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Six Months of a Vegan Low-Carbohydrate (“Eco-Atkins”) Diet Improves Cardiovascular Risk Factors and Body Weight in Hyperlipidemic Adults: A Randomized Controlled Trial

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20 **Contributions**

21
22 *Conception and design* - Jenkins, Wong, Kendall, Faulkner, Paul, Mukherjea, Krul, Singer

23
24 *Acquisition of data* - Jenkins, Wong, Kendall, Esfahani, Ng, Leong

25
26 *Analysis and interpretation of data* – Jenkins, Wong, Kendall, Vidgen

27
28 *Drafting of the manuscript* – Jenkins, Wong

29
30 *Critical revision of the manuscript for important intellectual content* – Jenkins, Wong, Kendall,

31
32 Esfahani, Ng, Leong, Faulkner, Vidgen, Paul, Mukherjea, Krul, Singer

33
34 *Statistical analysis* - Vidgen

35
36 *Obtaining funding* – Jenkins, Kendall, Wong

37
38 *Administrative, technical, or material support* – Wong, Kendall, Esfahani, Ng, Leong, Faulkner

39
40 *Supervision* – Jenkins, Kendall, Wong, Singer

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44 *No additional contributions* - Paul, Mukherjea, Krul

Abstract

Objective: Low-carbohydrate diets may be useful for weight loss. Diets high in vegetable proteins and oils may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease (CHD). The main objective was to determine the longer term effect of a diet that was both low-carbohydrate and plant-based on weight loss and LDL-C.

Design, Setting, Participants: A parallel design study of 39 overweight hyperlipidemic men and postmenopausal women conducted at a Canadian university-affiliated hospital nutrition research center from April 2005 to November 2006.

Intervention: Participants were advised to consume either a low-carbohydrate vegan diet or a high-carbohydrate lacto-ovo vegetarian diet for six-months after completing one-month metabolic (all foods provided) versions of these diets. The prescribed macronutrient intakes for the low- and high-carbohydrate diets were: 26% and 58% of energy from carbohydrate, 31% and 16% from protein and 43% and 25% from fat, respectively.

Primary Outcome: Change in body weight.

Results: Twenty-three participants (50% test, 68% control) completed the six-month ad libitum study. The approximate 4kg weight loss on the metabolic study was increased to -6.9kg on low-carbohydrate and -5.8kg on high-carbohydrate six-month ad libitum treatments (treatment difference [95% CI]: -1.1kg [-2.1, 0.0], $P=0.047$). The relative LDL-C and triglyceride reductions were also greater on the low-carbohydrate treatment (treatment difference [95% CI]: -0.49mmol/L [-0.70, -0.28], $P<0.001$ and -0.34mmol/L [-0.57, -0.11], $P=0.005$, respectively), as were the TC:HDL-C and apolipoprotein B:A1 ratios (-0.57 [-0.83, -0.32], $P<0.001$ and -0.05 [-0.09, -0.02], $P=0.003$, respectively).

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3 **Conclusions:** A self-selected low-carbohydrate vegan diet, containing increased protein and fat
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5 from gluten and soy products, nuts, and vegetable oils, had lipid lowering advantages over a
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7 high-carbohydrate, low-fat weight loss diet, thus improving heart disease risk factors.
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12 **Trial Registration:** clinicaltrials.gov (<http://www.clinicaltrials.gov/>), #NCT00256516
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Article Summary

Article Focus

- Low-carbohydrate diets may be useful for weight loss. Diets high in vegetable proteins and oils may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease (CHD).
- The objective of the randomized clinical trial was to determine the longer term effect of a diet that was both low-carbohydrate and plant-based on weight loss and LDL-C.
- We have already reported the effect of this dietary strategy in producing a difference of 8% in LDL-C reduction between calorie-restricted diets (60% of estimated calorie requirements) when all food was provided. We now report findings after these same participants continued on their respective diets for an additional 6 months, under self-selected conditions, in order to gain insights into the real life effectiveness of this diet.

Key Messages

- By comparison with the high-carbohydrate diet, consumption of the low-carbohydrate diet containing vegetable proteins and oils was also associated with significantly reduced concentrations of LDL-C. This LDL-C reduction has not been reported for other low-carbohydrate diet studies in which a large part of the protein and fat originated from animal sources and where increases in LDL-C were seen.
- The present study also demonstrated that consumption of a low-carbohydrate vegan diet resulted in modestly greater body weight reductions compared to a high-carbohydrate diet (7% versus 6% reductions, respectively) over a six-month ad libitum period.

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3 - The sustained reduction in LDL-C, associated with only a small incremental weight loss on
4 the 6-month self-selected diet, is a potentially important attribute of the diet in reducing long-
5 term CHD risk
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10 11 12 **Strengths and Limitations of this Study**

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15 The study weaknesses include the relatively small sample size and the high dropout rate.

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17 Nevertheless, high dropout rates have been reported in similar dietary studies and it is
18 noteworthy that attrition rates were low in the metabolic study when all food was provided [1].

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20 Food availability and preparation may therefore be important factors. For those who did
21 complete the study, however, there were benefits in weight loss and LDL-C reduction, an
22 additional 2% advantage in body weight reduction compared to the high-carbohydrate diet and a
23 13% drop in LDL-C for participants consuming a more plant-based low-carbohydrate diet.
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30 The study's strength is that the prescribed hypocaloric diet was self-selected, meaning the results
31 are more in line with what can be expected under free-living conditions. The breadth of
32 application of the plant-based low-carbohydrate diet, however, remains to be determined, but it
33 may provide an option for some individuals for whom LDL-C reduction is an equal concern to
34 weight loss. If low-carbohydrate dietary options become more generally available the number of
35 individuals who will benefit is likely to increase.
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Introduction

Many popular weight loss diets emphasize carbohydrate restriction (Atkins, Eddies, South Beach, Zone). Their success is determined by the level of compliance with the prescribed diets [2-7]. However, a high content of animal products, rich in saturated fat and cholesterol, may make conventional low-carbohydrate diets less appropriate for those with hypercholesterolemia [3 8]. Even during active weight loss, these high saturated fat diets, may raise serum LDL-C above baseline [3 8] and there is concern that if such diets continue to be eaten when weight loss has ceased, a more atherogenic blood lipid profile may result [9]. These concerns have prompted exploration of other weight loss strategies, but only modest reductions in LDL-C have been observed [10].

By contrast vegan diets significantly lower LDL-C [11]. Trials of vegan and vegetarian diets also reduce progression of coronary heart disease (CHD) [12] and improve diabetes control [13].

Plant food components such as vegetable proteins, vegetable oils, nuts and viscous fibers, reduce serum lipids in many studies [14-19] and may increase flow mediated vasodilatation [20-23].

Nuts, fiber and vegetarian diets in general, all reduce CHD and diabetes in cohort studies [24-29]. Finally, in cohort studies, low-carbohydrate diets, high in vegetable oils and proteins as opposed to animal products, reduce CHD events and diabetes incidence in women [30 31], while lower red meat intake reduces total, cardiovascular and cancer mortality [32]. Most recently a large randomized controlled trial confirmed the effect of nuts and increased vegetable oil (olive oil) intake in reducing cardiovascular events in the context of a Mediterranean diet [33].

In view of the apparent success of low-carbohydrate diets for weight loss and the demonstration that relatively high-carbohydrate vegetarian and vegan diets, and diets low in animal products, lower CHD risk factors [34-37], we designed a diet that combined both vegan and low-

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3 carbohydrate elements to determine whether such a diet captured both the weight loss and CHD
4 risk reduction advantages. We have already reported the effect of this dietary strategy in
5 producing a difference of 8% in LDL-C reduction between calorie-restricted diets (60% of
6 estimated calorie requirements) when all food was provided [1]. We now report findings after
7 these same participants continued on their respective diets for an additional 6 months, under self-
8 selected conditions, in order to gain insights into the real life effectiveness of this diet. The
9 results of the metabolic (all foods provided) study have been reported previously and had
10 demonstrated a CHD risk factor advantage, but with no greater weight loss than the control diet
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27 **Methods**

28 **Participants**

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30 Forty-seven overweight participants, recruited by newspaper advertisement and hospital clinic
31 notices, undertook the one-month metabolic first phase of the study (Figure 1) that has been
32 previously reported [1]. On completion of this phase, thirty-nine participants (19 control and 20
33 test participants) continued for an ad libitum six-month study (Table 1). The study was
34 conducted at a Canadian university-affiliated hospital nutrition research center from April 2005
35 to November 2006. All participants had high normal to raised LDL-C levels ($>3.4\text{mmol/L}$ at
36 diagnosis) and a body mass index $> 27\text{ kg/m}^2$. Details of the eligibility criteria have been
37 previously reported [1]. After recruitment, 11/39 participants discontinued lipid lowering
38 medications at least two weeks prior to starting and for the study duration (Table 1).
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55 **Study Protocol**

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3 The intervention was a randomized parallel study stratified by sex in which participants were
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5 randomized to either low- or high-carbohydrate, calorie-reduced diets. The first month was the
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7 previously reported metabolically controlled study [1]. For the following six-months, participants
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9 continued on the diet to which they had been assigned as a self-selected (ad libitum) diet.
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12 Anthropometric, blood pressure and blood lipid measurements were repeated at monthly
13
14 intervals. Insulin and HbA1c were measured at baseline and at the start and end of the ad libitum
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16 treatment. Percentage body fat was measured at baseline and end of the ad libitum treatment by
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18 bioelectrical impedance (Quantum II; RJL Systems, Clinton Township, Michigan). Seven-day
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20 diet and exercise histories were recorded in the week prior to each visit and discussed with the
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22 dietitian to enhance adherence. Alterations in exercise were allowed and recorded.
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26 The Ethics Committees of St. Michael's Hospital and the University of Toronto, and the
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28 Therapeutic Products Directorate of Health Canada approved the study. Written informed
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30 consent was obtained from the participants. The study's clinical trial registration number was
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32 #NCT00256516.
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36 37 38 **Diets**

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40 As with the previous metabolic study, participants were encouraged to eat only 60% of the
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42 estimated caloric requirements to maintain a stable body weight [38-40]. The prescribed test diet
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44 was a low-carbohydrate vegan diet containing 26% of calories from carbohydrate, 31% of
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46 calories from vegetable proteins and 43% from fat (primarily vegetable oils). The control, high-
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48 carbohydrate diet (58% carbohydrate, 16% protein and 25% fat) emphasized whole wheat
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50 cereals and cereal fiber. Details of the diets have been published previously [1]. Carbohydrate
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52 sources on the low-carbohydrate diet featured viscous fiber-containing foods (such as oats and
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3 barley) and low-starch vegetables (emphasizing okra and eggplant) for the relatively limited
4 amount of carbohydrate allowed. Participants were able to purchase at the research center the
5 “no” starch high protein nut bread and three of the seitan (wheat gluten) products used in the
6 study which were not available in Canada.
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12 Self-taring electronic scales (My Weigh Scales, Vancouver, BC or Tanita Corporation, Arlington
13 Heights, IL) were provided to all participants and they were instructed to weigh all food items
14 while recording the seven-day food diary in the week prior to clinic visits. Adherence was
15 assessed from the completed seven-day food records. Neither the dietitians nor participants could
16 be blinded, but equal emphasis was placed on the potential importance for health of both diets.
17 The analytical technicians were blinded to diet allocation, as was the statistician, up to analysis
18 of the primary outcome. Participants were offered no financial compensation for participation in
19 the study.
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34 **Analyses**

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36 The analytical techniques have been reported previously [1]. Serum was analyzed according to
37 the Lipid Research Clinics protocol in the J. Alick Little Lipid Research Laboratory [35] and
38 LDL-C (in mmol/L) was calculated by the method of Friedewald et al. [1]. The methods for
39 analyzing apolipoproteins A1 and B, high sensitivity C-reactive protein (hs-CRP), blood
40 glucose, insulin, HbA1c, and homeostasis model assessment – insulin resistance model (HOMA-
41 IR) have been described previously [1]. Exercise data were calculated as metabolic equivalents
42 (METs) [41]. The absolute 10-year CHD risk score was calculated using the Framingham risk
43 equation [42].
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3 Diets were assessed for macronutrients, fatty acids, cholesterol and fiber using a computer
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5 program based on the USDA database [43] and developed in our laboratory to allow the addition
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7 of the macronutrient content of study foods obtained from food labels or directly from food
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9 manufacturers.

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12 Adherence with the three principal cholesterol-lowering components [vegetable proteins (soy
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14 and gluten), nuts, and viscous fibers] of the low-carbohydrate diet was estimated from the 7-day
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16 food records by applying 33.3% adherence factor to the recorded intake for each of the three
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18 main components. The sum of the three components if consumed as prescribed would equal
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20 100% adherence.
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27 **Statistical Analyses**

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29 Results are expressed as means \pm SEM or 95% confidence intervals (CIs). Time zero was used as
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31 the baseline and refers to the pre-metabolic study baseline [1]. Treatment differences in physical
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33 and biochemical measures were assessed using all available data and a repeated measures mixed
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35 model accounting for time of assessment (SAS 9.2) [44] in the Tables (Table 2 and 3) and the
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37 Results. The response variable was change from baseline, with diet and week as fixed effects and
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39 subject ID nested in diet. There was no adjustment for baseline. Any participant who started the
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41 ad libitum treatment was included in the analysis (N=39).
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46 Multiple imputation (taking the mean of 5 sets of randomly imputed values) was used to present
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48 baseline and treatment values in the Tables (2 and 3) and Figures (2 and 3) by generating data for
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50 those who dropped out or had missing values [44].
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55 **Results**

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3 Compliance with the major dietary components [vegetable proteins (soy and gluten), nuts, and
4 viscous fibers] was 33.6% or one-third of that prescribed during the metabolic phase (Table 2).
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6 Saturated fat intakes were similar on both treatments whereas intake of monounsaturated fats,
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8 vegetable proteins, and soy protein were significantly higher on the low-carbohydrate diet (Table
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10 2). Available carbohydrate intake was significantly lower on the low-carbohydrate diet (Table 2).
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12 The dropout rate was 35% (7/20) on the low-carbohydrate and 26% (5/19) on the high-
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14 carbohydrate (Figure 1). Three participants were withdrawn by the study physician due to failure
15
16 to attain LDL-C targets on the low-carbohydrate diet (mean LDL-C = 5.24mmol/L) and one
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18 subject on the high-carbohydrate diet (LDL-C = 7.78mmol/L). Participants on the low-
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20 carbohydrate diet tended to have larger reductions in body weight over time (Figure 2). The
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22 weight loss from baseline to the end of the 6-month ad libitum treatment was -6.9kg [95% CI, -
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24 7.7, -6.1] on the low-carbohydrate and -5.8kg [95% CI, -6.6, -5.1] on the control diet with a
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26 significant difference between groups (treatment difference [95% CI]: -1.1kg [-2.1, 0.0];
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28 P=0.047) (Table 3). The final reduction in BMI was also greater on the low-carbohydrate versus
29
30 high-carbohydrate diet (treatment difference [95% CI]: -0.4kg/m² [-0.8, 0.0]; P=0.039) (Table 3).
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32 There was a relative increase in recorded exercise by the high-carbohydrate diet participants,
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34 whereas there was no relative change in the low-carbohydrate participants (treatment difference
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36 [95% CI]: -9.3 [-16.4, -2.2] METs; P=0.012), but this was not reflected in a greater weight loss
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38 (Table 3). There were no treatment differences in percent body fat, waist circumference or satiety
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40 (Table 3).
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53 Lipids

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3 At the end of the study, the reduction on the low-carbohydrate versus high-carbohydrate diet was
4 greater for LDL-C (treatment difference [95% CI]: -0.49mmol/L [-0.70, -0.28]; P<0.001, for TC
5 (-0.62mmol/L [-0.86, -0.37]; P<0.001, for TC:HDL-C -0.57 [-0.83, -0.32]; P<0.001, for LDL-
6 C:HDL-C (-0.42 [-0.60, -0.24]; P<0.001, and for triglycerides (-0.34mmol/L [-0.57, -0.11];
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8 P=0.005). No treatment difference was seen in HDL-C (Table 3). Values for LDL-C and the
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10 TC:HDL-C ratio were consistently lower in participants on the low-carbohydrate diet throughout
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12 the study while HDL-C values were not different from baseline (Figure 3 A-C).
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22 **Apolipoproteins**

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24 ApoB and the ApoB:A1 ratio were reduced more on the low- versus the high-carbohydrate diet
25 at the end of the study (treatment different [95% CI]: -0.11g/L [-0.16, -0.06]; P<0.001 and -0.05
26 [-0.09, -0.02]; P=0.003, respectively) (Table 3). No significant difference between the diets was
27
28 observed for ApoA1 concentrations. Figure 3D and 3F show that the low-carbohydrate diet
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30 resulted in lower apoB and ApoB:ApoA1 ratio relative to baseline over the course of the study.
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39 **C-Reactive Protein, HbA1c, Blood Glucose, Serum Insulin, Insulin Resistance and Blood** 40 **Pressure**

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42 Both treatments reduced hs-CRP with no difference between treatments (Table 3). HbA1c,
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44 fasting blood glucose, insulin, and insulin resistance (calculated using the HOMA model) fell
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46 similarly on both treatments during the course of the study (Table 3). Systolic and diastolic blood
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48 pressure decreased similarly with no treatment differences (Table 3).
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55 **Calculated CHD Risk**

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3 The low-carbohydrate diet significantly reduced the calculated 10-year CHD risk relative to the
4 high-carbohydrate diet (2% [-2, -1]; $P < 0.001$) (Table 3).
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10 **Adverse Events**

11 No serious adverse events or events that involved hospitalisation occurred during the study.
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17 **Discussion**

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19 The present study demonstrated that consumption of a low-carbohydrate vegan diet resulted in
20 modestly greater body weight reductions compared to a high-carbohydrate diet (7% versus 6%
21 reductions, respectively) over a six-month ad libitum period. These reductions were similar to
22 those reported for low-carbohydrate “Atkins-like” diets [2 3 6 10]. However by comparison with
23 the high-carbohydrate diet, consumption of the low-carbohydrate diet containing vegetable
24 proteins and oils was also associated with significantly reduced concentrations of LDL-C. This
25 LDL-C reduction has not been reported for other low-carbohydrate diet studies in which a large
26 part of the protein and fat originated from animal sources and where increases in LDL-C were
27 seen [2-6 8]. The sustained reduction in LDL-C, associated with only a small incremental weight
28 loss on the 6-month self-selected diet, is a potentially important attribute of the diet in reducing
29 long-term CHD risk [45 46]. Furthermore, as seen in the present study, a low-carbohydrate diet,
30 in which vegetable fat and protein options were encouraged, demonstrated a larger reduction in
31 the TC:HDL-C ratio than that reported at 6 months in weight loss studies employing either a
32 Mediterranean or a high-carbohydrate diet [10].
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52 The majority of studies undertaken to date have been 6 months to one year in duration [2-6 47]
53 with more recent studies of up to 2 years [2 8] and, as with the present study, a number of these
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3 studies had a high dropout rate [2 3 5 47]. However, the high dropout rate in the present study
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5 did not prevent identification of significant LDL-C and body weight differences in the intent-to-
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7 treat analysis (using all available data). The completer data therefore demonstrated an even larger
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9 treatment difference in LDL-C of -0.60mmol/L [-0.84, -0.36] favoring the test treatment
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11 (P<0.001). Those on the low-carbohydrate diet showed overall adherence to the major dietary
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13 components [vegetable proteins (soy and gluten), nuts, and viscous fibers] at 33.6% of that
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15 provided during the metabolic phase [1]. This adherence is similar to the 43.3% seen with the
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17 dietary portfolio in the comparison of the metabolic one month [35] and the ad libitum six
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19 month studies [48]. In this comparison also just under half the LDL-C reduction (13-14%) seen
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21 on the ad libitum compared to the metabolic study [35].
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27 The effect of low-carbohydrate diets on CHD events has not been assessed in randomized
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29 controlled trials. Nevertheless, low-carbohydrate diets high in vegetable proteins and oils have
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31 been associated with a 30% reduced CHD risk and an 18% reduced incidence of diabetes in
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33 cohort studies [30 31]. The median interquartile difference in these studies between the first and
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35 10th decile for vegetable protein and monounsaturated fat (MUFA) intakes, as a marker of
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37 increased vegetable oil consumption, was 1.4% and 9.3% expressed as a percentage of total
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39 caloric intake [30]. These figures compared to 8.2% and 4.6% in our studies as the relative
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41 increase from baseline on the Eco-Atkins diet compared to the control diet. The increases in
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43 MUFA were therefore seen in both studies. Recently a Spanish Mediterranean diet emphasizing
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45 increased nut or olive oil consumption, increasing monounsaturated fat intake by 2-3%, has been
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47 shown to significantly reduce cardiovascular events also by approximately 30% [33]. These data
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49 provide consistent support for the view that the Eco-Atkins approach would reduce CHD risk in
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51 the long term.
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3 The present diet, while lowering LDL-C by 9%, did not result in any significant depression of
4 HDL-C. Lowering LDL-C while maintaining HDL-C would be expected to reduce CHD risk [45
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8 46]. Similarly, reductions in ApoB and the ApoB:A1 ratio were also observed in the present
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10 study. These findings further support the potential CHD benefit that this weight loss diet may
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12 have [49-51]. It has also been claimed that apolipoproteins may be stronger predictors of CHD
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14 events than conventional lipid variables [52-54].

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17 In contrast to the metabolic study, the reductions in systolic and diastolic blood pressure were not
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19 significant between the diets. Similarly, hs-CRP was unchanged between treatments, however,
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21 the level was significantly reduced with the low-carbohydrate diet compared to baseline. Studies
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23 have shown that hs-CRP tended to be lowest on the diets containing the highest proportion of
24
25 carbohydrate [5]. Low glycemic index and low glycemic load diets have also been associated
26
27 with lower hs-CRP concentrations [55 56]. These advantages of the higher carbohydrate diet
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29 may have reduced any hs-CRP difference between the two diets in the present study.
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34 Soy-containing foods as well as nuts have cholesterol lowering effects [15 17 18 57 58] and may
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36 explain the present results on LDL-C. Viscous fiber in low starch vegetables and β -glucan in oats
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38 and barley may also contribute to the overall cholesterol lowering effect of the diet [9 14 45].
39
40 Furthermore, nuts and high fiber food consumption have been associated with lower body weight
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42 [59].
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46 The study weaknesses include the relatively small sample size and the high dropout rate.

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48 Nevertheless, high dropout rates have been reported in similar dietary studies and it is
49
50 noteworthy that attrition rates were low in the metabolic study when all food was provided [1].
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52 Food availability and preparation may therefore be important factors. For those who did
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54 complete the study, however, there were benefits in weight loss and LDL-C reduction, an
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3 additional 2% advantage in body weight reduction compared to the high-carbohydrate diet and a
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5 13% drop in LDL-C for participants consuming a more plant-based low-carbohydrate diet.
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8 The study's strength is that the prescribed hypocaloric diet was self-selected, meaning the results
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10 are more in line with what can be expected under free-living conditions. The breadth of
11
12 application of the plant-based low-carbohydrate diet, however, remains to be determined, but it
13
14 may provide an option for some individuals for whom LDL-C reduction is an equal concern to
15
16 weight loss. If low-carbohydrate dietary options become more generally available the number of
17
18 individuals who will benefit is likely to increase.
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22 We conclude that a weight-reducing diet which reduced carbohydrate in exchange for increased
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24 intakes of vegetable sources of protein, such as gluten, soy and nuts, together with vegetable oils
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26 offer an opportunity to improve both LDL-C and body weight, both being risk factors for CHD.
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29 Further human trials are warranted to evaluate low-carbohydrate diets, including more plant-
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31 based low-carbohydrate diets, on CHD risk factors and ultimately on CHD.
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For peer review only

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8 Figure 1: Patient Flow Diagram.
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12 Figure 2: Weight loss during the study on both diets.
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17 Figure 3: Mean (A) LDL-C, (B) HDL-C, (C) TC:HDL-C, (D) apolipoprotein B (apoB) and (E)
18 apolipoprotein A1 (apoA1), (F) ApoB:ApoA1 ratio between the two treatments.
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Table 1: Baseline Characteristics for Those Who Started the 6-Month Self-Selected Diets (n=39)

	High-carbohydrate (n=19)	Low-Carbohydrate (n=20)
Age (y)	55.3 ± 1.8	57.6 ± 1.4
Males/Females	6/13	9/11
Body Weight, kg	85.4 [79.3, 91.6]	83.7 [78.5, 89.0]
Body Mass Index, kg/m ²	31.1 [29.9, 32.4]	31.1 [29.8, 32.4]
Blood Pressure, mm Hg		
Systolic	122 [116, 128]	128 [123, 132]
Diastolic	75 [72, 79]	77 [74, 80]
Cholesterol, mmol/L		
Total	6.75 [6.28, 7.21]	6.76 [6.21, 7.31]
LDL-C	4.40 [3.99, 4.82]	4.53 [4.14, 4.93]
HDL-C	1.36 [1.22, 1.50]	1.21 [1.06, 1.36]
Triglycerides, mmol/L	2.16 [1.62, 2.70]	2.23 [1.65, 2.80]
Ratios		
TC:HDL-C	5.17 [4.54, 5.80]	5.81 [5.20, 6.41]
LDL-C: HDL-C	3.35 [2.95, 3.75]	3.89 [3.49, 4.29]
Medications		
Lipid lowering (prior to start of study)	4	7
Blood pressure	3	6
Diabetes	0	0
Thyroid	2	1

Values represent mean ± SEM or 95% confidence intervals (CIs).

