

LOSING WEIGHT FAQ

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- [Can I lose weight by avoiding all fat?](#)
- [Isn't it a good idea to avoid as much fat as I can, aiming for zero fat in my diet?](#)
- [But isn't fat a less desirable nutrient than other foods?](#)
- [Will eating EFAs help me lose weight?](#)
- [Eating carbohydrates will help me lose weight, because carbohydrates burn fat, right?](#)



Can I lose weight by avoiding all fat?

The way to lose weight is to eat fewer calories and exercise more. If you substitute calories from fat with *more* calories from carbohydrate or protein (as many people do), you will transform the extra calories into saturated fat. Ironically, you may find yourself gaining weight. Healthy weight loss can be accomplished by replacing most SFAs, MUFAs, and high-calorie processed foods with natural foods low in calories, high in EFAs, and high in fiber. Such foods will fill you up and provide balanced nutrition.

Isn't it a good idea to avoid as much fat as I can, aiming for zero fat in my diet?

No. The body needs Essential Fatty Acids (EFAs). Eating a zero fat diet will make you deficient in EFAs. Before going on a very low fat diet for a long time (more than one month), you should have a blood test done, to determine whether or not you have enough EFAs in your body. If you do not, you need to eat EFA supplements.

But isn't fat a less desirable nutrient than other foods?

No. Research has shown that you can eat all types of natural fat, as long as you maintain ideal weight, eat a balanced diet, and eat enough essential fats. Contrary to popular belief, whole grain cereals, breads and pasta are not necessarily more healthful than high fat foods. High-fat *natural* foods such as soybeans or eggs (which are high in nutrients and EFs) are more nutritious than processed low fat breads, pastas, and cereals (low in nutrients and essential fats).

Will eating EFAs help me lose weight?

No. Although some authors write that certain essential fats (such as one called GLA) make people lose weight, EFAs *are* fats and have nine calories per gram. EFAs could make you gain weight, just like any other source of concentrated calories, if you eat more calories than you need.

However, deficiencies of EFAs may trigger the "hunger" mechanism, whereas correcting EFA abnormalities may produce satiety, which will help with weight maintenance.

Eating carbohydrates will help me lose weight, because carbohydrates burn fat, right?

No. The body needs only about 100 grams of carbohydrates per day to burn fat.

Eating more carbohydrates will not help you burn more fat. It will give your body more calories to use as energy, but will not satisfy any additional nutritional requirements. And beware: all calories, whether from carbohydrates or other sources, must either be *used as energy* or *stored as fat*. Eating more calories than you need, even if these calories are "fat free," will make you gain weight.



Portions of this section have been excerpted from the book "[EFAs in Health and Disease](#)" (how to order, table of contents, references, notes, excerpts).

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