

Bananas: A Perfect Choice for Dieters

Position Statement on Low-Carbohydrate Diets

Introduction

The rise in popularity of diets based on the intake of low-carbohydrate foods has left some consumers questioning whether they should continue to include bananas in their diet. The key to healthy weight loss is getting all the nutrients you need while reducing your calorie intake. Dieters need to get the biggest bang for the buck by eating foods that are full of nutrients but not high in calories. *As a nutrient-dense and fat-free food, bananas are a perfect choice for dieters!*

There are two simple truths to healthy dieting:

- First, weight loss requires consuming fewer calories than what the body burns for energy, thus forcing the body to burn stored fat for energy. Calories come from multiple sources, not just from carbohydrates, including refined sugars, but also from fat and protein. In fact, fat contains more calories (9 calories per gram) than either carbohydrate or protein (4 calories per gram each).
- Second, even when reducing calorie intake, the body still needs energy and nutrients to function properly.

The smart approach for dieters is to choose foods and portion sizes that reduce overall calorie consumption while still providing the body with its energy and nutrition requirements. In addition, dieters should exercise regularly to burn up excess calories or fat while strengthening muscle and the cardiovascular system. Bananas are a great food choice for this sensible diet approach.

Bananas provide both energy and nutrition without fat

Bananas are ideal for people looking to lose or maintain weight through sound nutrition, while also giving the body sustenance for daily strength and fitness. Bananas offer the body carbohydrates – its main source of energy – and provide a good source of vitamin C, vitamin B6, potassium and dietary fiber. This amazing package of natural energy, minerals, vitamins, fiber and phytonutrients is also fat-free!

- ***Carbohydrates supply fuel for the body***
A single medium-size, ripe banana contains 29 grams of carbohydrate. Carbohydrates provide fuel for muscle and central nervous system activity and help the body efficiently use nutrients for good health. From these carbohydrates, the banana contains a mixture of simple sugars, starch and dietary fiber. This carbohydrate combination provides the body with both a quick boost and a sustained release of energy over a period of time, which helps to improve endurance and concentration during physical activity.

Proponents of some low-carbohydrate diets assert that bananas should be avoided during the “induction” phase of the diet program due to their carbohydrate content. Not only does this approach deprive the body of its preferred source of energy from a fat-free food, but it also robs the body of a food that contains several beneficial nutrients with no fat, sodium or cholesterol.

- ***Dietary fiber is useful for weight management***
One banana has 16 percent of the daily reference value of dietary fiber. Fiber-containing foods tend to produce a feeling of fullness in the stomach, thus helping you control the quantity of food you eat. Also, soluble fiber slows digestion and absorption of carbohydrates, which leads to a more steady release of natural energy. *No wonder why the fiber-containing, nutrient dense, fat-free banana is so popular for those people with active lifestyles and, in particular, those involved in sports!* Fiber can also help with constipation, hemorrhoids and diverticular disease.
- ***Vitamin C helps the body heal***
One banana has 15 percent of the reference daily intake of vitamin C. Vitamin C helps the body to heal and defend against infections and in the absorption of iron, synthesis of connective tissue and blood formation.
- ***Vitamin B6 supports the immune system***
One banana has 20 percent of the reference daily intake of vitamin B6, which is significant in the synthesis of antibodies in the immune system. It also helps in protein metabolism, red blood cell formation and functioning of the central nervous system.
- ***Potassium is essential for building muscles***
One banana has 11 percent of the daily reference value of potassium, which helps the body to maintain fluid balance in blood and tissue cells. Potassium is also an essential mineral for protein synthesis and the building of muscle because it stimulates nerve impulses for muscle contraction.

Bananas reduce the risk of several diseases

Certain nutrients present in bananas, when eaten as part of a diet low in fat, saturated fat and cholesterol, may reduce the risk of several diseases, including high blood pressure and stroke, some types of cancer and heart disease.

- ***High blood pressure and stroke***
Diets containing foods that are good sources of potassium and low in sodium may reduce the risk of high blood pressure and stroke. *Bananas are a good source of potassium and are a sodium-free food.*

- ***Some types of cancer***

Low-fat diets rich in fiber-containing fruits, vegetables, and grain products may reduce the risk of some types of cancer, a disease affected by many factors.

Bananas are fat-free and are a good source of fiber and vitamin C.

- ***Heart disease***

Development of heart disease depends on many factors. Eating a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol and high in fruits, vegetables, and grain products that contain fiber may lower blood cholesterol levels and reduce your risk of heart disease. *Bananas are naturally fat-free, saturated fat-free, are cholesterol-free, and are a good source of fiber.*

Bananas offer a balanced approach to sound nutrition

Experts agree that a balanced diet is the key to a healthy lifestyle, and that carbohydrates are a necessary part of that balance. The elimination of entire food groups under some low-carbohydrate diet plan is not only unnecessary for weight loss, but it is also inconsistent with a balanced approach to sound nutrition, robbing the body of essential nutrients.

Dieters should eat bananas as part of a low-fat diet that includes five to nine servings of colorful fruits and vegetables every day in addition to regular physical activity as a complement to a nutritious diet. Such an approach is the best way to reach and maintain a healthy weight.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 banana (126g)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 110	Calories from Fat 0
%Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 0mg	0%
Potassium 400mg	11%
Total Carbohydrates 29g	10%
Dietary Fiber 4g	16%
Soluble Fiber 4g	
Sugars 21g	
Protein 1g	
Vitamin C 15% • Vitamin B ₆ 20%	
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	