No significant differences between treatments at baseline assessed by two sample t-test (two-tailed).

Table 2: Nutritional Profiles on the High and Low Carbohydrate Diets (n=39)

	High Carbohydrate		Low Carbohydrate		Between-Treatment Difference ^c	P-value ^d
	Week 0 ^b	Ad Libitum ^b	Week 0 ^b	Ad Libitum ^b		
Calories (kcal)	1598 [1421, 1775]	1347 [1140, 1553]	1840 [1550, 2130]	1388 [1234, 1541]	-248 [-391, -106]	0.001
% of Total Calories						
Available Carbohydrate	46.3 [42.2, 50.4]	53.9 [50.2, 57.5]	43.8 [40.2, 47.4]	39.6 [35.7, 43.6]	-10.5 [-13.6, -7.5]	< 0.001
Protein	20.6 [18.7, 22.5]	18.4 [17.4, 19.5]	20.1 [18.0, 22.2]	22.7 [20.1, 25.4]	5.9 [4.3, 7.5]	< 0.001
Vegetable Protein	5.6 [5.0, 6.1]	6.7 [6.1, 7.3]	5.7 [5.3, 6.1]	15.0 [11.7, 18.2]	8.2 [6.5, 9.9]	< 0.001
Soy Protein	0 [0, 0]	0.2 [0.1, 0.2]	0 [0, 0]	4.7 [2.7, 6.8]	3.6 [2.9, 4.4]	< 0.001
Fat	30.8 [27.3, 34.4]	27.5 [24.6, 30.4]	34.4 [31.4, 37.5]	36.0 [31.5, 40.5]	5.2 [2.6, 7.7]	< 0.001
Saturated	10.8 [9.1, 12.6]	7.6 [6.2, 8.9]	11.8 [10.3, 13.3]	7.5 [6.6, 8.4]	-0.4 [-1.4, 0.6]	0.401
Monounsaturated	12.3 [10.7, 13.8]	10.4 [9.3, 11.6]	13.0 [11.9, 14.2]	14.8 [13.1, 16.6]	4.6 [3.1, 6.1]	< 0.001
Polyunsaturated*	5.2 [4.6, 5.8]	6.3 [5.4, 7.2]	6.6 [5.5, 7.8]	8.4 [7.5, 9.4]	0.4 [-0.5, 1.4]	0.4
Alcohol	2.2 [0.3, 4.2]	1.9 [0.7, 3.2]	1.6 [0.0, 3.3]	1.1 [0.1, 2.1]	-0.5 [-1.3, 0.2]	0.160
Dietary Fibre (g/1000 kcal)	10.9 [9.2, 12.5]	18.2 [15.2, 21.1]	12.1 [9.9, 14.4]	21.3 [18.8, 23.8]	1.5 [-0.5, 3.5]	0.127
Dietary Cholesterol (mg/1000 kcal)	149 [129, 169]	87 [61, 113]	157 [136, 177]	117 [44, 189]	11 [-22, 23]	0.954
Adherence with "Eco-Atkins" Components ^a						
Viscous Fiber (out of 33.3%)	---	---	---	14.0 [9.4, 18.6]	---	---
Vegetable Protein (soy and gluten) (out of 33.3%)	---	---	---	14.7 [10.3, 19.1]	---	---
Nuts (out of 33.3%)	---	---	---	6.3 [3.3, 9.3]	---	---
Total Adherence (out of 100%)	---	---	---	33.6 [22.1, 45.2]	---	---
Values represent mean ± 95% confidence intervals (CIs).						
^a Adherence represents the mean percentage intake of the prescribed intake of the 3 cholesterol-lowering components [viscous fiber, vegetable protein (soy and gluten), nuts] by expressing the recorded intake for each component as 33.3%. The sum of the 3 components if consumed as prescribed would equal 100% adherence.						
^b Values represent multiple imputation (taking the mean of 5 sets of randomly imputed values) to generate data for those who dropped out or had missing values.						
^c Between Treatment Difference = Change from baseline between the two diets using all available data.						
^d P-values assessed using all available data and a repeated measures mixed model accounting for time of assessment. The response variable was change from baseline, with diet and week as fixed effects and subject ID nested in diet. There was no adjustment for baseline.						
*Significantly different between treatments at baseline assessed by two sample t-test (two tailed), P=0.025.						

Table 3: Effect of high and low carbohydrate diets on body weight, blood lipids, apolipoproteins and 10-yr CHD risk (n=39)

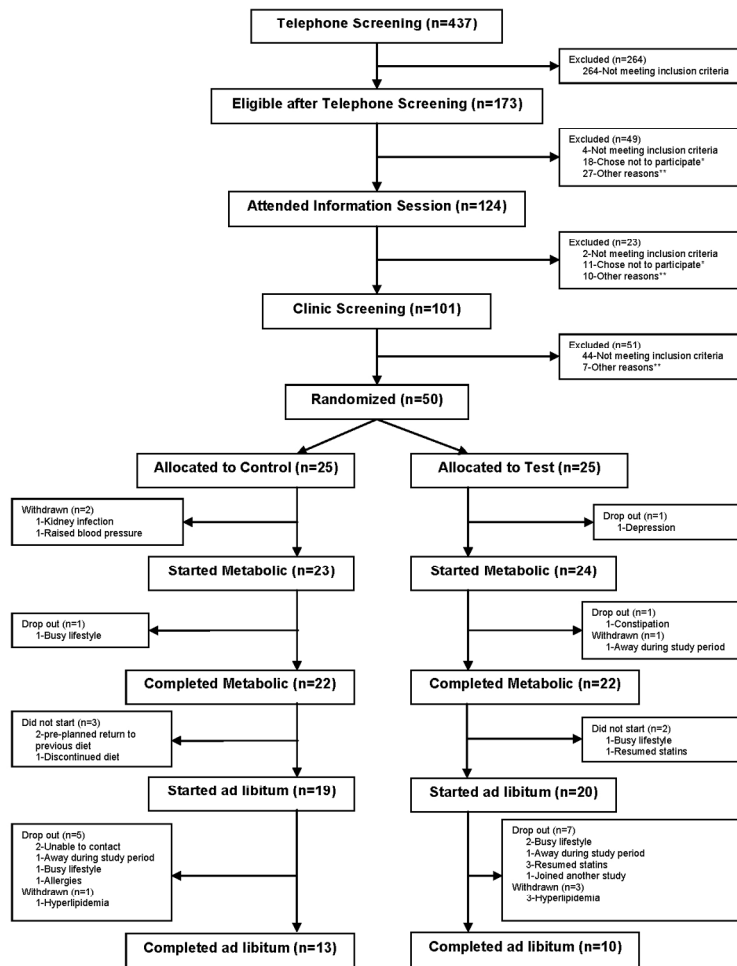
	High Carbohydrate		Low Carbohydrate		Between Treatment Difference ^b	P-value ^c
	Week 0 ^a	Ad Libitum ^a	Week 0 ^a	Ad Libitum ^a		
Body Weight, kg	85.4 [79.3, 91.6]	80.4 [74.2, 86.6]	83.7 [78.5, 89.0]	76.9 [71.9, 81.9]	-1.1 [-2.1, 0.0]	0.047
BMI	31.1 [29.9, 32.4]	29.2 [27.9, 30.5]	31.1 [29.8, 32.4]	28.7 [27.3, 30.1]	-0.4 [-0.8, 0.0]	0.039
Body Fat, %	38.9 [34.0, 43.8]	35.0 [30.7, 39.2]	35.6 [30.1, 41.1]	31.4 [26.1, 36.6]	-1.7 [-4.0, 0.7]	0.161
Waist Circumference (cm)	102.8 [99.4, 106.2]	97.4 [93.1, 101.6]	99.8 [96.1, 103.5]	93.7 [89.8, 97.7]	0.1 [-1.1, 1.3]	0.861
Fasting Glucose (mmol/L)	5.2 [4.9, 5.4]	4.6 [4.5, 4.7]	5.2 [5.0, 5.4]	4.6 [4.4, 4.9]	0.1 [-0.1, 0.2]	0.447
Fasting Insulin (pmol/L)	50.0 [38.3, 61.7]	36.4 [27.5, 45.4]	47.3 [36.9, 57.6]	33.3 [22.8, 43.9]	-0.6 [-9.1, 8.0]	0.898
HOMA-IR	1.65 [1.17, 2.13]	1.11 [0.81, 1.41]	1.53 [1.19, 1.88]	0.99 [0.68, 1.30]	0.01 [-0.30, 0.33]	0.937
Satiety (-4 to 4)	1.0 [0.7, 1.4]	0.9 [0.7, 1.2]	1.2 [0.8, 1.7]	1.1 [0.8, 1.4]	-0.1 [-0.4, 0.2]	0.440
Exercise, METs	17.4 [12.4, 22.4]	25.8 [21.1, 30.6]	24.0 [12.9, 35.0]	23.9 [15.3, 32.6]	-9.3 [-16.4, -2.2]	0.012
Cholesterol, mmol/L [†]						
Total	6.75 [6.28, 7.21]	6.49 [5.97, 7.02]	6.76 [6.21, 7.31]	6.10 [5.67, 6.53]	-0.62 [-0.86, -0.37]	<0.001
LDL-C	4.40 [3.99, 4.82]	4.40 [3.91, 4.90]	4.53 [4.14, 4.93]	4.06 [3.71, 4.42]	-0.49 [-0.70, -0.28]	<0.001
HDL-C	1.36 [1.22, 1.50]	1.35 [1.22, 1.48]	1.21 [1.06, 1.36]	1.25 [1.10, 1.39]	0.03 [-0.02, 0.07]	0.245
Triglycerides	2.16 [1.62, 2.70]	1.71 [1.35, 2.07]	2.23 [1.65, 2.80]	1.50 [1.22, 1.77]	-0.34 [-0.57, -0.11]	0.005
Ratios						
Tchol:HDL-C	5.17 [4.54, 5.80]	4.92 [4.49, 5.34]	5.81 [5.20, 6.41]	5.13 [4.65, 5.62]	-0.57 [-0.83, -0.32]	<0.001
LDL-C:HDL-C	3.35 [2.95, 3.75]	3.34 [3.00, 3.68]	3.89 [3.49, 4.29]	3.48 [3.06, 3.90]	-0.42 [-0.60, -0.24]	<0.002
Apolipoproteins, g/L [‡]						
Apo A1	1.69 [1.60, 1.78]	1.69 [1.60, 1.77]	1.57 [1.45, 1.69]	1.57 [1.46, 1.67]	-0.02 [-0.06, 0.02]	0.316
Apo B	1.38 [1.26, 1.50]	1.23 [1.13, 1.33]	1.42 [1.30, 1.54]	1.20 [1.10, 1.31]	-0.11 [-0.16, -0.06]	<0.001
Apo B: Apo A1	0.83 [0.74, 0.91]	0.74 [0.68, 0.80]	0.92 [0.84, 0.99]	0.78 [0.70, 0.86]	-0.05 [-0.09, -0.02]	0.003
hs-CRP, mg/dL	2.1 [1.0, 3.3]	1.9 [1.3, 2.4]	3.0 [1.5, 4.5]	2.6 [1.0, 4.1]	-0.4 [-0.9, 0.1]	0.082
Blood Pressure, mmHg						
Systolic	122 [116, 128]	118 [114, 122]	128 [123, 132]	123 [119, 128]	-2 [-5, 2]	0.356
Diastolic	75 [72, 79]	74 [71, 77]	77 [74, 80]	76 [71, 80]	-1 [-3, 1]	0.288
10-yr CHD risk (%)*	8 [6, 9]	7 [6, 9]	12 [9, 14]	9 [7, 11]	-2 [-2, -1]	<0.001

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Values represent mean ± 95% confidence intervals (CIs).					
[†] To convert total cholesterol, LDL-C, and HDL-C to mg/dL, divide by 0.0259; to convert triglycerides to mg/dL, divide by 0.0113.					
[‡] To convert apolipoprotein A1 and B to mg/dL, multiply by 100.					
^a Values represent multiple imputation (taking the mean of 5 sets of randomly imputed values) to generate data for those who dropped out or had missing values.					
^b Between Treatment Difference = Change from baseline between the two diets using all available data.					
^c P-values assessed using all available data and a repeated measures mixed model accounting for time of assessment. The response variable was change from baseline, with diet and week as fixed effects and subject ID nested in diet. There was no adjustment for baseline.					
[*] Significantly different between treatments at baseline assessed by two sample t-test (two tailed), P=0.007.					

peer review only

Figure 1



*Chose not to participate (29): busy lifestyle (13), not interested (6), study too demanding (3), currently on another diet (2), no compensation (2), work-related (2), dislike prepackaged foods (1)

**Other reasons (44): unable to contact (19), unable to come to clinic (13), away (5), throat surgery (1), bowel resection (1), high potassium and BP (1), high potassium (1), raised liver function tests (1), not interested (1), medical insurance issue (1)

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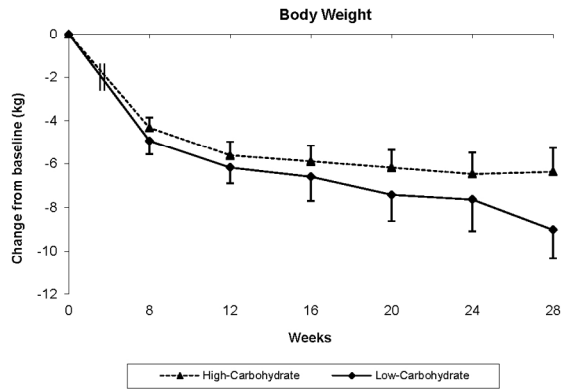


Figure 2: Weight loss during the study on both diets. Values represent mean \pm SEM of the change from baseline using multiple imputation (taking the mean of 5 sets of randomly imputed values) to generate data for those who dropped out or had missing values.

The change in weight was significantly reduced ($P=0.047$) on the low versus the high carbohydrate diet using all available data in the repeated measures mixed model analysis.

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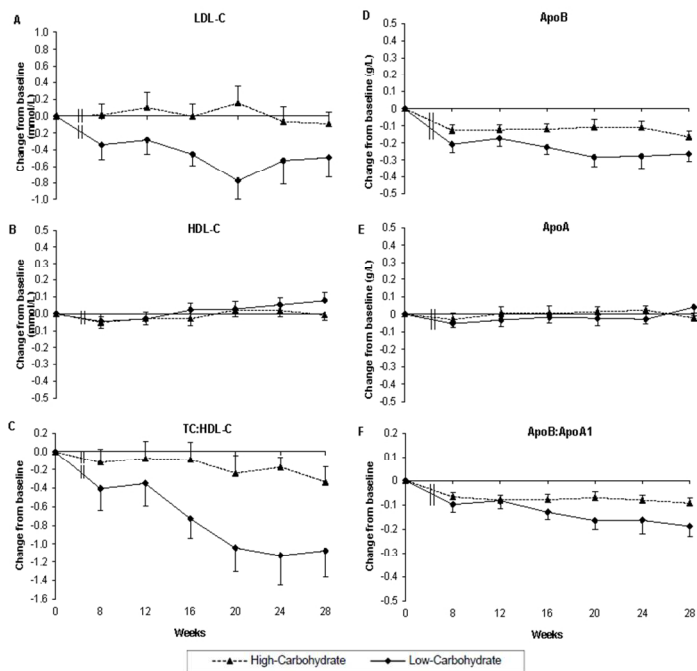


Figure 3. Change in (A) LDL-C, (B) HDL-C, (C) TC:HDL-C, (D) Apolipoprotein B (apoB), (E) Apolipoprotein A1 (apoA1), (F) ApoB:ApoA1 ratio between the two treatments. Values represent mean \pm SEM of the change from baseline using multiple imputation (taking the mean of 5 sets of randomly imputed values) to generate data for those who dropped out or had missing values. Significant treatment differences were seen for LDL-C ($P < 0.001$), apo B ($P < 0.001$) and the ratios TC:HDL-C ($P < 0.001$) and apoB:apoA1 ($P = 0.003$) using all available data in the repeated measures mixed model analysis.

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CONSORT 2010 checklist of information to include when reporting a randomised trial*

Section/Topic	Item No	Checklist item	Reported on page No
Title and abstract			
	1a	Identification as a randomised trial in the title	1
	1b	Structured summary of trial design, methods, results, and conclusions (for specific guidance see CONSORT for abstracts)	5-6
Introduction			
Background and objectives	2a	Scientific background and explanation of rationale	7-8
	2b	Specific objectives or hypotheses	8
Methods			
Trial design	3a	Description of trial design (such as parallel, factorial) including allocation ratio	9
	3b	Important changes to methods after trial commencement (such as eligibility criteria), with reasons	NA
Participants	4a	Eligibility criteria for participants	8, also previously published from results of metabolic phase
	4b	Settings and locations where the data were collected	8
Interventions	5	The interventions for each group with sufficient details to allow replication, including how and when they were actually administered	9-10
Outcomes	6a	Completely defined pre-specified primary and secondary outcome measures, including how and when they were assessed	10-11
	6b	Any changes to trial outcomes after the trial commenced, with reasons	NA
Sample size	7a	How sample size was determined	Continuation with ad libitum phase, metabolic phase published

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4	Randomisation:	7b	When applicable, explanation of any interim analyses and stopping guidelines
5	Sequence		
6	generation	8a	Method used to generate the random allocation sequence
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13		8b	Type of randomisation; details of any restriction (such as blocking and block size)
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22	Allocation	9	Mechanism used to implement the random allocation sequence (such as sequentially numbered containers),
23	concealment		describing any steps taken to conceal the sequence until interventions were assigned
24	mechanism		
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30	Implementation	10	Who generated the random allocation sequence, who enrolled participants, and who assigned participants to interventions
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39	Blinding	11a	If done, who was blinded after assignment to interventions (for example, participants, care providers, those assessing outcomes) and how
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41		11b	If relevant, description of the similarity of interventions
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2	Statistical methods	12a	Statistical methods used to compare groups for primary and secondary outcomes
3		12b	Methods for additional analyses, such as subgroup analyses and adjusted analyses
4			
5	Results		
6	Participant flow (a	13a	For each group, the numbers of participants who were randomly assigned, received intended treatment, and
7	diagram is strongly		were analysed for the primary outcome
8	recommended)		
9		13b	For each group, losses and exclusions after randomisation, together with reasons
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14	Recruitment	14a	Dates defining the periods of recruitment and follow-up
15		14b	Why the trial ended or was stopped
16	Baseline data	15	A table showing baseline demographic and clinical characteristics for each group
17	Numbers analysed	16	For each group, number of participants (denominator) included in each analysis and whether the analysis was
18			by original assigned groups
19			
20	Outcomes and	17a	For each primary and secondary outcome, results for each group, and the estimated effect size and its
21	estimation		precision (such as 95% confidence interval)
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23		17b	For binary outcomes, presentation of both absolute and relative effect sizes is recommended
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40	Ancillary analyses	18	Results of any other analyses performed, including subgroup analyses and adjusted analyses, distinguishing
41			pre-specified from exploratory
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2	Harms	19	All important harms or unintended effects in each group (for specific guidance see CONSORT for harms)
3			14
4	Discussion		
5	Limitations	20	Trial limitations, addressing sources of potential bias, imprecision, and, if relevant, multiplicity of analyses
6	Generalisability	21	Generalisability (external validity, applicability) of the trial findings
7			14,15
8	Interpretation	22	Interpretation consistent with results, balancing benefits and harms, and considering other relevant evidence
9			14-16
10	Other information		
11	Registration	23	Registration number and name of trial registry
12	Protocol	24	Where the full trial protocol can be accessed, if available
13	Funding	25	Sources of funding and other support (such as supply of drugs), role of funders
14			2-3, (repeated 18)

*We strongly recommend reading this statement in conjunction with the CONSORT 2010 Explanation and Elaboration for important clarifications on all the items. If relevant, we also recommend reading CONSORT extensions for cluster randomised trials, non-inferiority and equivalence trials, non-pharmacological treatments, herbal interventions, and pragmatic trials. Additional extensions are forthcoming: for those and for up to date references relevant to this checklist, see www.consort-statement.org.



Six Months of a Vegan Low-Carbohydrate (“Eco-Atkins”) Diet Improves Cardiovascular Risk Factors and Body Weight in Hyperlipidemic Adults: A Randomized Controlled Trial

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Primary Subject Heading:	Nutrition and metabolism
Secondary Subject Heading:	Cardiovascular medicine
Keywords:	weight loss, diet, hyperlipidemia

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Six Months of a Vegan Low-Carbohydrate (“Eco-Atkins”) Diet Improves Cardiovascular Risk Factors and Body Weight in Hyperlipidemic Adults: A Randomized Controlled Trial

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3 **Number of Tables:** 3

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6 **Number of Figures:** 3

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8 **Number of References:** 59

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10 **Running Title:** Weight loss in hyperlipidemia on a vegan diet

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12 **Trial Registration:** #NCT00256516

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15 **Keywords:** weight loss, vegetable proteins, nuts, soy, vegan diet, hyperlipidemia

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19
20 **Contributions**

21
22 *Conception and design* - Jenkins, Wong, Kendall, Faulkner, Paul, Mukherjea, Krul, Singer

23
24 *Acquisition of data* - Jenkins, Wong, Kendall, Esfahani, Ng, Leong

25
26 *Analysis and interpretation of data* – Jenkins, Wong, Kendall, Vidgen

27
28 *Drafting of the manuscript* – Jenkins, Wong

29
30 *Critical revision of the manuscript for important intellectual content* – Jenkins, Wong, Kendall,

31
32 Esfahani, Ng, Leong, Faulkner, Vidgen, Paul, Mukherjea, Krul, Singer

33
34 *Statistical analysis* - Vidgen

35
36 *Obtaining funding* – Jenkins, Kendall, Wong

37
38 *Administrative, technical, or material support* – Wong, Kendall, Esfahani, Ng, Leong, Faulkner

39
40 *Supervision* – Jenkins, Kendall, Wong, Singer

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42
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45 *No additional contributions* - Paul, Mukherjea, Krul

Abstract

Objective: Low-carbohydrate diets may be useful for weight loss. Diets high in vegetable proteins and oils may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease (CHD). The main objective was to determine the longer term effect of a diet that was both low-carbohydrate and plant-based on weight loss and LDL-C.

Design, Setting, Participants: A parallel design study of 39 overweight hyperlipidemic men and postmenopausal women conducted at a Canadian university-affiliated hospital nutrition research center from April 2005 to November 2006.

Intervention: Participants were advised to consume either a low-carbohydrate vegan diet or a high-carbohydrate lacto-ovo vegetarian diet for six-months after completing one-month metabolic (all foods provided) versions of these diets. The prescribed macronutrient intakes for the low- and high-carbohydrate diets were: 26% and 58% of energy from carbohydrate, 31% and 16% from protein and 43% and 25% from fat, respectively.

Primary Outcome: Change in body weight.

Results: Twenty-three participants (50% test, 68% control) completed the six-month ad libitum study. The approximate 4kg weight loss on the metabolic study was increased to -6.9kg on low-carbohydrate and -5.8kg on high-carbohydrate six-month ad libitum treatments (treatment difference [95% CI]: -1.1kg [-2.1, 0.0], $P=0.047$). The relative LDL-C and triglyceride reductions were also greater on the low-carbohydrate treatment (treatment difference [95% CI]: -0.49mmol/L [-0.70, -0.28], $P<0.001$ and -0.34mmol/L [-0.57, -0.11], $P=0.005$, respectively), as were the TC:HDL-C and apolipoprotein B:A1 ratios (-0.57 [-0.83, -0.32], $P<0.001$ and -0.05 [-0.09, -0.02], $P=0.003$, respectively).

