to consider lunch an interruption in my schedule. I'd rather drive around running errands at lunch and just chow down on something simple that could carry me over to my favorite meal. Dinner.

Power bars were a grab and go. The power bar had 247 calories and it was easy to eat and drive while I munched on it. One red traffic light and lunch was done. I could handle a 247 calorie lunch without too much guilt. Sometimes I'd drink one of those canned diet drinks. The carb count on that power bar? 47! A whopping 47!

Let's look at a typical lunch for me now. My attitude has changed. I run my errands at a different time and I take time to get out of my office and go eat a civilized lunch.

Let's say I order an 8 ounce burger with no bun. I have a slice of cheese on my burger and even a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of sautéed mushrooms. It comes with lettuce and a tomato slice. I might cut loose and splurge and let them bring the fries. I know. Fries are high carb and the purists would avoid them. Instead, I have trained myself to eat 4 full-sized fries and let the rest go. Sometimes I even ask the waitress to tell the kitchen I just want a few fries so they are not wasted on me, and can go to someone else, but usually the kitchen doesn't 'get it' and they give me the basic, huge pile of fries. The waitress ends up carrying most of them away later.

So let's tally that up. The fries give me 8 – 10 grams of carbs. The burger with all the fixins comes in about 2 grams. So my

total lunch is 12 grams of carbs. The calories count is 586. Oh horrors! That would have been my 'old days' reaction. I'd never eat that much at a weekday lunch! I can't risk that, would be my attitude. I might gain weight!

And, on to dinner. Dinner is when I relax and review my day. I start off by watching the news so I can catch up on national and local happenings. I might have a glass of wine while I do that. If I am a tad hungry I might munch on some nuts. Walnuts and pecans are my favorites. They help in cancer prevention too.

I'm a food writer, so my dinner might be more complex than what I am going to lay out here but if I have just a simple meal this is what it might look like. I am doing it this way because my description will be easier to relate to if you're not a complicated cook.

8 ounces of chicken breast, roasted. I might also roast some broccoli and have a cup of that. I will, of course make some yummy cheese sauce to drizzle over my broccoli. I'll have more wine and call it a dinner. Grams of carbs? 22. Calories? 650.

In the 'old days' my husband was traveling a lot, so my dinner was pretty standard. I hated cooking for myself so I would make it really easy. I'd have frozen diet macaroni and cheese that I'd microwave or I'd have a baked potato. I'd microwave that too. And of course I'd use the skinniest diet margarine I could find. Diet macaroni and cheese is 265 calories and 39 grams of carbs. To keep it even, let's say I had wine with that too.

So let's tally up my day of eating now and my day of eating in the 'old days'.

My day of food now adds up to 1797 calories. 59 grams of carbs. I ate all that food and I'm still under 80 grams.

My 'old day' of food added up to 929 calories and 137 grams of carbs.

I'm eating 93% more calories. 43% fewer carbs.

Every nutritionist, diet expert, doctor and guru (even eating psychologists) could not understand how I could gain weight on 929 calories. (Truth be told, most nights I didn't have wine so my calorie count was actually just over 700 calories per day). I worked out with a trainer 3 days a week, so it wasn't that my activity level was too low. All weekend I was out in my garden or on the golf course too. So what was it?

Well, they never figured it out. I just kept getting fatter and everyone threw up their arms. I must be cheating they'd say. I even had them hypnotize me to prove that theory was wrong. I ate like a mouse and just kept getting fatter.

Now I eat almost twice the calories, live a fully food-satisfied life and I don't gain an ounce. Draw your own conclusions. For my money, I'd say I figured it out. And you can too.

Enjoy!

Cheers,