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3 **Conclusions:** A self-selected low-carbohydrate vegan diet, containing increased protein and fat
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5 from gluten and soy products, nuts, and vegetable oils, had lipid lowering advantages over a
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7 high-carbohydrate, low-fat weight loss diet, thus improving heart disease risk factors.
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12 **Trial Registration:** clinicaltrials.gov (<http://www.clinicaltrials.gov/>), #NCT00256516
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17 **Abstract Word Count:** 273 (up to 300 allowed)
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Article Summary

Article Focus

- Low-carbohydrate diets may be useful for weight loss. Diets high in vegetable proteins and oils may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease (CHD).
- The objective of the randomized clinical trial was to determine the longer term effect of a diet that was both low-carbohydrate and plant-based on weight loss and LDL-C.
- We have already reported the effect of this dietary strategy in producing a difference of 8% in LDL-C reduction between calorie-restricted diets (60% of estimated calorie requirements) when all food was provided. We now report findings after these same participants continued on their respective diets for an additional 6 months, under self-selected conditions, in order to gain insights into the real life effectiveness of this diet.

Key Messages

- By comparison with the high-carbohydrate diet, consumption of the low-carbohydrate diet containing vegetable proteins and oils was also associated with significantly reduced concentrations of LDL-C. This LDL-C reduction has not been reported for other low-carbohydrate diet studies in which a large part of the protein and fat originated from animal sources.
- The present study also demonstrated that consumption of a low-carbohydrate vegan diet resulted in modestly greater body weight reductions compared to a high-carbohydrate diet (7% versus 6% reductions, respectively) over a six-month ad libitum period.

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3 - The sustained reduction in LDL-C, associated with only a small incremental weight loss on
4 the 6-month self-selected diet, is a potentially important attribute of the diet in reducing long-
5 term CHD risk
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10 11 12 **Strengths and Limitations of this Study**

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15 The study weaknesses include the relatively small sample size and the high dropout rate.

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17 Nevertheless, high dropout rates have been reported in similar dietary studies and it is
18 noteworthy that attrition rates were low in the metabolic study when all food was provided [1].

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20 Food availability and preparation may therefore be important factors. For those who did
21 complete the study, however, there were benefits in weight loss and LDL-C reduction, an
22 additional 2% advantage in body weight reduction compared to the high-carbohydrate diet and a
23 13% drop in LDL-C for participants consuming a more plant-based low-carbohydrate diet.
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30 The study's strength is that the prescribed hypocaloric diet was self-selected, meaning the results
31 are more in line with what can be expected under free-living conditions. The breadth of
32 application of the plant-based low-carbohydrate diet, however, remains to be determined, but it
33 may provide an option for some individuals for whom LDL-C reduction is an equal concern to
34 weight loss. If low-carbohydrate dietary options become more generally available the number of
35 individuals who will benefit is likely to increase.
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Introduction

Many popular weight loss diets emphasize carbohydrate restriction (Atkins, Eddies, South Beach, Zone). Their success is determined by the level of compliance with the prescribed diets [2-7]. However, a high content of animal products, rich in saturated fat and cholesterol, may make conventional low-carbohydrate diets less appropriate for those with hypercholesterolemia [3 8]. Even during active weight loss, these high saturated fat diets do not lower serum LDL-C below baseline [3 8] and there is concern that if such diets continue to be eaten when weight loss has ceased, a more atherogenic blood lipid profile may result [9]. These concerns have prompted exploration of other weight loss strategies, but only modest reductions in LDL-C have been observed [10].

By contrast vegan diets significantly lower LDL-C [11]. Trials of vegan and vegetarian diets also reduce progression of coronary heart disease (CHD) [12] and improve diabetes control [13].

Plant food components such as vegetable proteins, vegetable oils, nuts and viscous fibers, reduce serum lipids in many studies [14-19] and may increase flow mediated vasodilatation [20-23].

Nuts, fiber and vegetarian diets in general, all reduce CHD and diabetes in cohort studies [24-29]. Finally, in cohort studies, low-carbohydrate diets, high in vegetable oils and proteins as opposed to animal products, reduce CHD events and diabetes incidence in women [30 31], while lower red meat intake reduces total, cardiovascular and cancer mortality [32]. Most recently a large randomized controlled trial confirmed the effect of nuts and increased vegetable oil (olive oil) intake in reducing cardiovascular events in the context of a Mediterranean diet [33].

In view of the apparent success of low-carbohydrate diets for weight loss and the demonstration that relatively high-carbohydrate vegetarian and vegan diets, and diets low in animal products, lower CHD risk factors [34-37], we designed a diet that combined both vegan and low-

1
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3 carbohydrate elements to determine whether such a diet captured both the weight loss and CHD
4 risk reduction advantages. We have already reported the effect of this dietary strategy in
5 producing a difference of 8% in LDL-C reduction between calorie-restricted diets (60% of
6 estimated calorie requirements) when all food was provided [1]. We now report findings after
7 these same participants continued on their respective diets for an additional 6 months, under self-
8 selected conditions, in order to gain insights into the real life effectiveness of this diet. The
9 results of the metabolic (all foods provided) study have been reported previously and had
10 demonstrated a CHD risk factor advantage, but with no greater weight loss than the control diet
11 [1].
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27 **Methods**

28 **Participants**

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30 Forty-seven overweight participants, recruited by newspaper advertisement and hospital clinic
31 notices, undertook the one-month metabolic first phase of the study (Figure 1) that has been
32 previously reported [1]. At the start of the study, participants were given the option to participate
33 in both the metabolic and ad libitum phases or only the metabolic phase. On completion of the
34 metabolic phase, thirty-nine participants (19 control and 20 test participants) continued for an ad
35 libitum six-month study (Table 1). The study was conducted at a Canadian university-affiliated
36 hospital nutrition research center from April 2005 to November 2006. All participants had high
37 normal to raised LDL-C levels ($>3.4\text{mmol/L}$ at diagnosis) and a body mass index $> 27\text{ kg/m}^2$.
38 Details of the eligibility criteria have been previously reported [1]. After recruitment, the 11/39
39 participants who were taking lipid lowering medications discontinued their medications at least
40 two weeks prior to starting and for the study duration (Table 1).
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Study Protocol

The intervention was a randomized parallel study stratified by sex in which participants were randomized to either low- or high-carbohydrate, calorie-reduced diets. The first month was the previously reported metabolically controlled study [1]. For the following six-months, participants continued on the diet to which they had been assigned as a self-selected (ad libitum) diet.

Anthropometric, blood pressure and blood lipid measurements were repeated at monthly intervals. Insulin and HbA1c were measured at baseline and at the start and end of the ad libitum treatment. Percentage body fat was measured at baseline and end of the ad libitum treatment by bioelectrical impedance (Quantum II; RJL Systems, Clinton Township, Michigan). Seven-day diet and exercise histories were recorded in the week prior to each monthly visit. These histories were reviewed and discussed with the dietitian and appropriate dietary counselling was provided to enhance adherence. The overall feeling of satiety for the previous week was assessed at each study visit using a 9-point bipolar semantic scale, where -4 was extremely hungry, 0 was neutral, and +4 was uncomfortably full [1 35]. No exercise advice was given during the study, but alterations in exercise were allowed and recorded.

The Ethics Committees of St. Michael's Hospital and the University of Toronto, and the Therapeutic Products Directorate of Health Canada approved the study. Written informed consent was obtained from the participants. The study's clinical trial registration number was #NCT00256516.

Diets

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3 As with the previous metabolic study, participants were encouraged to eat only 60% of their
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As with the previous metabolic study, participants were encouraged to eat only 60% of their estimated caloric requirements in order to continue the body weight reduction started on their metabolic phase [38-40]. The prescribed test diet was a low-carbohydrate vegan diet containing 26% of calories from carbohydrate, 31% of calories from vegetable proteins and 43% from fat (primarily vegetable oils). Carbohydrate sources on the low-carbohydrate diet featured viscous fiber-containing foods (such as oats and barley) and low-starch vegetables (emphasizing okra and eggplant) for the relatively limited amount of carbohydrate allowed. The vegetable proteins were prescribed as gluten (54.8% of total protein), soy (23.0%), fruits and vegetables (8.7%), nuts (7.5%), and cereals (6.0%). Gluten was contained in the nut bread and wheat gluten (also called “seitan”) products. Soy protein was present in the form of burgers, veggie bacon, deli slices, breakfast links, tofu, and soy milks. Nuts included almonds, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia, pecans, and pistachios. The fat sources were nuts (43.6% of total fat), vegetable oils (24.4%), soy products (18.5%), avocado (7.1%), cereals (2.7%), fruits and vegetables (2.3%), and seitan products (1.4%). Participants were able to purchase at the research center the “no” starch high protein nut bread and three of the seitan (wheat gluten) products used in the study which were not available in Canada. The control, high-carbohydrate lacto-ovo vegetarian diet (58% carbohydrate, 16% protein and 25% fat) emphasized whole wheat cereals and cereal fiber, as well as low-fat or skim milk dairy products and liquid egg substitute to reduce saturated fat and cholesterol intakes. These diets have been published previously [1]. Participants were given a copy of the menu plans that outlined the food items and amounts prescribed during the metabolic phase. This served as a reference during the ad libitum phase. Furthermore, participants were given an exchange list of the items prescribed on the menu plan. The goal was to enhance adherence.

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3 Self-taring electronic scales (My Weigh Scales, Vancouver, BC or Tanita Corporation, Arlington
4 Heights, IL) were provided to all participants and they were instructed to weigh all food items
5 while recording the seven-day food diary in the week prior to monthly clinic visits. Adherence to
6 the three principal cholesterol-lowering components [vegetable proteins (soy and gluten), nuts,
7 and viscous fibers] of the low-carbohydrate diet was assessed from the completed monthly
8 seven-day food records. The amount of each component provided during the metabolic phase
9 remained the same as that prescribed during the ad libitum phase.

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20 Neither the dietitians nor participants could be blinded, but equal emphasis was placed on the
21 potential importance for health of both diets. The analytical technicians were blinded to diet
22 allocation, as was the statistician, up to analysis of the primary outcome. Participants were
23 offered no financial compensation for participation in the study.
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32 **Analyses**

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34 The analytical techniques have been reported previously [1]. Serum was analyzed in the J. Alick
35 Little Lipid Research Laboratory [35] and LDL-C (in mmol/L) was calculated by the method of
36 Friedewald et al. [1]. The methods for analyzing apolipoproteins A1 and B, high sensitivity C-
37 reactive protein (hs-CRP), blood glucose, insulin, HbA1c, and homeostasis model assessment –
38 insulin resistance model (HOMA-IR) have been described previously [1]. Exercise data were
39 calculated as metabolic equivalents (METs) [41]. The absolute 10-year CHD risk score was
40 calculated using the Framingham risk equation [42].
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50 Diets were assessed for macronutrients, fatty acids, cholesterol and fiber using a computer
51 program based on the USDA database [43] and developed in our laboratory to allow the addition
52 of the macronutrient content of study foods obtained from food labels or directly from food
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3 manufacturers. The nutritional profiles of the diets were calculated from the 7-day food records
4 completed once a month throughout the study and mean intakes are presented.
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8 Adherence with the three principal cholesterol-lowering components [vegetable proteins (soy
9 and gluten), nuts, and viscous fibers] of the low-carbohydrate diet was estimated from the 7-day
10 food records by applying 33.3% adherence factor to the recorded intake for each of the three
11 main components. The sum of the three components if consumed as prescribed would equal
12 100% adherence.
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20 21 22 **Statistical Analyses**

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24 Results are expressed as means \pm SEM or 95% confidence intervals (CIs). Time zero was used as
25 the baseline and refers to the pre-metabolic study baseline [1]. Treatment differences in physical
26 and biochemical measures were assessed using all available data and a repeated measures mixed
27 model accounting for time of assessment (SAS 9.2) [44] in the Tables (Table 2 and 3) and the
28 Results. The response variable was change from baseline, with diet and week as fixed effects and
29 subject ID nested in diet. There was no adjustment for baseline. Any participant who started the
30 ad libitum treatment was included in the analysis (N=39). The completer analysis included the 23
31 participants who completed the study.
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34 Multiple imputation (taking the mean of 5 sets of randomly imputed values) was used to present
35 baseline and treatment values in the Tables (2 and 3) and Figures (2 and 3) by generating data for
36 those who dropped out or had missing values [44].
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43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 **Results**

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3 Compliance with the major dietary components [vegetable proteins (soy and gluten), nuts, and
4 viscous fibers] was 33.6% or one-third of that prescribed during the metabolic phase (Table 2).
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6 Saturated fat intakes were similar on both treatments whereas intake of monounsaturated fats,
7
8 vegetable proteins, and soy protein were significantly higher on the low-carbohydrate diet (Table
9
10 2). Available carbohydrate intake was significantly lower on the low-carbohydrate diet (Table 2).
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12 The attrition rate was 50% (10/20) on the low-carbohydrate and 32% (6/19) on the high-
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14 carbohydrate (Figure 1), this equates to a total attrition rate of 41% (16/39). The number of
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16 participants who did not complete the study (including dropouts and withdrawals) did not differ
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18 between treatments. Three participants were withdrawn by the study physician due to failure to
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20 attain LDL-C targets on the low-carbohydrate diet (mean LDL-C = 5.24mmol/L) and one subject
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22 on the high-carbohydrate diet (LDL-C = 7.78mmol/L). Participants on the low-carbohydrate diet
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24 tended to have larger reductions in body weight over time (Figure 2). The weight loss from
25
26 baseline to the end of the 6-month ad libitum treatment was -6.9kg [95% CI, -7.7, -6.1] on the
27
28 low-carbohydrate and -5.8kg [95% CI, -6.6, -5.1] on the control diet with a significant difference
29
30 between groups (treatment difference [95% CI]: -1.1kg [-2.1, 0.0]; P=0.047) (Table 3). The final
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32 reduction in BMI was also greater on the low-carbohydrate versus high-carbohydrate diet
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34 (treatment difference [95% CI]: -0.4kg/m² [-0.8, 0.0]; P=0.039) (Table 3). Among the
35
36 completers, there were numerically larger differences between treatments for both body weight
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38 and BMI (treatment difference [95% CI]: -1.8 kg [-3.0, -0.6]; P=0.0041 and -0.7 kg/m² [-1.1, -
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40 0.2]; P=0.0039, respectively).
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50 There was a relative increase in recorded exercise by the high-carbohydrate diet participants,
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52 whereas there was no relative change in the low-carbohydrate participants (treatment difference
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54 [95% CI]: -9.3 [-16.4, -2.2] METs; P=0.012), but this was not reflected in a greater weight loss
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3 (Table 3). There were no treatment differences in percent body fat, waist circumference or satiety
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6 (Table 3).
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10 **Lipids**

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12 At the end of the study, the reduction on the low-carbohydrate versus high-carbohydrate diet was
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14 greater for LDL-C (treatment difference [95% CI]: -0.49mmol/L [-0.70, -0.28]; P<0.001, for TC
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16 (-0.62mmol/L [-0.86, -0.37]; P<0.001, for TC:HDL-C -0.57 [-0.83, -0.32]; P<0.001, for LDL-
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18 C:HDL-C (-0.42 [-0.60, -0.24]; P<0.001, and for triglycerides (-0.34mmol/L [-0.57, -0.11];
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20 P=0.005). No treatment difference was seen in HDL-C (Table 3). A similar pattern was observed
21
22 in the completers. The treatment difference was numerically larger for LDL-C (-0.60mmol/L [-
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24 0.84, -0.36]; P<0.0001), TC (-0.73mmol/L [-1.00, -0.45]; P<0.0001), TC:HDL-C (-0.68 [-0.97, -
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26 0.39]; P<0.0001), and LDL-C:HDL-C (-0.53 [-0.73, -0.32]; P<0.0001). Values for LDL-C and
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28 the TC:HDL-C ratio were consistently lower in participants on the low-carbohydrate diet
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30 throughout the study while HDL-C values were not different from baseline (Figure 3 A-C).
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39 **Apolipoproteins**

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41 ApoB and the ApoB:A1 ratio were reduced more on the low- versus the high-carbohydrate diet
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43 at the end of the study (treatment different [95% CI]: -0.11g/L [-0.16, -0.06]; P<0.001 and -0.05
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45 [-0.09, -0.02]; P=0.003, respectively) (Table 3). No significant difference between the diets was
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47 observed for ApoA1 concentrations. The pattern of change in the apolipoproteins in the
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49 completers reflected the changes seen in the whole group. Figure 3D and 3F show that the low-
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51 carbohydrate diet resulted in lower apoB and ApoB:ApoA1 ratios relative to baseline over the
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53 course of the study.
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C-Reactive Protein, HbA1c, Blood Glucose, Serum Insulin, Insulin Resistance and Blood Pressure

Both treatments reduced hs-CRP with no difference between treatments (Table 3). HbA1c, fasting blood glucose, insulin, and insulin resistance (calculated using the HOMA model) fell similarly on both treatments during the course of the study (Table 3). Systolic and diastolic blood pressure decreased similarly with no treatment differences (Table 3). The completers also failed to show a difference between treatments.

Calculated CHD Risk

The low-carbohydrate diet significantly reduced the calculated 10-year CHD risk relative to the high-carbohydrate diet (2% [-2, -1]; $P < 0.001$) (Table 3). A reduced CHD risk on the low-carbohydrate diet was also observed in the completers (2% [-3, -1]; $P < 0.001$).

Adverse Events

No serious adverse events or events that involved hospitalisation occurred during the study.

Discussion

The present study demonstrated that consumption of a low-carbohydrate vegan diet resulted in a modestly greater body weight reduction compared to a high-carbohydrate diet (7% versus 6% reductions, respectively) over a six-month ad libitum period. These reductions were similar to those reported for low-carbohydrate “Atkins-like” diets [2 3 6 10]. However by comparison with the high-carbohydrate diet, consumption of the low-carbohydrate diet containing vegetable

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3 proteins and oils was also associated with significantly reduced concentrations of LDL-C. This
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5 LDL-C reduction has not been reported for other low-carbohydrate diet studies in which a large
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7 part of the protein and fat originated from animal sources and in which no significant LDL-C
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9 reductions were seen [2-6 8]. The sustained reduction in LDL-C, associated with only a small
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11 incremental weight loss on the 6-month self-selected diet, is a potentially important attribute of
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13 the diet in reducing long-term CHD risk [45 46]. Furthermore, as seen in the present study, a
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15 low-carbohydrate diet, in which vegetable fat and protein options were encouraged,
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17 demonstrated a larger reduction in the TC:HDL-C ratio than that reported at 6 months in weight
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19 loss studies employing either a Mediterranean or a high-carbohydrate diet [10].

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21 The majority of studies undertaken to date have been 6 months to one year in duration [2-6 47]
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23 with more recent studies of up to 2 years [2 8] and, as with the present study, a number of these
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25 studies had a high dropout rate [2 3 5 47]. The high dropout rate in the present study did not
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27 prevent identification of significant LDL-C and body weight differences in the intent-to-treat
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29 analysis (using all available data). However, the completer data demonstrated an even larger
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31 treatment difference in LDL-C favoring the low-carbohydrate treatment . Those on the low-
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33 carbohydrate diet showed overall adherence to the major dietary components [vegetable proteins
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35 (soy and gluten), nuts, and viscous fibers] at 33.6% of that provided during the metabolic phase
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37 [1]. This adherence is similar to the 43.3% seen with the dietary portfolio in the comparison of
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39 the metabolic one month [35] and the ad libitum six month studies [48]. In this comparison also
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41 just under half the LDL-C reduction (13-14%) seen on the ad libitum compared to the metabolic
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43 study [35].
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53 The effect of low-carbohydrate diets on CHD events has not been assessed in randomized
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55 controlled trials. Nevertheless, low-carbohydrate diets high in vegetable proteins and oils have
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3 been associated with a 30% reduced CHD risk and an 18% reduced incidence of diabetes in
4 cohort studies [30 31]. The median interquartile difference in these studies between the first and
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6 10th decile for vegetable protein and monounsaturated fat (MUFA) intakes, as a marker of
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8 increased vegetable oil consumption, was 1.4% and 9.3% expressed as a percentage of total
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10 caloric intake [30]. These figures compare with a 8.2% and a 4.6% relative increase in vegetable
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12 protein and oil consumption from baseline on the Eco-Atkins diet compared to the control diet.
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14 The increases in MUFA were therefore seen in both studies. Recently a Spanish Mediterranean
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16 diet emphasizing increased nut or olive oil consumption, increasing monounsaturated fat intake
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18 by 2-3%, has been shown to significantly reduce cardiovascular events also by approximately
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20 30% [33]. These data provide consistent support for the view that the Eco-Atkins approach
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22 would reduce CHD risk in the long term.
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29 The present diet, while lowering LDL-C by 9%, did not result in any significant depression of
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31 HDL-C. Lowering LDL-C while maintaining HDL-C would be expected to reduce CHD risk [45
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33 46]. Similarly, reductions in ApoB and the ApoB:A1 ratio were also observed in the present
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35 study. These findings further support the potential CHD benefit that this weight loss diet may
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37 have [49-51]. It has also been claimed that apolipoproteins may be stronger predictors of CHD
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39 events than conventional lipid variables [52-54].
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44 In contrast to the metabolic study, the reductions in systolic and diastolic blood pressure were not
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46 significant between the low- and high-carbohydrate diets. Similarly, hs-CRP was unchanged
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48 between treatments, however, the level was significantly reduced with the low-carbohydrate diet
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50 compared to baseline. Studies have shown that hs-CRP tended to be lowest on the diets
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52 containing the highest proportion of carbohydrate [5]. Low glycemic index and low glycemic
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54 load diets have also been associated with lower hs-CRP concentrations [55 56]. These
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3 advantages of the higher carbohydrate diet may have reduced any hs-CRP difference between the
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5 two diets in the present study.
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8 Soy-containing foods as well as nuts have cholesterol lowering effects [15 17 18 57 58] and may
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10 explain the reduction in LDL-C. Viscous fiber in low starch vegetables and β -glucan in oats and
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12 barley may also have contributed to the overall cholesterol lowering effect of the diet [9 14 45].
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14 Furthermore, nuts and high fiber food consumption have been associated with lower body weight
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16 [59].
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19 The study weaknesses include the relatively small sample size and the high dropout rate.
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22 Nevertheless, high dropout rates have been reported in similar dietary studies and it is
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24 noteworthy that attrition rates were low in the metabolic study when all food was provided [1].
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27 Food availability and preparation may therefore be important factors. Future studies will need to
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29 focus on strategies to increase and maintain adherence, especially to the cholesterol lowering
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31 components, which all bear US FDA health claims for cardiovascular disease risk reduction.
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34 Furthermore, collaboration with food industry may be helpful in addressing concerns of
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36 availability, variety, and ease of preparation. In retrospect, a simplified one page eating plan for
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38 breakfast, lunch, and dinner with a number of options and amounts for each meal, as we have
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40 used in our dietary portfolio studies, might also be helpful [48]. For those who did complete the
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42 study, however, there were benefits in weight loss and LDL-C reduction, an additional 2%
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44 advantage in body weight reduction compared to the high-carbohydrate diet and a 13% drop in
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46 LDL-C for participants consuming a more plant-based low-carbohydrate diet. Unfortunately it
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48 was not possible to predict who would complete the diet based on pre-study data or changes
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50 observed during the metabolic phase.
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3 The study's strength is that the prescribed hypocaloric diet was self-selected, meaning the results
4 are more in line with what can be expected under free-living conditions. The breadth of
5 application of the plant-based low-carbohydrate diet, however, remains to be determined, but it
6 may provide an option for some individuals for whom LDL-C reduction is an equal concern to
7 weight loss. If low-carbohydrate dietary options become more generally available the number of
8 individuals who will benefit is likely to increase.
9

10 We conclude that a weight loss diet which reduced carbohydrate in exchange for increased
11 intakes of vegetable sources of protein, such as gluten, soy and nuts, together with vegetable oils
12 offers an opportunity to improve both LDL-C and body weight, both being risk factors for CHD.
13 Further trials are warranted to evaluate low-carbohydrate diets, including more plant-based low-
14 carbohydrate diets, on CHD risk factors and ultimately on CHD.
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Role of the Sponsors

None of the funding organizations or sponsors played any significant role in the design and conduct of the study, in the collection, management, analysis, and interpretation of the data, or in the preparation, or approval of the manuscript. However, the named co-authors from Solae LLC reviewed the manuscript.

Disclosures

Dr. Jenkins has served on the Scientific Advisory Board of Sanitarium Company, Agri-Culture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), Canadian Agriculture Policy Institute (CAPI), California Strawberry Commission, Loblaw Supermarket, Herbal Life International, Nutritional Fundamental for Health, Pacific Health Laboratories, Metagenics, Bayer Consumer Care, Orafti,

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3 Dean Foods, Kellogg's, Quaker Oats, Procter & Gamble, Coca-Cola, NuVal Griffin Hospital,
4
5 Abbott, Pulse Canada, Saskatchewan Pulse Growers, and Canola Council of Canada; received
6
7 honoraria for scientific advice from Sanitarium Company, Orafti, the Almond Board of
8
9 California, the American Peanut Council, International Tree Nut Council Nutrition Research and
10
11 Education Foundation and the Peanut Institute, Herbal Life International, Pacific Health
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13 Laboratories, Nutritional Fundamental for Health, Barilla, Metagenics, Bayer Consumer Care,
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15 Unilever Canada and Netherlands, Solae LLC, Oldways, Kellogg's, Quaker Oats, Procter &
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17 Gamble, Coca-Cola, NuVal Griffin Hospital, Abbott, Canola Council of Canada, Dean Foods,
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20
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31 Foundation and the Peanut Institute, the Canola and Flax Councils of Canada, Calorie Control
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41 the California Strawberry Commission, American Peanut Council, Herbal Life International,
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43 Nutritional Fundamental for Health, Metagenics, Bayer Consumer Care, AAFC, CAPI, Pepsi,
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45 Almond Board of California, Unilever, Alpro Foundation, International Tree Nut Council,
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3 Glycemic Index Laboratories, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Dr. Kendall reported being on speakers
4
5 bureaus for Almond Board of California, Solae LLC, and Unilever; and receiving research grants
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8 Figure 1: Patient Flow Diagram.
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12 Figure 2: Weight loss during the study on both diets.
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17 Figure 3: Mean (A) LDL-C, (B) HDL-C, (C) TC:HDL-C, (D) apolipoprotein B (apoB) and (E)
18 apolipoprotein A1 (apoA1), (F) ApoB:ApoA1 ratio between the two treatments during the
19 metabolic and ad libitum phases.
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Table 1: Baseline Characteristics for Those Who Started the 6-Month Self-Selected Diets (n=39)

	High-carbohydrate (n=19)	Low-Carbohydrate (n=20)
Age (y)	55.3 ± 1.8	57.6 ± 1.4
Males/Females	6/13	9/11
Body Weight, kg	85.4 [79.3, 91.6]	83.7 [78.5, 89.0]
Body Mass Index, kg/m ²	31.1 [29.9, 32.4]	31.1 [29.8, 32.4]
Blood Pressure, mm Hg		
Systolic	122 [116, 128]	128 [123, 132]
Diastolic	75 [72, 79]	77 [74, 80]
Cholesterol, mmol/L		
Total	6.75 [6.28, 7.21]	6.76 [6.21, 7.31]
LDL-C	4.40 [3.99, 4.82]	4.53 [4.14, 4.93]
HDL-C	1.36 [1.22, 1.50]	1.21 [1.06, 1.36]
Triglycerides, mmol/L	2.16 [1.62, 2.70]	2.23 [1.65, 2.80]
Ratios		
TC:HDL-C	5.17 [4.54, 5.80]	5.81 [5.20, 6.41]
LDL-C: HDL-C	3.35 [2.95, 3.75]	3.89 [3.49, 4.29]
Medications		
Lipid lowering (prior to start of study)	4	7
Blood pressure	3	6
Diabetes	0	0
Thyroid	2	1

Values represent mean ± SEM or 95% confidence intervals (CIs).

No significant differences between treatments at baseline assessed by two sample t-test (two-tailed).

Table 2: Nutritional Profiles on the High and Low Carbohydrate Diets (n=39)

	High Carbohydrate		Low Carbohydrate		Between-Treatment Difference ^c	P-value ^d
	Week 0 ^b	Ad Libitum ^b	Week 0 ^b	Ad Libitum ^b		
Calories (kcal)	1598 [1421, 1775]	1347 [1140, 1553]	1840 [1550, 2130]	1388 [1234, 1541]	-248 [-391, -106]	0.001
% of Total Calories						
Available Carbohydrate	46.3 [42.2, 50.4]	53.9 [50.2, 57.5]	43.8 [40.2, 47.4]	39.6 [35.7, 43.6]	-10.5 [-13.6, -7.5]	< 0.001
Protein	20.6 [18.7, 22.5]	18.4 [17.4, 19.5]	20.1 [18.0, 22.2]	22.7 [20.1, 25.4]	5.9 [4.3, 7.5]	< 0.001
Vegetable Protein	5.6 [5.0, 6.1]	6.7 [6.1, 7.3]	5.7 [5.3, 6.1]	15.0 [11.7, 18.2]	8.2 [6.5, 9.9]	< 0.001
Soy Protein	0 [0, 0]	0.2 [0.1, 0.2]	0 [0, 0]	4.7 [2.7, 6.8]	3.6 [2.9, 4.4]	< 0.001
Fat	30.8 [27.3, 34.4]	27.5 [24.6, 30.4]	34.4 [31.4, 37.5]	36.0 [31.5, 40.5]	5.2 [2.6, 7.7]	< 0.001
Saturated	10.8 [9.1, 12.6]	7.6 [6.2, 8.9]	11.8 [10.3, 13.3]	7.5 [6.6, 8.4]	-0.4 [-1.4, 0.6]	0.401
Monounsaturated	12.3 [10.7, 13.8]	10.4 [9.3, 11.6]	13.0 [11.9, 14.2]	14.8 [13.1, 16.6]	4.6 [3.1, 6.1]	< 0.001
Polyunsaturated*	5.2 [4.6, 5.8]	6.3 [5.4, 7.2]	6.6 [5.5, 7.8]	8.4 [7.5, 9.4]	0.4 [-0.5, 1.4]	0.4
Alcohol	2.2 [0.3, 4.2]	1.9 [0.7, 3.2]	1.6 [0.0, 3.3]	1.1 [0.1, 2.1]	-0.5 [-1.3, 0.2]	0.160
Dietary Fibre (g/1000 kcal)	10.9 [9.2, 12.5]	18.2 [15.2, 21.1]	12.1 [9.9, 14.4]	21.3 [18.8, 23.8]	1.5 [-0.5, 3.5]	0.127
Dietary Cholesterol (mg/1000 kcal)	149 [129, 169]	87 [61, 113]	157 [136, 177]	117 [44, 189]	11 [-22, 23]	0.954
Adherence with "Eco-Atkins" Components ^a						
Viscous Fiber (out of 33.3%)	---	---	---	14.0 [9.4, 18.6]	---	---
Vegetable Protein (soy and gluten) (out of 33.3%)	---	---	---	14.7 [10.3, 19.1]	---	---
Nuts (out of 33.3%)	---	---	---	6.3 [3.3, 9.3]	---	---
Total Adherence (out of 100%)	---	---	---	33.6 [22.1, 45.2]	---	---
Values represent mean ± 95% confidence intervals (CIs).						
^a Adherence represents the mean percentage intake of the prescribed intake of the 3 cholesterol-lowering components [viscous fiber, vegetable protein (soy and gluten), nuts] by expressing the recorded intake for each component as 33.3%. The sum of the 3 components if consumed as prescribed would equal 100% adherence.						
^b Values represent multiple imputation (taking the mean of 5 sets of randomly imputed values) to generate data for those who dropped out or had missing values.						
^c Between Treatment Difference = Change from baseline between the two diets using all available data.						
^d P-values assessed using all available data and a repeated measures mixed model accounting for time of assessment. The response variable was change from baseline, with diet and week as fixed effects and subject ID nested in diet. There was no adjustment for baseline.						
*Significantly different between treatments at baseline assessed by two sample t-test (two tailed), P=0.025.						

Table 3: Effect of high and low carbohydrate diets on body weight, blood lipids, apolipoproteins and 10-yr CHD risk (n=39)

	High Carbohydrate		Low Carbohydrate		Between Treatment Difference ^b	P-value ^c
	Week 0 ^a	Ad Libitum ^a	Week 0 ^a	Ad Libitum ^a		
Body Weight, kg	85.4 [79.3, 91.6]	80.4 [74.2, 86.6]	83.7 [78.5, 89.0]	76.9 [71.9, 81.9]	-1.1 [-2.1, 0.0]	0.047
BMI	31.1 [29.9, 32.4]	29.2 [27.9, 30.5]	31.1 [29.8, 32.4]	28.7 [27.3, 30.1]	-0.4 [-0.8, 0.0]	0.039
Body Fat, %	38.9 [34.0, 43.8]	35.0 [30.7, 39.2]	35.6 [30.1, 41.1]	31.4 [26.1, 36.6]	-1.7 [-4.0, 0.7]	0.161
Waist Circumference (cm)	102.8 [99.4, 106.2]	97.4 [93.1, 101.6]	99.8 [96.1, 103.5]	93.7 [89.8, 97.7]	0.1 [-1.1, 1.3]	0.861
Fasting Glucose	5.2 [4.9, 5.4]	4.6 [4.5, 4.7]	5.2 [5.0, 5.4]	4.6 [4.4, 4.9]	0.1 [-0.1, 0.2]	0.447
HbA1c (%)	5.2 [5.0, 5.4]	5.2 [5.0, 5.3]	5.3 [5.0, 5.5]	5.2 [5.0, 5.4]	0.0 [-0.2, 0.1]	0.852
Fasting Insulin	50.0 [38.3, 61.7]	36.4 [27.5, 45.4]	47.3 [36.9, 57.6]	33.3 [22.8, 43.9]	-0.6 [-9.1, 8.0]	0.898
HOMA-IR	1.65 [1.17, 2.13]	1.11 [0.81, 1.41]	1.53 [1.19, 1.88]	0.99 [0.68, 1.30]	0.01 [-0.30, 0.33]	0.937
Satiety (-4 to 4)	1.0 [0.7, 1.4]	0.9 [0.7, 1.2]	1.2 [0.8, 1.7]	1.1 [0.8, 1.4]	-0.1 [-0.4, 0.2]	0.440
Exercise, METs	17.4 [12.4, 22.4]	25.8 [21.1, 30.6]	24.0 [12.9, 35.0]	23.9 [15.3, 32.6]	-9.3 [-16.4, -2.2]	0.012
Cholesterol, mmol/L [†]						
Total	6.75 [6.28, 7.21]	6.49 [5.97, 7.02]	6.76 [6.21, 7.31]	6.10 [5.67, 6.53]	-0.62 [-0.86, -0.37]	<0.001
LDL-C	4.40 [3.99, 4.82]	4.40 [3.91, 4.90]	4.53 [4.14, 4.93]	4.06 [3.71, 4.42]	-0.49 [-0.70, -0.28]	<0.001
HDL-C	1.36 [1.22, 1.50]	1.35 [1.22, 1.48]	1.21 [1.06, 1.36]	1.25 [1.10, 1.39]	0.03 [-0.02, 0.07]	0.245
Triglycerides	2.16 [1.62, 2.70]	1.71 [1.35, 2.07]	2.23 [1.65, 2.80]	1.50 [1.22, 1.77]	-0.34 [-0.57, -0.11]	0.005
Ratios						
Tchol:HDL-C	5.17 [4.54, 5.80]	4.92 [4.49, 5.34]	5.81 [5.20, 6.41]	5.13 [4.65, 5.62]	-0.57 [-0.83, -0.32]	<0.001
LDL-C:HDL-C	3.35 [2.95, 3.75]	3.34 [3.00, 3.68]	3.89 [3.49, 4.29]	3.48 [3.06, 3.90]	-0.42 [-0.60, -0.24]	<0.002
Apolipoproteins, g/L [‡]						
Apo A1	1.69 [1.60, 1.78]	1.69 [1.60, 1.77]	1.57 [1.45, 1.69]	1.57 [1.46, 1.67]	-0.02 [-0.06, 0.02]	0.316
Apo B	1.38 [1.26, 1.50]	1.23 [1.13, 1.33]	1.42 [1.30, 1.54]	1.20 [1.10, 1.31]	-0.11 [-0.16, -0.06]	<0.001
Apo B: Apo A1	0.83 [0.74, 0.91]	0.74 [0.68, 0.80]	0.92 [0.84, 0.99]	0.78 [0.70, 0.86]	-0.05 [-0.09, -0.02]	0.003
hs-CRP, mg/dL	2.1 [1.0, 3.3]	1.9 [1.3, 2.4]	3.0 [1.5, 4.5]	2.6 [1.0, 4.1]	-0.4 [-0.9, 0.1]	0.082
Blood Pressure, mmHg						
Systolic	122 [116, 128]	118 [114, 122]	128 [123, 132]	123 [119, 128]	-2 [-5, 2]	0.356
Diastolic	75 [72, 79]	74 [71, 77]	77 [74, 80]	76 [71, 80]	-1 [-3, 1]	0.288
10-yr CHD risk (%)*	8 [6, 9]	7 [6, 9]	12 [9, 14]	9 [7, 11]	-2 [-2, -1]	<0.001

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Values represent mean ± 95% confidence intervals (CIs).					
[†] To convert total cholesterol, LDL-C, and HDL-C to mg/dL, divide by 0.0259; to convert triglycerides to mg/dL, divide by 0.0113.					
[‡] To convert apolipoprotein A1 and B to mg/dL, multiply by 100.					
^a Values represent multiple imputation (taking the mean of 5 sets of randomly imputed values) to generate data for those who dropped out or had missing values.					
^b Between Treatment Difference = Change from baseline between the two diets using all available data.					
^c P-values assessed using all available data and a repeated measures mixed model accounting for time of assessment. The response variable was change from baseline, with diet and week as fixed effects and subject ID nested in diet. There was no adjustment for baseline.					
[*] Significantly different between treatments at baseline assessed by two sample t-test (two tailed), P=0.007.					

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Six Months of a Vegan Low-Carbohydrate (“Eco-Atkins”) Diet Improves Cardiovascular Risk Factors and Body Weight in Hyperlipidemic Adults: A Randomized Controlled Trial

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12 **Trial Registration:** #NCT00256516

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15 **Keywords:** weight loss, vegetable proteins, nuts, soy, vegan diet, hyperlipidemia

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19
20 **Contributions**

21
22 *Conception and design* - Jenkins, Wong, Kendall, Faulkner, Paul, Mukherjea, Krul, Singer

23
24 *Acquisition of data* - Jenkins, Wong, Kendall, Esfahani, Ng, Leong

25
26 *Analysis and interpretation of data* – Jenkins, Wong, Kendall, Vidgen

27
28 *Drafting of the manuscript* – Jenkins, Wong

29
30 *Critical revision of the manuscript for important intellectual content* – Jenkins, Wong, Kendall,

31
32 Esfahani, Ng, Leong, Faulkner, Vidgen, Paul, Mukherjea, Krul, Singer

33
34 *Statistical analysis* - Vidgen

35
36 *Obtaining funding* – Jenkins, Kendall, Wong

37
38 *Administrative, technical, or material support* – Wong, Kendall, Esfahani, Ng, Leong, Faulkner

39
40 *Supervision* – Jenkins, Kendall, Wong, Singer

41
42 *No additional contributions* - Paul, Mukherjea, Krul

Abstract

Objective: Low-carbohydrate diets may be useful for weight loss. Diets high in vegetable proteins and oils may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease (CHD). The main objective was to determine the longer term effect of a diet that was both low-carbohydrate and plant-based on weight loss and LDL-C.

Design, Setting, Participants: A parallel design study of 39 overweight hyperlipidemic men and postmenopausal women conducted at a Canadian university-affiliated hospital nutrition research center from April 2005 to November 2006.

Intervention: Participants were advised to consume either a low-carbohydrate vegan diet or a high-carbohydrate lacto-ovo vegetarian diet for six-months after completing one-month metabolic (all foods provided) versions of these diets. The prescribed macronutrient intakes for the low- and high-carbohydrate diets were: 26% and 58% of energy from carbohydrate, 31% and 16% from protein and 43% and 25% from fat, respectively.

Primary Outcome: Change in body weight.

Results: Twenty-three participants (50% test, 68% control) completed the six-month ad libitum study. The approximate 4kg weight loss on the metabolic study was increased to -6.9kg on low-carbohydrate and -5.8kg on high-carbohydrate six-month ad libitum treatments (treatment difference [95% CI]: -1.1kg [-2.1, 0.0], $P=0.047$). The relative LDL-C and triglyceride reductions were also greater on the low-carbohydrate treatment (treatment difference [95% CI]: -0.49mmol/L [-0.70, -0.28], $P<0.001$ and -0.34mmol/L [-0.57, -0.11], $P=0.005$, respectively), as were the TC:HDL-C and apolipoprotein B:A1 ratios (-0.57 [-0.83, -0.32], $P<0.001$ and -0.05 [-0.09, -0.02], $P=0.003$, respectively).

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3 **Conclusions:** A self-selected low-carbohydrate vegan diet, containing increased protein and fat
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5 from gluten and soy products, nuts, and vegetable oils, had lipid lowering advantages over a
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7 high-carbohydrate, low-fat weight loss diet, thus improving heart disease risk factors.
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12 **Trial Registration:** clinicaltrials.gov (<http://www.clinicaltrials.gov/>), #NCT00256516
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Article Summary

Article Focus

- Low-carbohydrate diets may be useful for weight loss. Diets high in vegetable proteins and oils may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease (CHD).
- The objective of the randomized clinical trial was to determine the longer term effect of a diet that was both low-carbohydrate and plant-based on weight loss and LDL-C.
- We have already reported the effect of this dietary strategy in producing a difference of 8% in LDL-C reduction between calorie-restricted diets (60% of estimated calorie requirements) when all food was provided. We now report findings after these same participants continued on their respective diets for an additional 6 months, under self-selected conditions, in order to gain insights into the real life effectiveness of this diet.

Key Messages

- By comparison with the high-carbohydrate diet, consumption of the low-carbohydrate diet containing vegetable proteins and oils was also associated with significantly reduced concentrations of LDL-C. This LDL-C reduction has not been reported for other low-carbohydrate diet studies in which a large part of the protein and fat originated from animal sources, ~~and where increases in LDL-C were seen.~~
- The present study also demonstrated that consumption of a low-carbohydrate vegan diet resulted in modestly greater body weight reductions compared to a high-carbohydrate diet (7% versus 6% reductions, respectively) over a six-month ad libitum period.

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3 - The sustained reduction in LDL-C, associated with only a small incremental weight loss on
4 the 6-month self-selected diet, is a potentially important attribute of the diet in reducing long-
5 term CHD risk
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10 11 12 **Strengths and Limitations of this Study**

13 The study weaknesses include the relatively small sample size and the high dropout rate.

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15 Nevertheless, high dropout rates have been reported in similar dietary studies and it is
16 noteworthy that attrition rates were low in the metabolic study when all food was provided [1].

17 Food availability and preparation may therefore be important factors. For those who did
18 complete the study, however, there were benefits in weight loss and LDL-C reduction, an
19 additional 2% advantage in body weight reduction compared to the high-carbohydrate diet and a
20 13% drop in LDL-C for participants consuming a more plant-based low-carbohydrate diet.
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22 The study's strength is that the prescribed hypocaloric diet was self-selected, meaning the results
23 are more in line with what can be expected under free-living conditions. The breadth of
24 application of the plant-based low-carbohydrate diet, however, remains to be determined, but it
25 may provide an option for some individuals for whom LDL-C reduction is an equal concern to
26 weight loss. If low-carbohydrate dietary options become more generally available the number of
27 individuals who will benefit is likely to increase.
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Introduction

Many popular weight loss diets emphasize carbohydrate restriction (Atkins, Eddies, South Beach, Zone). Their success is determined by the level of compliance with the prescribed diets [2-7]. However, a high content of animal products, rich in saturated fat and cholesterol, may make conventional low-carbohydrate diets less appropriate for those with hypercholesterolemia [3 8]. Even during active weight loss, these high saturated fat diets ~~do not lower, may raise~~ serum LDL-C ~~below~~ ~~above~~ baseline [3 8] and there is concern that if such diets continue to be eaten when weight loss has ceased, a more atherogenic blood lipid profile may result [9]. These concerns have prompted exploration of other weight loss strategies, but only modest reductions in LDL-C have been observed [10].

By contrast vegan diets significantly lower LDL-C [11]. Trials of vegan and vegetarian diets also reduce progression of coronary heart disease (CHD) [12] and improve diabetes control [13].

Plant food components such as vegetable proteins, vegetable oils, nuts and viscous fibers, reduce serum lipids in many studies [14-19] and may increase flow mediated vasodilatation [20-23].

Nuts, fiber and vegetarian diets in general, all reduce CHD and diabetes in cohort studies [24-29]. Finally, in cohort studies, low-carbohydrate diets, high in vegetable oils and proteins as opposed to animal products, reduce CHD events and diabetes incidence in women [30 31], while lower red meat intake reduces total, cardiovascular and cancer mortality [32]. Most recently a large randomized controlled trial confirmed the effect of nuts and increased vegetable oil (olive oil) intake in reducing cardiovascular events in the context of a Mediterranean diet [33].

In view of the apparent success of low-carbohydrate diets for weight loss and the demonstration that relatively high-carbohydrate vegetarian and vegan diets, and diets low in animal products, lower CHD risk factors [34-37], we designed a diet that combined both vegan and low-

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3 carbohydrate elements to determine whether such a diet captured both the weight loss and CHD
4 risk reduction advantages. We have already reported the effect of this dietary strategy in
5 producing a difference of 8% in LDL-C reduction between calorie-restricted diets (60% of
6 estimated calorie requirements) when all food was provided [1]. We now report findings after
7 these same participants continued on their respective diets for an additional 6 months, under self-
8 selected conditions, in order to gain insights into the real life effectiveness of this diet. The
9 results of the metabolic (all foods provided) study have been reported previously and had
10 demonstrated a CHD risk factor advantage, but with no greater weight loss than the control diet
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27 **Methods**

28 **Participants**

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30 Forty-seven overweight participants, recruited by newspaper advertisement and hospital clinic
31 notices, undertook the one-month metabolic first phase of the study (Figure 1) that has been
32 previously reported [1]. At the start of the study, participants were given the option to participate
33 in both the metabolic and ad libitum phases or only the metabolic phase. On completion of the
34 metabolic phase, thirty-nine participants (19 control and 20 test participants) continued for an
35 ad libitum six-month study (Table 1). The study was conducted at a Canadian university-
36 affiliated hospital nutrition research center from April 2005 to November 2006. All participants
37 had high normal to raised LDL-C levels ($>3.4\text{mmol/L}$ at diagnosis) and a body mass index > 27
38 kg/m^2 . Details of the eligibility criteria have been previously reported [1]. After recruitment, the
39 11/39 participants who were taking lipid lowering medications discontinued their lipid-lowering
40 medications at least two weeks prior to starting and for the study duration (Table 1).
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Study Protocol

The intervention was a randomized parallel study stratified by sex in which participants were randomized to either low- or high-carbohydrate, calorie-reduced diets. The first month was the previously reported metabolically controlled study [1]. For the following six-months, participants continued on the diet to which they had been assigned as a self-selected (ad libitum) diet.

Anthropometric, blood pressure and blood lipid measurements were repeated at monthly intervals. Insulin and HbA1c were measured at baseline and at the start and end of the ad libitum treatment. Percentage body fat was measured at baseline and end of the ad libitum treatment by bioelectrical impedance (Quantum II; RJL Systems, Clinton Township, Michigan). Seven-day diet and exercise histories were recorded in the week prior to each monthly visit. These histories were reviewed and discussed with the dietitian and appropriate dietary counselling was provided to enhance adherence. The overall feeling of satiety for the previous week was assessed at each study visit using a 9-point bipolar semantic scale, where -4 was extremely hungry, 0 was neutral, and +4 was uncomfortably full [1 35]. No exercise advice was given during the study, There was no prescription related to exercise where but Aalterations in exercise were allowed and recorded.

The Ethics Committees of St. Michael's Hospital and the University of Toronto, and the Therapeutic Products Directorate of Health Canada approved the study. Written informed consent was obtained from the participants. The study's clinical trial registration number was #NCT00256516.

Diets

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3 As with the previous metabolic study, participants were encouraged to eat only 60% of their
4 estimated caloric requirements in order to continue the body weight reduction started on their
5 metabolic phase [38-40]. The prescribed test diet was a low-carbohydrate vegan diet containing
6 26% of calories from carbohydrate, 31% of calories from vegetable proteins and 43% from fat
7 (primarily vegetable oils). Carbohydrate sources on the low-carbohydrate diet featured viscous
8 fiber-containing foods (such as oats and barley) and low-starch vegetables (emphasizing okra
9 and eggplant) for the relatively limited amount of carbohydrate allowed. The vegetable proteins
10 were prescribed as gluten (54.8% of total protein), soy (23.0%), fruits and vegetables (8.7%),
11 nuts (7.5%), and cereals (6.0%). Gluten was contained in the nut bread and wheat gluten (also
12 called “seitan”) products. Soy protein was present in the form of burgers, veggie bacon, deli
13 slices, breakfast links, tofu, and soy milks. Nuts included almonds, cashews, hazelnuts,
14 macadamia, pecans, and pistachios. The fat sources were nuts (43.6% of total fat), vegetable oils
15 (24.4%), soy products (18.5%), avocado (7.1%), cereals (2.7%), fruits and vegetables (2.3%),
16 and seitan products (1.4%). Participants were able to purchase at the research center the “no”
17 starch high protein nut bread and three of the seitan (wheat gluten) products used in the study
18 which were not available in Canada. The control, high-carbohydrate lacto-ovo vegetarian diet
19 (58% carbohydrate, 16% protein and 25% fat) emphasized whole wheat cereals and cereal fiber,
20 as well as low-fat or skim milk dairy products and liquid egg substitute to reduce saturated fat
21 and cholesterol intakes. These diets have been published previously [1]. Participants were given
22 a copy of the menu plans that outlined the food items and amounts prescribed during the
23 metabolic phase. This served as a reference during the ad libitum phase. Furthermore,
24 participants were given an exchange list of the items prescribed on the menu plan. The goal was
25 to enhance adherence.
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3 Self-taring electronic scales (My Weigh Scales, Vancouver, BC or Tanita Corporation, Arlington
4 Heights, IL) were provided to all participants and they were instructed to weigh all food items
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6 while recording the seven-day food diary in the week prior to monthly clinic visits. Adherence
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8 to the three principal cholesterol-lowering components [vegetable proteins (soy and gluten), nuts,
9 and viscous fibers] of the low-carbohydrate diet was assessed from the completed monthly
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11 seven-day food records. The amount of each component provided during the metabolic phase
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13 remained the same as that prescribed during the ad libitum phase.
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20 Neither the dietitians nor participants could be blinded, but equal emphasis was placed on the
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22 potential importance for health of both diets. The analytical technicians were blinded to diet
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24 allocation, as was the statistician, up to analysis of the primary outcome. Participants were
25
26 offered no financial compensation for participation in the study.
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32 **Analyses**

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34 The analytical techniques have been reported previously [1]. Serum was analyzed ~~according to~~
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36 ~~the Lipid Research Clinics protocol~~ in the J. Alick Little Lipid Research Laboratory [35] and
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38 LDL-C (in mmol/L) was calculated by the method of Friedewald et al. [1]. The methods for
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40 analyzing apolipoproteins A1 and B, high sensitivity C-reactive protein (hs-CRP), blood
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42 glucose, insulin, HbA1c, and homeostasis model assessment – insulin resistance model (HOMA-
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44 IR) have been described previously [1]. Exercise data were calculated as metabolic equivalents
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46 (METs) [41]. The absolute 10-year CHD risk score was calculated using the Framingham risk
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48 equation [42].
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53 Diets were assessed for macronutrients, fatty acids, cholesterol and fiber using a computer
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55 program based on the USDA database [43] and developed in our laboratory to allow the addition
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3 of the macronutrient content of study foods obtained from food labels or directly from food
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5 manufacturers. The nutritional profiles of the diets were calculated from the 7-day food records
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7 completed once a month throughout the study and mean intakes are presented.
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10 Adherence with the three principal cholesterol-lowering components [vegetable proteins (soy
11 and gluten), nuts, and viscous fibers] of the low-carbohydrate diet was estimated from the 7-day
12 food records by applying 33.3% adherence factor to the recorded intake for each of the three
13 main components. The sum of the three components if consumed as prescribed would equal
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15 100% adherence.
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22 23 24 **Statistical Analyses**

25 Results are expressed as means \pm SEM or 95% confidence intervals (CIs). Time zero was used as
26 the baseline and refers to the pre-metabolic study baseline [1]. Treatment differences in physical
27 and biochemical measures were assessed using all available data and a repeated measures mixed
28 model accounting for time of assessment (SAS 9.2) [44] in the Tables (Table 2 and 3) and the
29 Results. The response variable was change from baseline, with diet and week as fixed effects and
30 subject ID nested in diet. There was no adjustment for baseline. Any participant who started the
31 ad libitum treatment was included in the analysis (N=39). The completer analysis included the 23
32 participants who completed the study.
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46 Multiple imputation (taking the mean of 5 sets of randomly imputed values) was used to present
47 baseline and treatment values in the Tables (2 and 3) and Figures (2 and 3) by generating data for
48 those who dropped out or had missing values [44].
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55 **Results**

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3 Compliance with the major dietary components [vegetable proteins (soy and gluten), nuts, and
4 viscous fibers] was 33.6% or one-third of that prescribed during the metabolic phase (Table 2).
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6 Saturated fat intakes were similar on both treatments whereas intake of monounsaturated fats,
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8 vegetable proteins, and soy protein were significantly higher on the low-carbohydrate diet (Table
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13 2). Available carbohydrate intake was significantly lower on the low-carbohydrate diet (Table 2).

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15 The attrition dropout rate was 50.35% (710/20) on the low-carbohydrate and 32.26% (65/19) on
16
17 the high-carbohydrate (Figure 1). this equates to a total attrition dropout rate of 43.1% (16/39).

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19 The number of participants who did not complete the study (including dropouts and withdrawals)
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21 did not differ between treatments. Three participants were withdrawn by the study physician due
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24 to failure to attain LDL-C targets on the low-carbohydrate diet (mean LDL-C = 5.24mmol/L)

25 and one subject on the high-carbohydrate diet (LDL-C = 7.78mmol/L). Participants on the low-

26
27 carbohydrate diet tended to have larger reductions in body weight over time (Figure 2). The

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29 weight loss from baseline to the end of the 6-month ad libitum treatment was -6.9kg [95% CI, -

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31 7.7, -6.1] on the low-carbohydrate and -5.8kg [95% CI, -6.6, -5.1] on the control diet with a

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33 significant difference between groups (treatment difference [95% CI]: -1.1kg [-2.1, 0.0];

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35 P=0.047) (Table 3). The final reduction in BMI was also greater on the low-carbohydrate versus

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37 high-carbohydrate diet (treatment difference [95% CI]: -0.4kg/m² [-0.8, 0.0]; P=0.039) (Table 3).

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39 Among the completers, there were numerically larger differences between treatments for both

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41 body weight and BMI (treatment difference [95% CI]: -1.8 kg [-3.0, -0.6]; P=0.0041 and -0.7

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43 kg/m² [-1.1, -0.2]; P=0.0039, respectively).

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45 There was a relative increase in recorded exercise by the high-carbohydrate diet participants,

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47 whereas there was no relative change in the low-carbohydrate participants (treatment difference

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49 [95% CI]: -9.3 [-16.4, -2.2] METs; P=0.012), but this was not reflected in a greater weight loss

(Table 3). There were no treatment differences in percent body fat, waist circumference or satiety (Table 3).

Lipids

At the end of the study, the reduction on the low-carbohydrate versus high-carbohydrate diet was greater for LDL-C (treatment difference [95% CI]: -0.49mmol/L [-0.70, -0.28]; $P<0.001$, for TC (-0.62mmol/L [-0.86, -0.37]; $P<0.001$, for TC:HDL-C -0.57 [-0.83, -0.32]; $P<0.001$, for LDL-C:HDL-C (-0.42 [-0.60, -0.24]; $P<0.001$, and for triglycerides (-0.34mmol/L [-0.57, -0.11]; $P=0.005$). No treatment difference was seen in HDL-C (Table 3). A similar pattern was observed in the completers. The treatment difference was numerically larger for LDL-C (-0.60mmol/L [-0.84, -0.36]; $P<0.0001$), TC (-0.73mmol/L [-1.00, -0.45]; $P<0.0001$), TC:HDL-C (-0.68 [-0.97, -0.39]; $P<0.0001$), and LDL-C:HDL-C (-0.53 [-0.73, -0.32]; $P<0.0001$). Values for LDL-C and the TC:HDL-C ratio were consistently lower in participants on the low-carbohydrate diet throughout the study while HDL-C values were not different from baseline (Figure 3 A-C).

Apolipoproteins

ApoB and the ApoB:A1 ratio were reduced more on the low- versus the high-carbohydrate diet at the end of the study (treatment different [95% CI]: -0.11g/L [-0.16, -0.06]; $P<0.001$ and -0.05 [-0.09, -0.02]; $P=0.003$, respectively) (Table 3). No significant difference between the diets was observed for ApoA1 concentrations. The pattern of change in the apolipoproteins in the completers reflected the changes seen in the whole group. Figure 3D and 3F show that the low-carbohydrate diet resulted in lower apoB and ApoB:ApoA1 ratios relative to baseline over the course of the study.

C-Reactive Protein, HbA1c, Blood Glucose, Serum Insulin, Insulin Resistance and Blood Pressure

Both treatments reduced hs-CRP with no difference between treatments (Table 3). HbA1c, fasting blood glucose, insulin, and insulin resistance (calculated using the HOMA model) fell similarly on both treatments during the course of the study (Table 3). Systolic and diastolic blood pressure decreased similarly with no treatment differences (Table 3). [The completers also failed to show a difference between treatments.](#)

Calculated CHD Risk

The low-carbohydrate diet significantly reduced the calculated 10-year CHD risk relative to the high-carbohydrate diet (2% [-2, -1]; $P < 0.001$) (Table 3). [A reduced CHD risk on the low-carbohydrate diet was also observed in the completers \(2% \[-3, -1\]; \$P < 0.001\$ \).](#)

Adverse Events

No serious adverse events or events that involved hospitalisation occurred during the study.

Discussion

The present study demonstrated that consumption of a low-carbohydrate vegan diet resulted in a modestly greater body weight reduction compared to a high-carbohydrate diet (7% versus 6% reductions, respectively) over a six-month ad libitum period. These reductions were similar to those reported for low-carbohydrate “Atkins-like” diets [2 3 6 10]. However by comparison with the high-carbohydrate diet, consumption of the low-carbohydrate diet containing vegetable

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3 proteins and oils was also associated with significantly reduced concentrations of LDL-C. This
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5 LDL-C reduction has not been reported for other low-carbohydrate diet studies in which a large
6
7 part of the protein and fat originated from animal sources and in which no significant LDL-C
8
9 reductions were seen where increases in LDL-C were seen [2-6 8]. The sustained reduction in
10
11 LDL-C, associated with only a small incremental weight loss on the 6-month self-selected diet, is
12
13 a potentially important attribute of the diet in reducing long-term CHD risk [45 46]. Furthermore,
14
15 as seen in the present study, a low-carbohydrate diet, in which vegetable fat and protein options
16
17 were encouraged, demonstrated a larger reduction in the TC:HDL-C ratio than that reported at 6
18
19 months in weight loss studies employing either a Mediterranean or a high-carbohydrate diet [10].
20
21 The majority of studies undertaken to date have been 6 months to one year in duration [2-6 47]
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23 with more recent studies of up to 2 years [2 8] and, as with the present study, a number of these
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25 studies had a high dropout rate [2 3 5 47]. The high dropout rate in the present study did not
26
27 prevent identification of significant LDL-C and body weight differences in the intent-to-treat
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29 analysis (using all available data). However, the completer data demonstrated an even larger
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31 treatment difference in LDL-C ~~of -0.60mmol/L [-0.84, -0.36]~~ favoring the low-carbohydrate test
32
33 treatment (P<0.001). Those on the low-carbohydrate diet showed overall adherence to the major
34
35 dietary components [vegetable proteins (soy and gluten), nuts, and viscous fibers] at 33.6% of
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37 that provided during the metabolic phase [1]. This adherence is similar to the 43.3% seen with
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39 the dietary portfolio in the comparison of the metabolic one month [35] and the ad libitum six
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41 month studies [48]. In this comparison also just under half the LDL-C reduction (13-14%) seen
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43 on the ad libitum compared to the metabolic study [35].
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53 The effect of low-carbohydrate diets on CHD events has not been assessed in randomized
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55 controlled trials. Nevertheless, low-carbohydrate diets high in vegetable proteins and oils have
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2
3 been associated with a 30% reduced CHD risk and an 18% reduced incidence of diabetes in
4 cohort studies [30 31]. The median interquartile difference in these studies between the first and
5
6 10th decile for vegetable protein and monounsaturated fat (MUFA) intakes, as a marker of
7
8 increased vegetable oil consumption, was 1.4% and 9.3% expressed as a percentage of total
9
10 caloric intake [30]. These figures compare with a 8.2% and a 4.6% relative increase in vegetable
11
12 protein and oil consumption from baseline on the Eco-Atkins diet compared to the control diet.
13
14 The increases in MUFA were therefore seen in both studies. Recently a Spanish Mediterranean
15
16 diet emphasizing increased nut or olive oil consumption, increasing monounsaturated fat intake
17
18 by 2-3%, has been shown to significantly reduce cardiovascular events also by approximately
19
20 30% [33]. These data provide consistent support for the view that the Eco-Atkins approach
21
22 would reduce CHD risk in the long term.
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29 The present diet, while lowering LDL-C by 9%, did not result in any significant depression of
30
31 HDL-C. Lowering LDL-C while maintaining HDL-C would be expected to reduce CHD risk [45
32
33 46]. Similarly, reductions in ApoB and the ApoB:A1 ratio were also observed in the present
34
35 study. These findings further support the potential CHD benefit that this weight loss diet may
36
37 have [49-51]. It has also been claimed that apolipoproteins may be stronger predictors of CHD
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39 events than conventional lipid variables [52-54].
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44 In contrast to the metabolic study, the reductions in systolic and diastolic blood pressure were not
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46 significant between the [low- and high-carbohydrate](#) diets. Similarly, hs-CRP was unchanged
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48 between treatments, however, the level was significantly reduced with the low-carbohydrate diet
49
50 compared to baseline. Studies have shown that hs-CRP tended to be lowest on the diets
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52 containing the highest proportion of carbohydrate [5]. Low glycemic index and low glycemic
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54 load diets have also been associated with lower hs-CRP concentrations [55 56]. These
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3 advantages of the higher carbohydrate diet may have reduced any hs-CRP difference between the
4
5 two diets in the present study.
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8 Soy-containing foods as well as nuts have cholesterol lowering effects [15 17 18 57 58] and may
9
10 explain the reduction in LDL-C. Viscous fiber in low starch vegetables and β -glucan in oats and
11
12 barley may also have contributed to the overall cholesterol lowering effect of the diet [9 14 45].
13
14 Furthermore, nuts and high fiber food consumption have been associated with lower body weight
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16 [59].
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18
19 The study weaknesses include the relatively small sample size and the high dropout rate.
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22 Nevertheless, high dropout rates have been reported in similar dietary studies and it is
23
24 noteworthy that attrition rates were low in the metabolic study when all food was provided [1].
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27 Food availability and preparation may therefore be important factors. Future studies will need to
28
29 focus on strategies to increase and maintain adherence, especially to the cholesterol lowering
30
31 components, which all bear US FDA health claims for cardiovascular disease risk reduction.
32
33 Furthermore, collaboration with food industry may be helpful in addressing concerns of
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35 availability, variety, and ease of preparation. In retrospect, a simplified one page eating plan for
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37 breakfast, lunch, and dinner with a number of options and amounts for each meal, as we have
38
39 used in our dietary portfolio studies, might also be helpful [48]. For those who did complete the
40
41 study, however, there were benefits in weight loss and LDL-C reduction, an additional 2%
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43 advantage in body weight reduction compared to the high-carbohydrate diet and a 13% drop in
44
45 LDL-C for participants consuming a more plant-based low-carbohydrate diet. Unfortunately it
46
47 was not possible to predict who would complete the diet based on pre-study data or changes
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49 observed during the metabolic phase.
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3 The study's strength is that the prescribed hypocaloric diet was self-selected, meaning the results
4 are more in line with what can be expected under free-living conditions. The breadth of
5 application of the plant-based low-carbohydrate diet, however, remains to be determined, but it
6 may provide an option for some individuals for whom LDL-C reduction is an equal concern to
7 weight loss. If low-carbohydrate dietary options become more generally available the number of
8 individuals who will benefit is likely to increase.
9

10 We conclude that a weight loss diet which reduced carbohydrate in exchange for increased
11 intakes of vegetable sources of protein, such as gluten, soy and nuts, together with vegetable oils
12 offers an opportunity to improve both LDL-C and body weight, both being risk factors for CHD.
13 Further trials are warranted to evaluate low-carbohydrate diets, including more plant-based low-
14 carbohydrate diets, on CHD risk factors and ultimately on CHD.
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Disclosures

Dr. Jenkins has served on the Scientific Advisory Board of Sanitarium Company, Agri-Culture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), Canadian Agriculture Policy Institute (CAPI), California Strawberry Commission, Loblaw Supermarket, Herbal Life International, Nutritional Fundamental for Health, Pacific Health Laboratories, Metagenics, Bayer Consumer Care, Orafti,

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8
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4
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Figure Legends

Figure 1: Patient Flow Diagram.

Figure 2: Weight loss during the study on both diets.

Figure 3: Mean (A) LDL-C, (B) HDL-C, (C) TC:HDL-C, (D) apolipoprotein B (apoB) and (E) apolipoprotein A1 (apoA1), (F) ApoB:ApoA1 ratio between the two treatments during the metabolic and ad libitum phases.

Table 1: Baseline Characteristics for Those Who Started the 6-Month Self-Selected Diets (n=39)

	High-carbohydrate (n=19)	Low-Carbohydrate (n=20)
Age (y)	55.3 ± 1.8	57.6 ± 1.4
Males/Females	6/13	9/11
Body Weight, kg	85.4 [79.3, 91.6]	83.7 [78.5, 89.0]
Body Mass Index, kg/m ²	31.1 [29.9, 32.4]	31.1 [29.8, 32.4]
Blood Pressure, mm Hg		
Systolic	122 [116, 128]	128 [123, 132]
Diastolic	75 [72, 79]	77 [74, 80]
Cholesterol, mmol/L		
Total	6.75 [6.28, 7.21]	6.76 [6.21, 7.31]
LDL-C	4.40 [3.99, 4.82]	4.53 [4.14, 4.93]
HDL-C	1.36 [1.22, 1.50]	1.21 [1.06, 1.36]
Triglycerides, mmol/L	2.16 [1.62, 2.70]	2.23 [1.65, 2.80]
Ratios		
TC:HDL-C	5.17 [4.54, 5.80]	5.81 [5.20, 6.41]
LDL-C: HDL-C	3.35 [2.95, 3.75]	3.89 [3.49, 4.29]
Medications		
Lipid lowering (prior to start of study)	4	7
Blood pressure	3	6
Diabetes	0	0
Thyroid	2	1

Values represent mean ± SEM or 95% confidence intervals (CIs).

No significant differences between treatments at baseline assessed by two sample t-test (two-tailed).

Table 2: Nutritional Profiles on the High and Low Carbohydrate Diets (n=39)

	High Carbohydrate		Low Carbohydrate		Between-Treatment Difference ^c	P-value ^d
	Week 0 ^b	Ad Libitum ^b	Week 0 ^b	Ad Libitum ^b		
Calories (kcal)	1598 [1421, 1775]	1347 [1140, 1553]	1840 [1550, 2130]	1388 [1234, 1541]	-248 [-391, -106]	0.001
% of Total Calories						
Available Carbohydrate	46.3 [42.2, 50.4]	53.9 [50.2, 57.5]	43.8 [40.2, 47.4]	39.6 [35.7, 43.6]	-10.5 [-13.6, -7.5]	< 0.001
Protein	20.6 [18.7, 22.5]	18.4 [17.4, 19.5]	20.1 [18.0, 22.2]	22.7 [20.1, 25.4]	5.9 [4.3, 7.5]	< 0.001
Vegetable Protein	5.6 [5.0, 6.1]	6.7 [6.1, 7.3]	5.7 [5.3, 6.1]	15.0 [11.7, 18.2]	8.2 [6.5, 9.9]	< 0.001
Soy Protein	0 [0, 0]	0.2 [0.1, 0.2]	0 [0, 0]	4.7 [2.7, 6.8]	3.6 [2.9, 4.4]	< 0.001
Fat	30.8 [27.3, 34.4]	27.5 [24.6, 30.4]	34.4 [31.4, 37.5]	36.0 [31.5, 40.5]	5.2 [2.6, 7.7]	< 0.001
Saturated	10.8 [9.1, 12.6]	7.6 [6.2, 8.9]	11.8 [10.3, 13.3]	7.5 [6.6, 8.4]	-0.4 [-1.4, 0.6]	0.401
Monounsaturated	12.3 [10.7, 13.8]	10.4 [9.3, 11.6]	13.0 [11.9, 14.2]	14.8 [13.1, 16.6]	4.6 [3.1, 6.1]	< 0.001
Polyunsaturated*	5.2 [4.6, 5.8]	6.3 [5.4, 7.2]	6.6 [5.5, 7.8]	8.4 [7.5, 9.4]	0.4 [-0.5, 1.4]	0.4
Alcohol	2.2 [0.3, 4.2]	1.9 [0.7, 3.2]	1.6 [0.0, 3.3]	1.1 [0.1, 2.1]	-0.5 [-1.3, 0.2]	0.160
Dietary Fibre (g/1000 kcal)	10.9 [9.2, 12.5]	18.2 [15.2, 21.1]	12.1 [9.9, 14.4]	21.3 [18.8, 23.8]	1.5 [-0.5, 3.5]	0.127
Dietary Cholesterol (mg/1000 kcal)	149 [129, 169]	87 [61, 113]	157 [136, 177]	117 [44, 189]	11 [-22, 23]	0.954
Adherence with "Eco-Atkins" Components ^a						
Viscous Fiber (out of 33.3%)	---	---	---	14.0 [9.4, 18.6]	---	---
Vegetable Protein (soy and gluten) (out of 33.3%)	---	---	---	14.7 [10.3, 19.1]	---	---
Nuts (out of 33.3%)	---	---	---	6.3 [3.3, 9.3]	---	---
Total Adherence (out of 100%)	---	---	---	33.6 [22.1, 45.2]	---	---
Values represent mean ± 95% confidence intervals (CIs).						
^a Adherence represents the mean percentage intake of the prescribed intake of the 3 cholesterol-lowering components [viscous fiber, vegetable protein (soy and gluten), nuts] by expressing the recorded intake for each component as 33.3%. The sum of the 3 components if consumed as prescribed would equal 100% adherence.						
^b Values represent multiple imputation (taking the mean of 5 sets of randomly imputed values) to generate data for those who dropped out or had missing values.						
^c Between Treatment Difference = Change from baseline between the two diets using all available data.						
^d P-values assessed using all available data and a repeated measures mixed model accounting for time of assessment. The response variable was change from baseline, with diet and week as fixed effects and subject ID nested in diet. There was no adjustment for baseline.						
*Significantly different between treatments at baseline assessed by two sample t-test (two tailed), P=0.025.						

Table 3: Effect of high and low carbohydrate diets on body weight, blood lipids, apolipoproteins and 10-yr CHD risk (n=39)

	High Carbohydrate		Low Carbohydrate		Between Treatment Difference ^b	P-value ^c
	Week 0 ^a	Ad Libitum ^a	Week 0 ^a	Ad Libitum ^a		
Body Weight, kg	85.4 [79.3, 91.6]	80.4 [74.2, 86.6]	83.7 [78.5, 89.0]	76.9 [71.9, 81.9]	-1.1 [-2.1, 0.0]	0.047
BMI	31.1 [29.9, 32.4]	29.2 [27.9, 30.5]	31.1 [29.8, 32.4]	28.7 [27.3, 30.1]	-0.4 [-0.8, 0.0]	0.039
Body Fat, %	38.9 [34.0, 43.8]	35.0 [30.7, 39.2]	35.6 [30.1, 41.1]	31.4 [26.1, 36.6]	-1.7 [-4.0, 0.7]	0.161
Waist Circumference (cm)	102.8 [99.4, 106.2]	97.4 [93.1, 101.6]	99.8 [96.1, 103.5]	93.7 [89.8, 97.7]	0.1 [-1.1, 1.3]	0.861
Fasting Glucose	5.2 [4.9, 5.4]	4.6 [4.5, 4.7]	5.2 [5.0, 5.4]	4.6 [4.4, 4.9]	0.1 [-0.1, 0.2]	0.447
HbA1c (%)	5.2 [5.0, 5.4]	5.2 [5.0, 5.3]	5.3 [5.0, 5.5]	5.2 [5.0, 5.4]	0.0 [-0.2, 0.1]	0.852
Fasting Insulin	50.0 [38.3, 61.7]	36.4 [27.5, 45.4]	47.3 [36.9, 57.6]	33.3 [22.8, 43.9]	-0.6 [-9.1, 8.0]	0.898
HOMA-IR	1.65 [1.17, 2.13]	1.11 [0.81, 1.41]	1.53 [1.19, 1.88]	0.99 [0.68, 1.30]	0.01 [-0.30, 0.33]	0.937
Satiety (-4 to 4)	1.0 [0.7, 1.4]	0.9 [0.7, 1.2]	1.2 [0.8, 1.7]	1.1 [0.8, 1.4]	-0.1 [-0.4, 0.2]	0.440
Exercise, METs	17.4 [12.4, 22.4]	25.8 [21.1, 30.6]	24.0 [12.9, 35.0]	23.9 [15.3, 32.6]	-9.3 [-16.4, -2.2]	0.012
Cholesterol, mmol/L [†]						
Total	6.75 [6.28, 7.21]	6.49 [5.97, 7.02]	6.76 [6.21, 7.31]	6.10 [5.67, 6.53]	-0.62 [-0.86, -0.37]	<0.001
LDL-C	4.40 [3.99, 4.82]	4.40 [3.91, 4.90]	4.53 [4.14, 4.93]	4.06 [3.71, 4.42]	-0.49 [-0.70, -0.28]	<0.001
HDL-C	1.36 [1.22, 1.50]	1.35 [1.22, 1.48]	1.21 [1.06, 1.36]	1.25 [1.10, 1.39]	0.03 [-0.02, 0.07]	0.245
Triglycerides	2.16 [1.62, 2.70]	1.71 [1.35, 2.07]	2.23 [1.65, 2.80]	1.50 [1.22, 1.77]	-0.34 [-0.57, -0.11]	0.005
Ratios						
Tchol:HDL-C	5.17 [4.54, 5.80]	4.92 [4.49, 5.34]	5.81 [5.20, 6.41]	5.13 [4.65, 5.62]	-0.57 [-0.83, -0.32]	<0.001
LDL-C:HDL-C	3.35 [2.95, 3.75]	3.34 [3.00, 3.68]	3.89 [3.49, 4.29]	3.48 [3.06, 3.90]	-0.42 [-0.60, -0.24]	<0.002
Apolipoproteins, g/L [‡]						
Apo A1	1.69 [1.60, 1.78]	1.69 [1.60, 1.77]	1.57 [1.45, 1.69]	1.57 [1.46, 1.67]	-0.02 [-0.06, 0.02]	0.316
Apo B	1.38 [1.26, 1.50]	1.23 [1.13, 1.33]	1.42 [1.30, 1.54]	1.20 [1.10, 1.31]	-0.11 [-0.16, -0.06]	<0.001
Apo B: Apo A1	0.83 [0.74, 0.91]	0.74 [0.68, 0.80]	0.92 [0.84, 0.99]	0.78 [0.70, 0.86]	-0.05 [-0.09, -0.02]	0.003
hs-CRP, mg/dL	2.1 [1.0, 3.3]	1.9 [1.3, 2.4]	3.0 [1.5, 4.5]	2.6 [1.0, 4.1]	-0.4 [-0.9, 0.1]	0.082
Blood Pressure, mmHg						
Systolic	122 [116, 128]	118 [114, 122]	128 [123, 132]	123 [119, 128]	-2 [-5, 2]	0.356
Diastolic	75 [72, 79]	74 [71, 77]	77 [74, 80]	76 [71, 80]	-1 [-3, 1]	0.288
10-yr CHD risk (%)*	8 [6, 9]	7 [6, 9]	12 [9, 14]	9 [7, 11]	-2 [-2, -1]	<0.001

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4 Values represent mean \pm 95% confidence intervals (CIs).

5 †To convert total cholesterol, LDL-C, and HDL-C to mg/dL, divide by 0.0259; to convert triglycerides to mg/dL, divide by 0.0113.

6 ‡To convert apolipoprotein A1 and B to mg/dL, multiply by 100.
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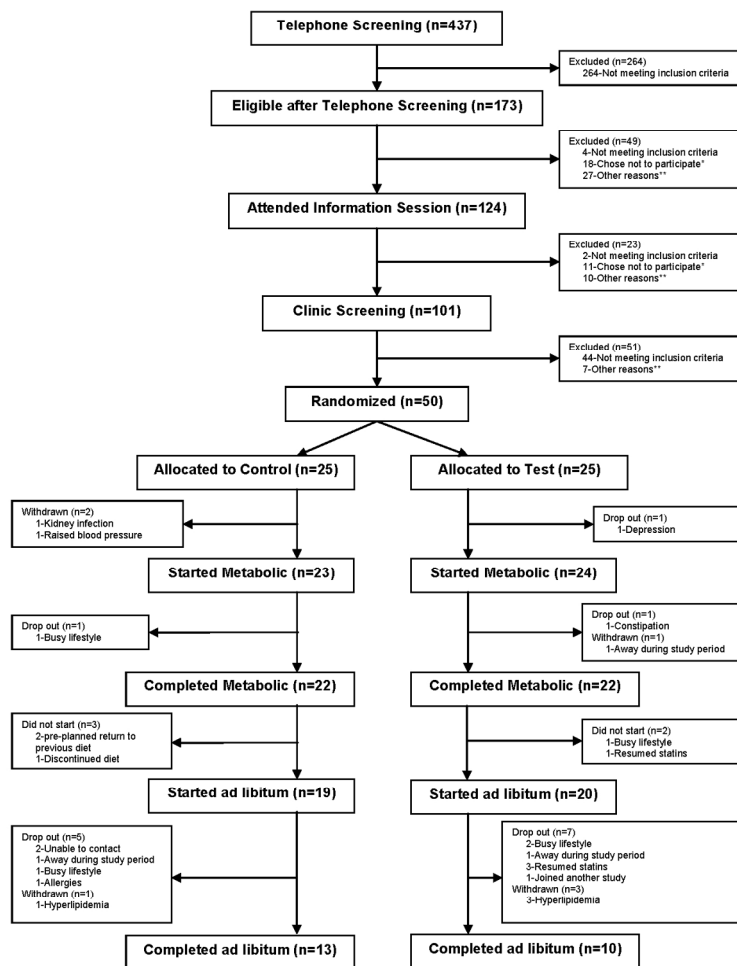
9 ^aValues represent multiple imputation (taking the mean of 5 sets of randomly imputed values) to generate data for those who dropped out or had missing values.

10 ^bBetween Treatment Difference = Change from baseline between the two diets using all available data.

11 ^cP-values assessed using all available data and a repeated measures mixed model accounting for time of assessment. The response variable was change from baseline,
12 with diet and week as fixed effects and subject ID nested in diet. There was no adjustment for baseline.

13 *Significantly different between treatments at baseline assessed by two sample t-test (two tailed), P=0.007.
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Figure 1



*Chose not to participate (29): busy lifestyle (13), not interested (6), study too demanding (3), currently on another diet (2), no compensation (2), work-related (2), dislike prepackaged foods (1)

**Other reasons (44): unable to contact (19), unable to come to clinic (13), away (5), throat surgery (1), bowel resection (1), high potassium and BP (1), high potassium (1), raised liver function tests (1), not interested (1), medical insurance issue (1)

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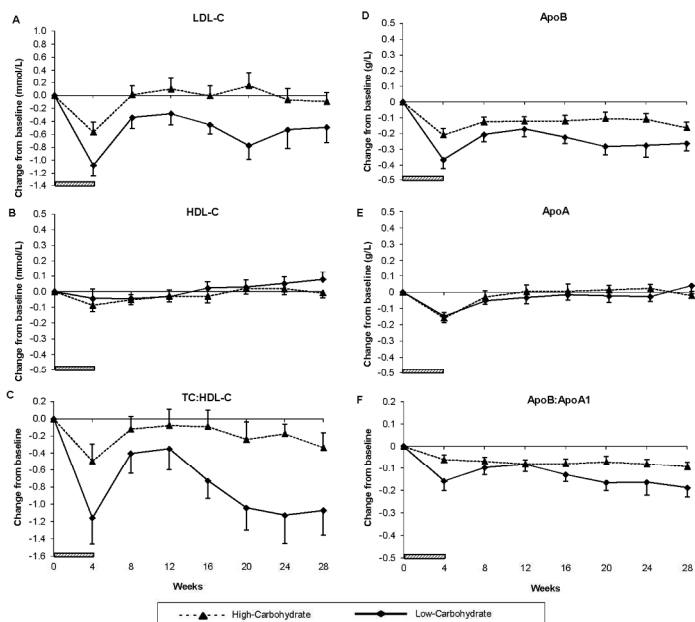


Figure 3. Change in (A) LDL-C, (B) HDL-C, (C) TC:HDL-C, (D) Apolipoprotein B (apoB), (E) Apolipoprotein A1 (apoA1), (F) ApoB:ApoA1 ratio between the two treatments during the metabolic phase and the ad libitum phase. Values represent mean \pm SEM of the change from baseline using multiple imputation (taking the mean of 5 sets of randomly imputed values) to generate data for those who dropped out or had missing values for the ad libitum phase. Significant treatment differences were seen for LDL-C (P<0.001), apo B (P<0.001) and the ratios TC:HDL-C (P<0.001) and apoB:apoA1 (p=0.003) using all available data in the repeated measures mixed model analysis during the ad libitum phase.

■ Represents the metabolic phase.

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Review only



CONSORT 2010 checklist of information to include when reporting a randomised trial*

Section/Topic	Item No	Checklist item	Reported on page No
Title and abstract			
	1a	Identification as a randomised trial in the title	1
	1b	Structured summary of trial design, methods, results, and conclusions (for specific guidance see CONSORT for abstracts)	5-6
Introduction			
Background and objectives	2a	Scientific background and explanation of rationale	7-8
	2b	Specific objectives or hypotheses	8
Methods			
Trial design	3a	Description of trial design (such as parallel, factorial) including allocation ratio	9
	3b	Important changes to methods after trial commencement (such as eligibility criteria), with reasons	NA
Participants	4a	Eligibility criteria for participants	8, also previously published from results of metabolic phase
	4b	Settings and locations where the data were collected	8
Interventions	5	The interventions for each group with sufficient details to allow replication, including how and when they were actually administered	9-11
Outcomes	6a	Completely defined pre-specified primary and secondary outcome measures, including how and when they were assessed	10-12
	6b	Any changes to trial outcomes after the trial commenced, with reasons	NA
Sample size	7a	How sample size was determined	Continuation with ad libitum phase, metabolic phase published

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Randomisation:
Sequence
generation

7b When applicable, explanation of any interim analyses and stopping guidelines

NA

8a Method used to generate the random allocation sequence

Continuation
with ad libitum
phase,
randomized
metabolic
phase
published

8b Type of randomisation; details of any restriction (such as blocking and block size)

Continuation
with ad libitum
phase,
randomized
metabolic
phase
published

Allocation
concealment
mechanism

9 Mechanism used to implement the random allocation sequence (such as sequentially numbered containers), describing any steps taken to conceal the sequence until interventions were assigned

Continuation
with ad libitum
phase,
randomized
metabolic
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published

Implementation

10 Who generated the random allocation sequence, who enrolled participants, and who assigned participants to interventions

Continuation
with ad libitum
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Blinding

11a If done, who was blinded after assignment to interventions (for example, participants, care providers, those assessing outcomes) and how

11a

11b If relevant, description of the similarity of interventions

NA

1				
2	Statistical methods	12a	Statistical methods used to compare groups for primary and secondary outcomes	12
3		12b	Methods for additional analyses, such as subgroup analyses and adjusted analyses	12
4				
5	Results			
6	Participant flow (a diagram is strongly recommended)	13a	For each group, the numbers of participants who were randomly assigned, received intended treatment, and were analysed for the primary outcome	Figure 1, CONSORT Diagram
7		13b	For each group, losses and exclusions after randomisation, together with reasons	Figure 1, CONSORT Diagram
8				
9	Recruitment	14a	Dates defining the periods of recruitment and follow-up	8
10		14b	Why the trial ended or was stopped	NA
11				
12	Baseline data	15	A table showing baseline demographic and clinical characteristics for each group	Table 1
13	Numbers analysed	16	For each group, number of participants (denominator) included in each analysis and whether the analysis was by original assigned groups	12
14		17a	For each primary and secondary outcome, results for each group, and the estimated effect size and its precision (such as 95% confidence interval)	132-153 , Table 3, Figure 2 & 3
15	Outcomes and estimation	17b	For binary outcomes, presentation of both absolute and relative effect sizes is recommended	Relative effect sizes are given in Results 132-153 and Tables 2 & 3. The absolute differences from each treatment can be derived from Table 2 & 3 and Figures 2 & 3.
16		18	Results of any other analyses performed, including subgroup analyses and adjusted analyses, distinguishing pre-specified from exploratory	13-152, 13
17				
18	Ancillary analyses	18	Results of any other analyses performed, including subgroup analyses and adjusted analyses, distinguishing pre-specified from exploratory	13-152, 13
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Harms	19	All important harms or unintended effects in each group (for specific guidance see CONSORT for harms)	<u>154</u>
Discussion			
Limitations	20	Trial limitations, addressing sources of potential bias, imprecision, and, if relevant, multiplicity of analyses	<u>186</u>
Generalisability	21	Generalisability (external validity, applicability) of the trial findings	<u>15-194,15</u>
Interpretation	22	Interpretation consistent with results, balancing benefits and harms, and considering other relevant evidence	<u>145-1946</u>
Other information			
Registration	23	Registration number and name of trial registry	<u>2</u>
Protocol	24	Where the full trial protocol can be accessed, if available	<u>2</u>
Funding	25	Sources of funding and other support (such as supply of drugs), role of funders	<u>2-3, (repeated 18) 20</u>

*We strongly recommend reading this statement in conjunction with the CONSORT 2010 Explanation and Elaboration for important clarifications on all the items. If relevant, we also recommend reading CONSORT extensions for cluster randomised trials, non-inferiority and equivalence trials, non-pharmacological treatments, herbal interventions, and pragmatic trials. Additional extensions are forthcoming: for those and for up to date references relevant to this checklist, see www.consort-statement.org.



Effect of a Six Months Vegan Low-Carbohydrate (“Eco-Atkins”) Diet on Cardiovascular Risk Factors and Body Weight in Hyperlipidemic Adults: A Randomized Controlled Trial



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Primary Subject Heading:	Nutrition and metabolism
Secondary Subject Heading:	Cardiovascular medicine
Keywords:	weight loss, diet, hyperlipidemia

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Effect of a Six Month Vegan Low-Carbohydrate (“Eco-Atkins”) Diet on Cardiovascular Risk Factors and Body Weight in Hyperlipidemic Adults: A Randomized Controlled Trial

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Abstract

Objective: Low-carbohydrate diets may be useful for weight loss. Diets high in vegetable proteins and oils may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease (CHD). The main objective was to determine the longer term effect of a diet that was both low-carbohydrate and plant-based on weight loss and LDL-C.

Design, Setting, Participants: A parallel design study of 39 overweight hyperlipidemic men and postmenopausal women conducted at a Canadian university-affiliated hospital nutrition research center from April 2005 to November 2006.

Intervention: Participants were advised to consume either a low-carbohydrate vegan diet or a high-carbohydrate lacto-ovo vegetarian diet for six-months after completing one-month metabolic (all foods provided) versions of these diets. The prescribed macronutrient intakes for the low- and high-carbohydrate diets were: 26% and 58% of energy from carbohydrate, 31% and 16% from protein and 43% and 25% from fat, respectively.

Primary Outcome: Change in body weight.

Results: Twenty-three participants (50% test, 68% control) completed the six-month ad libitum study. The approximate 4kg weight loss on the metabolic study was increased to -6.9kg on low-carbohydrate and -5.8kg on high-carbohydrate six-month ad libitum treatments (treatment difference [95% CI]: -1.1kg [-2.1, 0.0], P=0.047). The relative LDL-C and triglyceride reductions were also greater on the low-carbohydrate treatment (treatment difference [95% CI]: -0.49mmol/L [-0.70, -0.28], P<0.001 and -0.34mmol/L [-0.57, -0.11], P=0.005, respectively), as were the TC:HDL-C and apolipoprotein B:A1 ratios (-0.57 [-0.83, -0.32], P<0.001 and -0.05 [-0.09, -0.02], P=0.003, respectively).

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3 **Conclusions:** A self-selected low-carbohydrate vegan diet, containing increased protein and fat
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5 from gluten and soy products, nuts, and vegetable oils, had lipid lowering advantages over a
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7 high-carbohydrate, low-fat weight loss diet, thus improving heart disease risk factors.
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12 **Trial Registration:** clinicaltrials.gov (<http://www.clinicaltrials.gov/>), #NCT00256516
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For peer review only

Article Summary

Article Focus

- Low-carbohydrate diets may be useful for weight loss. Diets high in vegetable proteins and oils may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease (CHD).
- The objective of the randomized clinical trial was to determine the longer term effect of a diet that was both low-carbohydrate and plant-based on weight loss and LDL-C.
- We have already reported the effect of this dietary strategy in producing a difference of 8% in LDL-C reduction between calorie-restricted diets (60% of estimated calorie requirements) when all food was provided. We now report findings after these same participants continued on their respective diets for an additional 6 months, under self-selected conditions, in order to gain insights into the real life effectiveness of this diet.

Key Messages

- By comparison with the high-carbohydrate diet, consumption of the low-carbohydrate diet containing vegetable proteins and oils was also associated with significantly reduced concentrations of LDL-C. This LDL-C reduction has not been reported for other low-carbohydrate diet studies in which a large part of the protein and fat originated from animal sources.
- The present study also demonstrated that consumption of a low-carbohydrate vegan diet resulted in modestly greater body weight reductions compared to a high-carbohydrate diet (7% versus 6% reductions, respectively) over a six-month ad libitum period.

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3 - The sustained reduction in LDL-C, associated with a small incremental weight loss on the 6-
4 month self-selected diet, is a potentially important attribute of the diet in reducing long-term
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8 CHD risk
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10 11 12 **Strengths and Limitations of this Study**

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15 The study weaknesses include the relatively small sample size and the high dropout rate.

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18 Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that attrition rates were low in the metabolic study when all food
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20 was provided [1]. Food availability and preparation may therefore be important factors. For those
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22 who did complete the study, however, there were benefits in weight loss and LDL-C reduction,
23
24 an additional 2% advantage in body weight reduction compared to the high-carbohydrate diet
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26 and a 13% drop in LDL-C for participants consuming a more plant-based low-carbohydrate diet.

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29 The study's strength is that the prescribed hypocaloric diet was self-selected, meaning the results
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31 are more in line with what can be expected under free-living conditions. The breadth of
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33 application of the plant-based low-carbohydrate diet, however, remains to be determined, but it
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35 may provide an option for some individuals for whom LDL-C reduction is an equal concern to
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37 weight loss. If low-carbohydrate dietary options become more generally available the number of
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39 individuals who will benefit is likely to increase.
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Introduction

Many popular weight loss diets emphasize carbohydrate restriction (Atkins, Eddies, South Beach, Zone). Their success is determined by the level of compliance with the prescribed diets [2-7]. However, a high content of animal products, rich in saturated fat and cholesterol, may make conventional low-carbohydrate diets less appropriate for those with hypercholesterolemia [3 8]. Even during active weight loss, these high saturated fat diets do not lower serum LDL-C below baseline [3 8] and there is concern that if such diets continue to be eaten when weight loss has ceased, a more atherogenic blood lipid profile may result [9]. These concerns have prompted exploration of other weight loss strategies, but only modest reductions in LDL-C have been observed [10].

By contrast vegan diets significantly lower LDL-C [11]. Trials of vegan and vegetarian diets also reduce progression of coronary heart disease (CHD) [12] and improve diabetes control [13].

Plant food components such as vegetable proteins, vegetable oils, nuts and viscous fibers, reduce serum lipids in many studies [14-19] and may increase flow mediated vasodilatation [20-23].

Nuts, fiber and vegetarian diets in general, all reduce CHD and diabetes in cohort studies [24-29]. Finally, in cohort studies, low-carbohydrate diets, high in vegetable oils and proteins as opposed to animal products, reduce CHD events and diabetes incidence in women [30 31], while lower red meat intake reduces total, cardiovascular and cancer mortality [32]. Most recently a large randomized controlled trial confirmed the effect of nuts and increased vegetable oil (olive oil) intake in reducing cardiovascular events in the context of a Mediterranean diet [33].

In view of the apparent success of low-carbohydrate diets for weight loss and the demonstration that relatively high-carbohydrate vegetarian and vegan diets, and diets low in animal products, lower CHD risk factors [34-37], we designed a diet that combined both vegan and low-

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3 carbohydrate elements to determine whether such a diet captured both the weight loss and CHD
4 risk reduction advantages. We have already reported the effect of this dietary strategy in
5 producing a difference of 8% in LDL-C reduction between calorie-restricted diets (60% of
6 estimated calorie requirements) when all food was provided [1]. We now report findings after
7 these same participants continued on their respective diets for an additional 6 months, under self-
8 selected conditions, in order to gain insights into the real life effectiveness of this diet. The
9 results of the metabolic (all foods provided) study have been reported previously and had
10 demonstrated a CHD risk factor advantage, but with no greater weight loss than the control diet
11 [1].
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27 **Methods**

28 **Participants**

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30 Forty-seven overweight participants, recruited by newspaper advertisement and hospital clinic
31 notices, undertook the one-month metabolic first phase of the study (Figure 1) that has been
32 previously reported [1]. At the start of the study, participants were given the option to participate
33 in both the metabolic and ad libitum phases or only the metabolic phase. On completion of the
34 metabolic phase, thirty-nine participants (19 control and 20 test participants) continued for an ad
35 libitum six-month study and their data (n=39) were used in the final analysis (Table 1). The
36 study was conducted at a Canadian university-affiliated hospital nutrition research center from
37 April 2005 to November 2006. All participants had high normal to raised LDL-C levels
38 (>3.4mmol/L at diagnosis) and a body mass index > 27 kg/m². Details of the eligibility criteria
39 have been previously reported [1]. After recruitment, the 11/39 participants who were taking
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3 lipid lowering medications discontinued their medications at least two weeks prior to starting and
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5 for the study duration (Table 1).
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10 **Study Protocol**

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12 The intervention was a randomized parallel study stratified by sex in which participants were
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14 randomized to either low- or high-carbohydrate, calorie-reduced diets. The first month was the
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16 previously reported metabolically controlled study [1]. For the following six-months, participants
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18 continued on the diet to which they had been assigned as a self-selected (ad libitum) diet.
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21 Anthropometric, blood pressure and blood lipid measurements were repeated at monthly
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23 intervals. Insulin and HbA1c were measured at baseline and at the start and end of the ad libitum
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25 treatment. Percentage body fat was measured at baseline and end of the ad libitum treatment by
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27 bioelectrical impedance (Quantum II; RJL Systems, Clinton Township, Michigan). Seven-day
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29 diet and exercise histories were recorded in the week prior to each monthly visit. These histories
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31 were reviewed and discussed with the dietitian and appropriate dietary counselling was provided
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33 to enhance adherence. The overall feeling of satiety for the previous week was assessed at each
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35 study visit using a 9-point bipolar semantic scale, where -4 was extremely hungry, 0 was neutral,
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37 and +4 was uncomfortably full [1 35]. No exercise advise was given during the study, but
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39 alterations in exercise were allowed and recorded.
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45 The Ethics Committees of St. Michael's Hospital and the University of Toronto, and the
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47 Therapeutic Products Directorate of Health Canada approved the study. Written informed
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49 consent was obtained from the participants. The study's clinical trial registration number was
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51 #NCT00256516.
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Diets

As with the previous metabolic study, participants were encouraged to eat only 60% of their estimated caloric requirements in order to continue the body weight reduction started on their metabolic phase [38-40]. The prescribed test diet was a low-carbohydrate vegan diet containing 26% of calories from carbohydrate, 31% of calories from vegetable proteins and 43% from fat (primarily vegetable oils). Carbohydrate sources on the low-carbohydrate diet featured viscous fiber-containing foods (such as oats and barley) and low-starch vegetables (emphasizing okra and eggplant) for the relatively limited amount of carbohydrate allowed. The vegetable proteins were prescribed as gluten (54.8% of total protein), soy (23.0%), fruits and vegetables (8.7%), nuts (7.5%), and cereals (6.0%). Gluten was contained in the nut bread and wheat gluten (also called “seitan”) products. Soy protein was present in the form of burgers, deli slices, breakfast links, veggie bacon, tofu, and soy milks. Nuts included almonds, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia, pecans, and pistachios. The fat sources were nuts (43.6% of total fat), vegetable oils (24.4%), soy products (18.5%), avocado (7.1%), cereals (2.7%), fruits and vegetables (2.3%), and seitan products (1.4%). Participants were able to purchase at the research center the “no” starch high protein nut bread and three of the seitan (wheat gluten) products used in the study which were not available in Canada. The control, high-carbohydrate lacto-ovo vegetarian diet (58% carbohydrate, 16% protein and 25% fat) emphasized whole wheat cereals and cereal fiber, as well as low-fat or skim milk dairy products and liquid egg substitute to reduce saturated fat and cholesterol intakes. These diets have been published previously [1]. Participants were given a copy of the menu plans that outlined the food items and amounts prescribed during the metabolic phase. These menu plans served as a reference during the ad libitum phase.

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3 Furthermore, participants were given an exchange list of the items prescribed on the menu plan.

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5 The goal was to enhance adherence.

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8 Self-taring electronic scales (My Weigh Scales, Vancouver, BC or Tanita Corporation, Arlington
9 Heights, IL) were provided to all participants and they were instructed to weigh all food items
10 while recording the seven-day food diary in the week prior to monthly clinic visits. Adherence to
11 the three principal cholesterol-lowering components [vegetable proteins (soy and gluten), nuts,
12 and viscous fibers] of the low-carbohydrate diet was assessed from the completed monthly
13 seven-day food records. The amount of each component provided during the metabolic phase
14 remained the same as that prescribed during the ad libitum phase.

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17 Neither the dietitians nor participants could be blinded, but equal emphasis was placed on the
18 potential importance for health of both diets. The analytical technicians were blinded to diet
19 allocation, as was the statistician, up to analysis of the primary outcome. Participants were
20 offered no financial compensation for participation in the study.
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36 **Analyses**

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38 The analytical techniques have been reported previously [1]. Serum was analyzed in the J. Alick
39 Little Lipid Research Laboratory [35]. LDL-C (in mmol/L) was calculated by the method of
40 Friedewald et al. [1], using all data including the two participants who had baseline and during
41 study triglyceride values above 4.5 mmol/L (3 values on low-carbohydrate diet and 2 on high-
42 carbohydrate diet, maximum triglyceride < 6.5 mmol/L) (exclusion of these two individuals did
43 not alter the findings). The methods for analyzing apolipoproteins A1 and B, high sensitivity C-
44 reactive protein (hs-CRP), blood glucose, insulin, HbA1c, and homeostasis model assessment –
45 insulin resistance model (HOMA-IR) have been described previously [1]. Exercise data were
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3 calculated as metabolic equivalents (METs) [41]. The absolute 10-year CHD risk score was
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5 calculated using the Framingham risk equation [42].
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8 Diets were assessed for macronutrients, fatty acids, cholesterol and fiber using a computer
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10 program based on the USDA database [43] and developed in our laboratory to allow the addition
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12 of the macronutrient content of study foods obtained from food labels or directly from food
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14 manufacturers. The nutritional profiles of the diets were calculated from the 7-day food records
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16 completed once a month throughout the study and mean intakes are presented.
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20 Adherence to the three principal cholesterol-lowering components [vegetable proteins (soy and
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22 gluten), nuts, and viscous fibers] of the low-carbohydrate diet was estimated from the 7-day food
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24 records. Each component was assessed as contributing 1/3 or 33.3% to the LDL-C reduction.
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27 When the amount consumed was equivalent to the amount prescribed a 33.3% compliance would
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29 be recorded for that component. The sum of the three components if consumed as prescribed
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31 would equal 100% adherence.
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34 35 36 **Statistical Analyses**

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38 Results are expressed as means \pm SEM or 95% confidence intervals (CIs). Time zero was used as
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40 the baseline and refers to the pre-metabolic study baseline [1]. Treatment differences in physical
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42 and biochemical measures were assessed using all available data from the 39 participants and a
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44 repeated measures mixed model accounting for time of assessment (SAS 9.2) [44] in the Tables
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46 (Table 2 and 3) and the Results. The response variable was change from baseline, with diet and
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48 week as fixed effects and subject ID nested in diet. There was no adjustment for baseline. Any
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50 participant who started the ad libitum treatment was included in the analysis (N=39). The
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52 completer analysis included the 23 participants who completed the study (Figure 1).
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3 Multiple imputation (taking the mean of 5 sets of randomly imputed values) was used to present
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5 baseline and treatment values in the Tables (2 and 3) and Figures (2 and 3) by generating data for
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7 those who dropped out or had missing values [44].
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10 11 12 **Results**

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14 Compliance with the major dietary components [vegetable proteins (soy and gluten), nuts, and
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16 viscous fibers] was 33.6% or one-third of that prescribed during the metabolic phase (Table 2).
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18 Saturated fat intakes were similar on both treatments whereas intake of monounsaturated fats,
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20 vegetable proteins, and soy protein were significantly higher on the low-carbohydrate diet (Table
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22 2). Available carbohydrate intake was significantly lower on the low-carbohydrate diet (Table 2).
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24 The attrition rate was 50% (10/20) on the low-carbohydrate and 32% (6/19) on the high-
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26 carbohydrate (Figure 1), this equates to a total attrition rate of 41% (16/39). The number of
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28 participants who did not complete the study (including dropouts and withdrawals) did not differ
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30 between treatments. Three participants were withdrawn by the study physician due to failure to
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32 attain LDL-C targets on the low-carbohydrate diet (mean LDL-C = 5.24mmol/L) and one subject
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34 on the high-carbohydrate diet (LDL-C = 7.78mmol/L). Participants on the low-carbohydrate diet
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36 tended to have larger reductions in body weight over time (Figure 2). The weight loss from
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38 baseline to the end of the 6-month ad libitum treatment was -6.9kg [95% CI, -7.7, -6.1] on the
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40 low-carbohydrate and -5.8kg [95% CI, -6.6, -5.1] on the control diet with a significant difference
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42 between groups (treatment difference [95% CI]: -1.1kg [-2.1, 0.0]; P=0.047) (Table 3). The final
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44 reduction in BMI was also greater on the low-carbohydrate versus high-carbohydrate diet
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46 (treatment difference [95% CI]: -0.4kg/m² [-0.8, 0.0]; P=0.039) (Table 3). Among the
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48 completers, there were numerically larger differences between treatments for both body weight
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3 and BMI (treatment difference [95% CI]: -1.8 kg [-3.0, -0.6]; P=0.004 and -0.7 kg/m² [-1.1, -
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5 0.2]; P=0.004, respectively).

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8 There was a relative increase in recorded exercise by the high-carbohydrate diet participants,
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10 whereas there was no relative change in the low-carbohydrate participants (treatment difference
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12 [95% CI]: -9.3 [-16.4, -2.2] METs; P=0.012), but this was not reflected in a greater weight loss
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14 (Table 3). There were no treatment differences in percent body fat, waist circumference or satiety
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16 (Table 3).
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20 21 22 **Lipids**

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24 At the end of the study, the reduction on the low-carbohydrate versus high-carbohydrate diet was
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26 greater for LDL-C (treatment difference [95% CI]: -0.49mmol/L [-0.70, -0.28]; P<0.001, for TC
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28 (-0.62mmol/L [-0.86, -0.37]; P<0.001, for TC:HDL-C -0.57 [-0.83, -0.32]; P<0.001, for LDL-
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30 C:HDL-C (-0.42 [-0.60, -0.24]; P<0.001, and for triglycerides (-0.34mmol/L [-0.57, -0.11];
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32 P=0.005). No treatment difference was seen in HDL-C (Table 3). A similar pattern was observed
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34 in the completers. The treatment difference was numerically larger for LDL-C (-0.60mmol/L [-
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36 0.84, -0.36]; P<0.0001), TC (-0.73mmol/L [-1.00, -0.45]; P<0.0001), TC:HDL-C (-0.68 [-0.97, -
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38 0.39]; P<0.0001), and LDL-C:HDL-C (-0.53 [-0.73, -0.32]; P<0.0001). Values for LDL-C and
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40 the TC:HDL-C ratio were consistently lower in participants on the low-carbohydrate diet
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42 throughout the study while HDL-C values were not different from baseline (Figure 3 A-C).
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50 51 **Apolipoproteins**

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53 ApoB and the ApoB:A1 ratio were reduced more on the low- versus the high-carbohydrate diet
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55 at the end of the study (treatment different [95% CI]: -0.11g/L [-0.16, -0.06]; P<0.001 and -0.05
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3 [-0.09, -0.02]; P=0.003, respectively) (Table 3). No significant difference between the diets was
4
5 observed for ApoA1 concentrations. The pattern of change in the apolipoproteins in the
6
7 completers reflected the changes seen in the whole group. Figure 3D and 3F show that the low-
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9 carbohydrate diet resulted in lower apoB and ApoB:ApoA1 ratios relative to baseline over the
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11 course of the study.
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14 15 16 17 18 **C-Reactive Protein, HbA1c, Blood Glucose, Serum Insulin, Insulin Resistance and Blood** 19 20 **Pressure**

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22 Both treatments reduced hs-CRP with no difference between treatments (Table 3). HbA1c,
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24 fasting blood glucose, insulin, and insulin resistance (calculated using the HOMA model) fell
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26 similarly on both treatments during the course of the study (Table 3). Systolic and diastolic blood
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28 pressure decreased similarly with no treatment differences (Table 3). The completers also failed
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30 to show a difference between treatments.
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33 34 35 36 **Calculated CHD Risk**

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38 The low-carbohydrate diet significantly reduced the calculated 10-year CHD risk relative to the
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40 high-carbohydrate diet (2% [-2, -1]; P<0.001) (Table 3). A reduced CHD risk on the low-
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42 carbohydrate diet was also observed in the completers (2% [-3, -1]; P<0.001).
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48 **Adverse Events**

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50 No serious adverse events or events that involved hospitalisation occurred during the study.
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55 **Discussion**

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3 The present study demonstrated that consumption of a low-carbohydrate vegan diet resulted in a
4 modestly greater body weight reduction compared to a high-carbohydrate diet (7% versus 6%
5 reductions, respectively) over a six-month ad libitum period. These reductions were similar to
6 those reported for low-carbohydrate “Atkins-like” diets[2 3 6 10]. However by comparison with
7 the high-carbohydrate diet, consumption of the low-carbohydrate diet containing vegetable
8 proteins and oils was also associated with significantly reduced concentrations of LDL-C. This
9 LDL-C reduction has not been reported for other low-carbohydrate diet studies in which a large
10 part of the protein and fat originated from animal sources and in which no significant LDL-C
11 reductions were seen [2-6 8]. The sustained reduction in LDL-C, associated with a small
12 incremental weight loss on the 6-month self-selected diet, is a potentially important attribute of
13 the diet in reducing long-term CHD risk [45 46]. Furthermore, as seen in the present study, a
14 low-carbohydrate diet, in which vegetable fat and protein options were encouraged,
15 demonstrated a larger reduction in the TC:HDL-C ratio than that reported at 6 months in weight
16 loss studies employing either a Mediterranean or a high-carbohydrate diet [10].

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The majority of studies undertaken to date have been 6 months to one year in duration [2-6 47]
with more recent studies of up to 2 years [2 8]. The high dropout rate in the present 6-month
study did not prevent identification of significant LDL-C and body weight differences in the
intent-to-treat analysis (using all available data). However, the completer data demonstrated an
even larger treatment difference in LDL-C favoring the low-carbohydrate treatment. Those on
the low-carbohydrate diet showed overall adherence to the major dietary components [vegetable
proteins (soy and gluten), nuts, and viscous fibers] at 33.6% of that provided during the
metabolic phase [1]. This adherence is similar to the 43.3% seen with the dietary portfolio in the
comparison of the metabolic one month [35] and the ad libitum six month studies [48]. In this

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3 study, the LDL-C reduction on the low-carbohydrate metabolic month was also greater than that
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5 on the ad libitum 6 months, although the treatment differences were similar [35].
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8 The effect of low-carbohydrate diets on CHD events has not been assessed in randomized
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10 controlled trials. Nevertheless, low-carbohydrate diets high in vegetable proteins and oils have
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12 been associated with a 30% reduced CHD risk and an 18% reduced incidence of diabetes in
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14 cohort studies [30 31]. The median interquartile difference in these studies between the first and
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16 10th decile for vegetable protein and monounsaturated fat (MUFA) intakes, as a marker of
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18 increased vegetable oil consumption, was 1.4% and 9.3% expressed as a percentage of total
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20 caloric intake [30]. These figures compare with an 8.2% and a 4.6% relative increase in
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22 vegetable protein and oil consumption from baseline on the Eco-Atkins diet compared to the
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24 control diet. The increases in MUFA were therefore seen in both studies. Recently a Spanish
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26 Mediterranean diet emphasizing increased nut or olive oil consumption, and so increasing
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28 monounsaturated fat intake by 2-3%, has been shown to significantly reduce cardiovascular
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30 events also by approximately 30% [33]. These data provide consistent support for the view that
31
32 the Eco-Atkins approach would reduce CHD risk in the long term.
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36 The present diet, while lowering LDL-C by 9%, did not result in any significant depression of
37
38 HDL-C. Lowering LDL-C while maintaining HDL-C would be expected to reduce CHD risk [45
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40 46]. Similarly, reductions in ApoB and the ApoB:A1 ratio were also observed in the present
41
42 study. These findings further support the potential CHD benefit that this weight loss diet may
43
44 have [49-51]. It has also been claimed that apolipoproteins may be stronger predictors of CHD
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46 events than conventional lipid variables [52-54].
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50 In contrast to the metabolic study, the reductions in systolic and diastolic blood pressure were not
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52 significant between the low- and high-carbohydrate diets. Similarly, hs-CRP was unchanged
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3 between treatments, however, the level was significantly reduced with the low-carbohydrate diet
4 compared to baseline. Studies have shown that hs-CRP tended to be lowest on the diets
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6 containing the highest proportion of carbohydrate [5]. Low glycemic index and low glycemic
7
8 load diets have also been associated with lower hs-CRP concentrations [55 56]. These
9
10 advantages of the higher carbohydrate diet may have reduced any hs-CRP difference between the
11
12 two diets in the present study.
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16 Soy-containing foods as well as nuts have cholesterol lowering effects [15 17 18 57 58] and may
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18 explain the reduction in LDL-C. Viscous fiber in low starch vegetables and β -glucan in oats and
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20 barley may also have contributed to the overall cholesterol lowering effect of the diet [9 14 45].
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22 Furthermore, nuts and high fiber food consumption have been associated with lower body weight
23
24 [59].
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28 The study weaknesses include the relatively small sample size and the high dropout rate.
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31 Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that attrition rates were low in the metabolic study when all food
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33 was provided [1]. Food availability and preparation may therefore be important factors. Future
34
35 studies will need to focus on strategies to increase and maintain adherence, especially to the
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37 cholesterol lowering components, which all bear US FDA health claims for cardiovascular
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39 disease risk reduction. Furthermore, collaboration with food industry may be helpful in
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41 addressing concerns of availability, variety, and ease of preparation. In retrospect, a simplified
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43 one page eating plan for breakfast, lunch, and dinner with a number of options and amounts for
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45 each meal, as we have used in our dietary portfolio studies, might also be helpful [48]. For those
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47 who did complete the study, however, there were benefits in weight loss and LDL-C reduction,
48
49 an additional 2% advantage in body weight reduction compared to the high-carbohydrate diet
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51 and a 13% drop in LDL-C for participants consuming a more plant-based low-carbohydrate diet.
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3 Unfortunately it was not possible to predict who would complete the diet based on pre-study data
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5 or changes observed during the metabolic phase.
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8 The study's strength is that the prescribed hypocaloric diet was self-selected, meaning the results
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10 are more in line with what can be expected under free-living conditions. The breadth of
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12 application of the plant-based low-carbohydrate diet, however, remains to be determined, but it
13
14 may provide an option for some individuals for whom LDL-C reduction is an equal concern to
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16 weight loss. If low-carbohydrate dietary options become more generally available the number of
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18 individuals who will benefit is likely to increase.
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22 We conclude that a weight loss diet which reduced carbohydrate in exchange for increased
23
24 intakes of vegetable sources of protein, such as gluten, soy and nuts, together with vegetable oils
25
26 offers an opportunity to improve both LDL-C and body weight, both being risk factors for CHD.
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28 Further trials are warranted to evaluate low-carbohydrate diets, including more plant-based low-
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30 carbohydrate diets, on CHD risk factors and ultimately on CHD.
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Contributions

Conception and design - Jenkins, Wong, Kendall, Faulkner, Paul, Mukherjea, Krul, Singer

Acquisition of data - Jenkins, Wong, Kendall, Esfahani, Ng, Leong

Analysis and interpretation of data – Jenkins, Wong, Kendall, Vidgen

Drafting of the manuscript – Jenkins, Wong

Critical revision of the manuscript for important intellectual content – Jenkins, Wong, Kendall, Esfahani, Ng, Leong, Faulkner, Vidgen, Paul, Mukherjea, Krul, Singer

Statistical analysis - Vidgen

Obtaining funding – Jenkins, Kendall, Wong

Administrative, technical, or material support – Wong, Kendall, Esfahani, Ng, Leong, Faulkner

Supervision – Jenkins, Kendall, Wong, Singer

1
2
3 *No additional contributions* - Paul, Mukherjea, Krul
4
5
6
7

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9

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12 conduct of the study, in the collection, management, analysis, and interpretation of the data, or in
13
14 the preparation, or approval of the manuscript. However, the named co-authors from Solae LLC
15
16 reviewed the manuscript.
17
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20

21 **Disclosures**

22

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25
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29
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For peer review only

Figure Legends

Figure 1: Patient Flow Diagram.

Figure 2: Weight loss during the study on both diets.

Figure 3: Mean (A) LDL-C, (B) HDL-C, (C) TC:HDL-C, (D) apolipoprotein B (apoB) and (E) apolipoprotein A1 (apoA1), (F) ApoB:ApoA1 ratio between the two treatments during the metabolic and ad libitum phases.

Tables

Supplementary Table 1: Baseline Characteristics for Those Who Started the 6-Month Self-Selected Diets

Supplementary Table 2: Nutritional Profiles on the High and Low Carbohydrate Diets

Supplementary Table 3: Effect of high and low carbohydrate diets on body weight, blood lipids, apolipoproteins and 10-yr CHD risk

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Effect of a Six Months-of-a Vegan Low-Carbohydrate (“Eco-Atkins”) Diet Improveson Cardiovascular Risk Factors and Body Weight in Hyperlipidemic Adults: A Randomized Controlled Trial

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20 **Contributions**

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22 *Conception and design* - Jenkins, Wong, Kendall, Faulkner, Paul, Mukherjea, Krul, Singer
23

24 *Acquisition of data* - Jenkins, Wong, Kendall, Esfahani, Ng, Leong
25

26 *Analysis and interpretation of data* – Jenkins, Wong, Kendall, Vidgen
27

28 *Drafting of the manuscript* – Jenkins, Wong
29

30 *Critical revision of the manuscript for important intellectual content* – Jenkins, Wong, Kendall,
31

32 Esfahani, Ng, Leong, Faulkner, Vidgen, Paul, Mukherjea, Krul, Singer
33

34 *Statistical analysis* - Vidgen
35

36 *Obtaining funding* – Jenkins, Kendall, Wong
37

38 *Administrative, technical, or material support* – Wong, Kendall, Esfahani, Ng, Leong, Faulkner
39

40 *Supervision* – Jenkins, Kendall, Wong, Singer
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42 *No additional contributions* - Paul, Mukherjea, Krul
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Abstract

Objective: Low-carbohydrate diets may be useful for weight loss. Diets high in vegetable proteins and oils may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease (CHD). The main objective was to determine the longer term effect of a diet that was both low-carbohydrate and plant-based on weight loss and LDL-C.

Design, Setting, Participants: A parallel design study of 39 overweight hyperlipidemic men and postmenopausal women conducted at a Canadian university-affiliated hospital nutrition research center from April 2005 to November 2006.

Intervention: Participants were advised to consume either a low-carbohydrate vegan diet or a high-carbohydrate lacto-ovo vegetarian diet for six-months after completing one-month metabolic (all foods provided) versions of these diets. The prescribed macronutrient intakes for the low- and high-carbohydrate diets were: 26% and 58% of energy from carbohydrate, 31% and 16% from protein and 43% and 25% from fat, respectively.

Primary Outcome: Change in body weight.

Results: Twenty-three participants (50% test, 68% control) completed the six-month ad libitum study. The approximate 4kg weight loss on the metabolic study was increased to -6.9kg on low-carbohydrate and -5.8kg on high-carbohydrate six-month ad libitum treatments (treatment difference [95% CI]: -1.1kg [-2.1, 0.0], $P=0.047$). The relative LDL-C and triglyceride reductions were also greater on the low-carbohydrate treatment (treatment difference [95% CI]: -0.49mmol/L [-0.70, -0.28], $P<0.001$ and -0.34mmol/L [-0.57, -0.11], $P=0.005$, respectively), as were the TC:HDL-C and apolipoprotein B:A1 ratios (-0.57 [-0.83, -0.32], $P<0.001$ and -0.05 [-0.09, -0.02], $P=0.003$, respectively).

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3 **Conclusions:** A self-selected low-carbohydrate vegan diet, containing increased protein and fat
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5 from gluten and soy products, nuts, and vegetable oils, had lipid lowering advantages over a
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7 high-carbohydrate, low-fat weight loss diet, thus improving heart disease risk factors.
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12 **Trial Registration:** clinicaltrials.gov (<http://www.clinicaltrials.gov/>), #NCT00256516
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Article Summary

Article Focus

- Low-carbohydrate diets may be useful for weight loss. Diets high in vegetable proteins and oils may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease (CHD).
- The objective of the randomized clinical trial was to determine the longer term effect of a diet that was both low-carbohydrate and plant-based on weight loss and LDL-C.
- We have already reported the effect of this dietary strategy in producing a difference of 8% in LDL-C reduction between calorie-restricted diets (60% of estimated calorie requirements) when all food was provided. We now report findings after these same participants continued on their respective diets for an additional 6 months, under self-selected conditions, in order to gain insights into the real life effectiveness of this diet.

Key Messages

- By comparison with the high-carbohydrate diet, consumption of the low-carbohydrate diet containing vegetable proteins and oils was also associated with significantly reduced concentrations of LDL-C. This LDL-C reduction has not been reported for other low-carbohydrate diet studies in which a large part of the protein and fat originated from animal sources.
- The present study also demonstrated that consumption of a low-carbohydrate vegan diet resulted in modestly greater body weight reductions compared to a high-carbohydrate diet (7% versus 6% reductions, respectively) over a six-month ad libitum period.

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3 | - The sustained reduction in LDL-C, associated with ~~only~~ a small incremental weight loss on
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6 | the 6-month self-selected diet, is a potentially important attribute of the diet in reducing long-
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8 | term CHD risk
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12 **Strengths and Limitations of this Study**

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15 The study weaknesses include the relatively small sample size and the high dropout rate.

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17 | Nevertheless, ~~high dropout rates have been reported in similar dietary studies and~~ it is
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19 | noteworthy that attrition rates were low in the metabolic study when all food was provided [1].
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22 Food availability and preparation may therefore be important factors. For those who did
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24 complete the study, however, there were benefits in weight loss and LDL-C reduction, an
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26 additional 2% advantage in body weight reduction compared to the high-carbohydrate diet and a
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28 13% drop in LDL-C for participants consuming a more plant-based low-carbohydrate diet.
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31 The study's strength is that the prescribed hypocaloric diet was self-selected, meaning the results
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33 are more in line with what can be expected under free-living conditions. The breadth of
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35 application of the plant-based low-carbohydrate diet, however, remains to be determined, but it
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37 may provide an option for some individuals for whom LDL-C reduction is an equal concern to
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39 weight loss. If low-carbohydrate dietary options become more generally available the number of
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41 individuals who will benefit is likely to increase.
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Introduction

Many popular weight loss diets emphasize carbohydrate restriction (Atkins, Eddies, South Beach, Zone). Their success is determined by the level of compliance with the prescribed diets [2-7]. However, a high content of animal products, rich in saturated fat and cholesterol, may make conventional low-carbohydrate diets less appropriate for those with hypercholesterolemia [3 8]. Even during active weight loss, these high saturated fat diets do not lower serum LDL-C below baseline [3 8] and there is concern that if such diets continue to be eaten when weight loss has ceased, a more atherogenic blood lipid profile may result [9]. These concerns have prompted exploration of other weight loss strategies, but only modest reductions in LDL-C have been observed [10].

By contrast vegan diets significantly lower LDL-C [11]. Trials of vegan and vegetarian diets also reduce progression of coronary heart disease (CHD) [12] and improve diabetes control [13].

Plant food components such as vegetable proteins, vegetable oils, nuts and viscous fibers, reduce serum lipids in many studies [14-19] and may increase flow mediated vasodilatation [20-23].

Nuts, fiber and vegetarian diets in general, all reduce CHD and diabetes in cohort studies [24-29]. Finally, in cohort studies, low-carbohydrate diets, high in vegetable oils and proteins as opposed to animal products, reduce CHD events and diabetes incidence in women [30 31], while lower red meat intake reduces total, cardiovascular and cancer mortality [32]. Most recently a large randomized controlled trial confirmed the effect of nuts and increased vegetable oil (olive oil) intake in reducing cardiovascular events in the context of a Mediterranean diet [33].

In view of the apparent success of low-carbohydrate diets for weight loss and the demonstration that relatively high-carbohydrate vegetarian and vegan diets, and diets low in animal products, lower CHD risk factors [34-37], we designed a diet that combined both vegan and low-

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3 carbohydrate elements to determine whether such a diet captured both the weight loss and CHD
4 risk reduction advantages. We have already reported the effect of this dietary strategy in
5 producing a difference of 8% in LDL-C reduction between calorie-restricted diets (60% of
6 estimated calorie requirements) when all food was provided [1]. We now report findings after
7 these same participants continued on their respective diets for an additional 6 months, under self-
8 selected conditions, in order to gain insights into the real life effectiveness of this diet. The
9 results of the metabolic (all foods provided) study have been reported previously and had
10 demonstrated a CHD risk factor advantage, but with no greater weight loss than the control diet
11 [1].
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27 **Methods**

28 **Participants**

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30 Forty-seven overweight participants, recruited by newspaper advertisement and hospital clinic
31 notices, undertook the one-month metabolic first phase of the study (Figure 1) that has been
32 previously reported [1]. At the start of the study, participants were given the option to participate
33 in both the metabolic and ad libitum phases or only the metabolic phase. On completion of the
34 metabolic phase, thirty-nine participants (19 control and 20 test participants) continued for an ad
35 libitum six-month study and their data (n=39) were used in the final analysis (Table 1). The
36 study was conducted at a Canadian university-affiliated hospital nutrition research center from
37 April 2005 to November 2006. All participants had high normal to raised LDL-C levels
38 (>3.4mmol/L at diagnosis) and a body mass index > 27 kg/m². Details of the eligibility criteria
39 have been previously reported [1]. After recruitment, the 11/39 participants who were taking
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3 lipid lowering medications discontinued their medications at least two weeks prior to starting and
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5 for the study duration (Table 1).
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10 **Study Protocol**

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12 The intervention was a randomized parallel study stratified by sex in which participants were
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14 randomized to either low- or high-carbohydrate, calorie-reduced diets. The first month was the
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16 previously reported metabolically controlled study [1]. For the following six-months, participants
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18 continued on the diet to which they had been assigned as a self-selected (ad libitum) diet.
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21 Anthropometric, blood pressure and blood lipid measurements were repeated at monthly
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23 intervals. Insulin and HbA1c were measured at baseline and at the start and end of the ad libitum
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25 treatment. Percentage body fat was measured at baseline and end of the ad libitum treatment by
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27 bioelectrical impedance (Quantum II; RJL Systems, Clinton Township, Michigan). Seven-day
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29 diet and exercise histories were recorded in the week prior to each monthly visit. These histories
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31 were reviewed and discussed with the dietitian and appropriate dietary counselling was provided
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33 to enhance adherence. The overall feeling of satiety for the previous week was assessed at each
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35 study visit using a 9-point bipolar semantic scale, where -4 was extremely hungry, 0 was neutral,
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37 and +4 was uncomfortably full [1 35]. No exercise advise was given during the study, but
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39 alterations in exercise were allowed and recorded.
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45 The Ethics Committees of St. Michael's Hospital and the University of Toronto, and the
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47 Therapeutic Products Directorate of Health Canada approved the study. Written informed
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49 consent was obtained from the participants. The study's clinical trial registration number was
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51 #NCT00256516.
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Diets

As with the previous metabolic study, participants were encouraged to eat only 60% of their estimated caloric requirements in order to continue the body weight reduction started on their metabolic phase [38-40]. The prescribed test diet was a low-carbohydrate vegan diet containing 26% of calories from carbohydrate, 31% of calories from vegetable proteins and 43% from fat (primarily vegetable oils). Carbohydrate sources on the low-carbohydrate diet featured viscous fiber-containing foods (such as oats and barley) and low-starch vegetables (emphasizing okra and eggplant) for the relatively limited amount of carbohydrate allowed. The vegetable proteins were prescribed as gluten (54.8% of total protein), soy (23.0%), fruits and vegetables (8.7%), nuts (7.5%), and cereals (6.0%). Gluten was contained in the nut bread and wheat gluten (also called “seitan”) products. Soy protein was present in the form of burgers, ~~veggie bacon~~, deli slices, breakfast links, veggie bacon, tofu, and soy milks. Nuts included almonds, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia, pecans, and pistachios. The fat sources were nuts (43.6% of total fat), vegetable oils (24.4%), soy products (18.5%), avocado (7.1%), cereals (2.7%), fruits and vegetables (2.3%), and seitan products (1.4%). Participants were able to purchase at the research center the “no” starch high protein nut bread and three of the seitan (wheat gluten) products used in the study which were not available in Canada. The control, high-carbohydrate lacto-ovo vegetarian diet (58% carbohydrate, 16% protein and 25% fat) emphasized whole wheat cereals and cereal fiber, as well as low-fat or skim milk dairy products and liquid egg substitute to reduce saturated fat and cholesterol intakes. These diets have been published previously [1].

Participants were given a copy of the menu plans that outlined the food items and amounts prescribed during the metabolic phase. These menu plans served as a reference during the ad

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3 libitum phase. Furthermore, participants were given an exchange list of the items prescribed on
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5 the menu plan. The goal was to enhance adherence.
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8 Self-taring electronic scales (My Weigh Scales, Vancouver, BC or Tanita Corporation, Arlington
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10 Heights, IL) were provided to all participants and they were instructed to weigh all food items
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12 while recording the seven-day food diary in the week prior to monthly clinic visits. Adherence to
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14 the three principal cholesterol-lowering components [vegetable proteins (soy and gluten), nuts,
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16 and viscous fibers] of the low-carbohydrate diet was assessed from the completed monthly
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18 seven-day food records. The amount of each component provided during the metabolic phase
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20 remained the same as that prescribed during the ad libitum phase.
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24 Neither the dietitians nor participants could be blinded, but equal emphasis was placed on the
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26 potential importance for health of both diets. The analytical technicians were blinded to diet
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28 allocation, as was the statistician, up to analysis of the primary outcome. Participants were
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30 offered no financial compensation for participation in the study.
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36 **Analyses**

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38 The analytical techniques have been reported previously [1]. Serum was analyzed in the J. Alick
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40 Little Lipid Research Laboratory [35]. ~~and~~-LDL-C (in mmol/L) was calculated by the method of
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42 Friedewald et al. [1]. using all data including the two participants who had baseline and during
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44 study triglyceride values above 4.5 mmol/L (3 values on low-carbohydrate diet and 2 on high-
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46 carbohydrate diet, maximum triglyceride < 6.5 mmol/L) (exclusion of these two individuals did
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48 not alter the findings). The methods for analyzing apolipoproteins A1 and B, high sensitivity C-
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50 reactive protein (hs-CRP), blood glucose, insulin, HbA1c, and homeostasis model assessment –
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53 insulin resistance model (HOMA-IR) have been described previously [1]. Exercise data were
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3 calculated as metabolic equivalents (METs) [41]. The absolute 10-year CHD risk score was
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5 calculated using the Framingham risk equation [42].
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8 Diets were assessed for macronutrients, fatty acids, cholesterol and fiber using a computer
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10 program based on the USDA database [43] and developed in our laboratory to allow the addition
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12 of the macronutrient content of study foods obtained from food labels or directly from food
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14 manufacturers. The nutritional profiles of the diets were calculated from the 7-day food records
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16 completed once a month throughout the study and mean intakes are presented.
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20 Adherence ~~with~~to the three principal cholesterol-lowering components [vegetable proteins (soy
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22 and gluten), nuts, and viscous fibers] of the low-carbohydrate diet was estimated from the 7-day
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24 food records. Each component was assessed as contributing 1/3 or by applying 33.3% to the
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26 LDL-C reduction. When the amount consumed was equivalent to the amount prescribed a 33.3%
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28 compliance would be recorded for that component. adherence factor to the recorded intake for
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30 each of the three main components. The sum of the three components if consumed as prescribed
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32 would equal 100% adherence.
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39 **Statistical Analyses**

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41 Results are expressed as means \pm SEM or 95% confidence intervals (CIs). Time zero was used as
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43 the baseline and refers to the pre-metabolic study baseline [1]. Treatment differences in physical
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45 and biochemical measures were assessed using all available data from the 39 participants and a
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47 repeated measures mixed model accounting for time of assessment (SAS 9.2) [44] in the Tables
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49 (Table 2 and 3) and the Results. The response variable was change from baseline, with diet and
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51 week as fixed effects and subject ID nested in diet. There was no adjustment for baseline. Any
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3 participant who started the ad libitum treatment was included in the analysis (N=39). The
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5 completer analysis included the 23 participants who completed the study (Figure 1).
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8 Multiple imputation (taking the mean of 5 sets of randomly imputed values) was used to present
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10 baseline and treatment values in the Tables (2 and 3) and Figures (2 and 3) by generating data for
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12 those who dropped out or had missing values [44].
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17 Results

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19 Compliance with the major dietary components [vegetable proteins (soy and gluten), nuts, and
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21 viscous fibers] was 33.6% or one-third of that prescribed during the metabolic phase (Table 2).
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23 Saturated fat intakes were similar on both treatments whereas intake of monounsaturated fats,
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25 vegetable proteins, and soy protein were significantly higher on the low-carbohydrate diet (Table
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27 2). Available carbohydrate intake was significantly lower on the low-carbohydrate diet (Table 2).
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29 The attrition rate was 50% (10/20) on the low-carbohydrate and 32% (6/19) on the high-
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31 carbohydrate (Figure 1), this equates to a total attrition rate of 41% (16/39). The number of
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33 participants who did not complete the study (including dropouts and withdrawals) did not differ
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35 between treatments. Three participants were withdrawn by the study physician due to failure to
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37 attain LDL-C targets on the low-carbohydrate diet (mean LDL-C = 5.24mmol/L) and one subject
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39 on the high-carbohydrate diet (LDL-C = 7.78mmol/L). Participants on the low-carbohydrate diet
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41 tended to have larger reductions in body weight over time (Figure 2). The weight loss from
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43 baseline to the end of the 6-month ad libitum treatment was -6.9kg [95% CI, -7.7, -6.1] on the
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45 low-carbohydrate and -5.8kg [95% CI, -6.6, -5.1] on the control diet with a significant difference
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47 between groups (treatment difference [95% CI]: -1.1kg [-2.1, 0.0]; P=0.047) (Table 3). The final
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49 reduction in BMI was also greater on the low-carbohydrate versus high-carbohydrate diet
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3 (treatment difference [95% CI]: -0.4kg/m^2 [-0.8, 0.0]; $P=0.039$) (Table 3). Among the
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5 completers, there were numerically larger differences between treatments for both body weight
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7 and BMI (treatment difference [95% CI]: -1.8 kg [-3.0, -0.6]; $P=0.004$ and -0.7 kg/m^2 [-1.1, -
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9 0.2]; $P=0.004$, respectively).

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12 There was a relative increase in recorded exercise by the high-carbohydrate diet participants,
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14 whereas there was no relative change in the low-carbohydrate participants (treatment difference
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16 [95% CI]: -9.3 [-16.4, -2.2] METs; $P=0.012$), but this was not reflected in a greater weight loss
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18 (Table 3). There were no treatment differences in percent body fat, waist circumference or satiety
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20 (Table 3). There were no treatment differences in percent body fat, waist circumference or satiety
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22 (Table 3).
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24 25 26 27 **Lipids**

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29 At the end of the study, the reduction on the low-carbohydrate versus high-carbohydrate diet was
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31 greater for LDL-C (treatment difference [95% CI]: -0.49mmol/L [-0.70, -0.28]; $P<0.001$, for TC
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33 (-0.62mmol/L [-0.86, -0.37]; $P<0.001$, for TC:HDL-C -0.57 [-0.83, -0.32]; $P<0.001$, for LDL-
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35 C:HDL-C (-0.42 [-0.60, -0.24]; $P<0.001$, and for triglycerides (-0.34mmol/L [-0.57, -0.11];
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37 $P=0.005$). No treatment difference was seen in HDL-C (Table 3). A similar pattern was observed
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39 in the completers. The treatment difference was numerically larger for LDL-C (-0.60mmol/L [-
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41 0.84, -0.36]; $P<0.0001$), TC (-0.73mmol/L [-1.00, -0.45]; $P<0.0001$), TC:HDL-C (-0.68 [-0.97, -
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43 0.39]; $P<0.0001$), and LDL-C:HDL-C (-0.53 [-0.73, -0.32]; $P<0.0001$). Values for LDL-C and
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45 the TC:HDL-C ratio were consistently lower in participants on the low-carbohydrate diet
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47 throughout the study while HDL-C values were not different from baseline (Figure 3 A-C).
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53 54 55 **Apolipoproteins**

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3 ApoB and the ApoB:A1 ratio were reduced more on the low- versus the high-carbohydrate diet
4 at the end of the study (treatment different [95% CI]: -0.11g/L [-0.16, -0.06]; P<0.001 and -0.05
5 [-0.09, -0.02]; P=0.003, respectively) (Table 3). No significant difference between the diets was
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7
8 observed for ApoA1 concentrations. The pattern of change in the apolipoproteins in the
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10 completers reflected the changes seen in the whole group. Figure 3D and 3F show that the low-
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12 carbohydrate diet resulted in lower apoB and ApoB:ApoA1 ratios relative to baseline over the
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14 course of the study.
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22 **C-Reactive Protein, HbA1c, Blood Glucose, Serum Insulin, Insulin Resistance and Blood** 23 24 **Pressure**

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26 Both treatments reduced hs-CRP with no difference between treatments (Table 3). HbA1c,
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28 fasting blood glucose, insulin, and insulin resistance (calculated using the HOMA model) fell
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30 similarly on both treatments during the course of the study (Table 3). Systolic and diastolic blood
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32 pressure decreased similarly with no treatment differences (Table 3). The completers also failed
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34 to show a difference between treatments.
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41 **Calculated CHD Risk**

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43 The low-carbohydrate diet significantly reduced the calculated 10-year CHD risk relative to the
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45 high-carbohydrate diet (2% [-2, -1]; P<0.001) (Table 3). A reduced CHD risk on the low-
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47 carbohydrate diet was also observed in the completers (2% [-3, -1]; P<0.001).
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53 **Adverse Events**

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55 No serious adverse events or events that involved hospitalisation occurred during the study.
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Discussion

The present study demonstrated that consumption of a low-carbohydrate vegan diet resulted in a modestly greater body weight reduction compared to a high-carbohydrate diet (7% versus 6% reductions, respectively) over a six-month ad libitum period. These reductions were similar to those reported for low-carbohydrate “Atkins-like” diets [2 3 6 10]. However by comparison with the high-carbohydrate diet, consumption of the low-carbohydrate diet containing vegetable proteins and oils was also associated with significantly reduced concentrations of LDL-C. This LDL-C reduction has not been reported for other low-carbohydrate diet studies in which a large part of the protein and fat originated from animal sources and in which no significant LDL-C reductions were seen [2-6 8]. The sustained reduction in LDL-C, associated with ~~only~~ a small incremental weight loss on the 6-month self-selected diet, is a potentially important attribute of the diet in reducing long-term CHD risk [45 46]. Furthermore, as seen in the present study, a low-carbohydrate diet, in which vegetable fat and protein options were encouraged, demonstrated a larger reduction in the TC:HDL-C ratio than that reported at 6 months in weight loss studies employing either a Mediterranean or a high-carbohydrate diet [10].

The majority of studies undertaken to date have been 6 months to one year in duration [2-6 47] with more recent studies of up to 2 years [2 8] ~~and, as with the present study, a number of these studies had a high dropout rate [2 3 5 47].~~ The high dropout rate in the present 6-month study did not prevent identification of significant LDL-C and body weight differences in the intent-to-treat analysis (using all available data). However, the completer data demonstrated an even larger treatment difference in LDL-C favoring the low-carbohydrate treatment. Those on the low-carbohydrate diet showed overall adherence to the major dietary components [vegetable proteins

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3 (soy and gluten), nuts, and viscous fibers] at 33.6% of that provided during the metabolic phase
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6 [1]. This adherence is similar to the 43.3% seen with the dietary portfolio in the comparison of
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8 the metabolic one month [35] and the ad libitum six month studies [48]. In this study,
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10 ~~comparison also just under half~~ the LDL-C reduction on the low-carbohydrate metabolic month
11 was also greater than that on the ad libitum 6 months, although the treatment differences were
12 similar (13-14%) seen on the ad libitum compared to the metabolic study [35].
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18 The effect of low-carbohydrate diets on CHD events has not been assessed in randomized
19 controlled trials. Nevertheless, low-carbohydrate diets high in vegetable proteins and oils have
20 been associated with a 30% reduced CHD risk and an 18% reduced incidence of diabetes in
21 cohort studies [30 31]. The median interquartile difference in these studies between the first and
22 10th decile for vegetable protein and monounsaturated fat (MUFA) intakes, as a marker of
23 increased vegetable oil consumption, was 1.4% and 9.3% expressed as a percentage of total
24 caloric intake [30]. These figures compare with an 8.2% and a 4.6% relative increase in
25 vegetable protein and oil consumption from baseline on the Eco-Atkins diet compared to the
26 control diet. The increases in MUFA were therefore seen in both studies. Recently a Spanish
27 Mediterranean diet emphasizing increased nut or olive oil consumption, and so increasing
28 monounsaturated fat intake by 2-3%, has been shown to significantly reduce cardiovascular
29 events also by approximately 30% [33]. These data provide consistent support for the view that
30 the Eco-Atkins approach would reduce CHD risk in the long term.
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48 The present diet, while lowering LDL-C by 9%, did not result in any significant depression of
49 HDL-C. Lowering LDL-C while maintaining HDL-C would be expected to reduce CHD risk [45
50 46]. Similarly, reductions in ApoB and the ApoB:A1 ratio were also observed in the present
51 study. These findings further support the potential CHD benefit that this weight loss diet may
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3 have [49-51]. It has also been claimed that apolipoproteins may be stronger predictors of CHD
4
5 events than conventional lipid variables [52-54].
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8 In contrast to the metabolic study, the reductions in systolic and diastolic blood pressure were not
9
10 significant between the low- and high-carbohydrate diets. Similarly, hs-CRP was unchanged
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12 between treatments, however, the level was significantly reduced with the low-carbohydrate diet
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14 compared to baseline. Studies have shown that hs-CRP tended to be lowest on the diets
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16 containing the highest proportion of carbohydrate [5]. Low glycemic index and low glycemic
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18 load diets have also been associated with lower hs-CRP concentrations [55 56]. These
19
20 advantages of the higher carbohydrate diet may have reduced any hs-CRP difference between the
21
22 two diets in the present study.
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26 Soy-containing foods as well as nuts have cholesterol lowering effects [15 17 18 57 58] and may
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28 explain the reduction in LDL-C. Viscous fiber in low starch vegetables and β -glucan in oats and
29
30 barley may also have contributed to the overall cholesterol lowering effect of the diet [9 14 45].
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32 Furthermore, nuts and high fiber food consumption have been associated with lower body weight
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34 [59].
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38 The study weaknesses include the relatively small sample size and the high dropout rate.

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40 Nevertheless, ~~high dropout rates have been reported in similar dietary studies and~~ it is
41
42 noteworthy that attrition rates were low in the metabolic study when all food was provided [1].
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45 Food availability and preparation may therefore be important factors. Future studies will need to
46
47 focus on strategies to increase and maintain adherence, especially to the cholesterol lowering
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49 components, which all bear US FDA health claims for cardiovascular disease risk reduction.
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52 Furthermore, collaboration with food industry may be helpful in addressing concerns of
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54 availability, variety, and ease of preparation. In retrospect, a simplified one page eating plan for
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3 breakfast, lunch, and dinner with a number of options and amounts for each meal, as we have
4 used in our dietary portfolio studies, might also be helpful [48]. For those who did complete the
5 study, however, there were benefits in weight loss and LDL-C reduction, an additional 2%
6 advantage in body weight reduction compared to the high-carbohydrate diet and a 13% drop in
7 LDL-C for participants consuming a more plant-based low-carbohydrate diet. Unfortunately it
8 was not possible to predict who would complete the diet based on pre-study data or changes
9 observed during the metabolic phase.
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19 The study's strength is that the prescribed hypocaloric diet was self-selected, meaning the results
20 are more in line with what can be expected under free-living conditions. The breadth of
21 application of the plant-based low-carbohydrate diet, however, remains to be determined, but it
22 may provide an option for some individuals for whom LDL-C reduction is an equal concern to
23 weight loss. If low-carbohydrate dietary options become more generally available the number of
24 individuals who will benefit is likely to increase.
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34 We conclude that a weight loss diet which reduced carbohydrate in exchange for increased
35 intakes of vegetable sources of protein, such as gluten, soy and nuts, together with vegetable oils
36 offers an opportunity to improve both LDL-C and body weight, both being risk factors for CHD.
37 Further trials are warranted to evaluate low-carbohydrate diets, including more plant-based low-
38 carbohydrate diets, on CHD risk factors and ultimately on CHD.
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Dr. Jenkins has served on the Scientific Advisory Board of Sanitarium Company, Agri-Culture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), Canadian Agriculture Policy Institute (CAPI), California Strawberry Commission, Loblaw Supermarket, Herbal Life International, Nutritional Fundamental for Health, Pacific Health Laboratories, Metagenics, Bayer Consumer Care, Orafti,

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6
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10
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For peer review only

Figure Legends

Figure 1: Patient Flow Diagram.

Figure 2: Weight loss during the study on both diets.

Figure 3: Mean (A) LDL-C, (B) HDL-C, (C) TC:HDL-C, (D) apolipoprotein B (apoB) and (E) apolipoprotein A1 (apoA1), (F) ApoB:ApoA1 ratio between the two treatments during the metabolic and ad libitum phases.

Table 1: Baseline Characteristics for Those Who Started the 6-Month Self-Selected Diets (n=39)

	High-carbohydrate (n=19)	Low-Carbohydrate (n=20)
Age (y)	55.3 ± 1.8	57.6 ± 1.4
Males/Females	6/13	9/11
Body Weight, kg	85.4 [79.3, 91.6]	83.7 [78.5, 89.0]
Body Mass Index, kg/m ²	31.1 [29.9, 32.4]	31.1 [29.8, 32.4]
Blood Pressure, mm Hg		
Systolic	122 [116, 128]	128 [123, 132]
Diastolic	75 [72, 79]	77 [74, 80]
Cholesterol, mmol/L		
Total	6.75 [6.28, 7.21]	6.76 [6.21, 7.31]
LDL-C	4.40 [3.99, 4.82]	4.53 [4.14, 4.93]
HDL-C	1.36 [1.22, 1.50]	1.21 [1.06, 1.36]
Triglycerides, mmol/L	2.16 [1.62, 2.70]	2.23 [1.65, 2.80]
Ratios		
TC:HDL-C	5.17 [4.54, 5.80]	5.81 [5.20, 6.41]
LDL-C: HDL-C	3.35 [2.95, 3.75]	3.89 [3.49, 4.29]
Medications		
Lipid lowering (prior to start of study)	4	7
Blood pressure	3	6
Diabetes	0	0
Thyroid	2	1

Values represent mean ± SEM or 95% confidence intervals (CIs).

No significant differences between treatments at baseline assessed by two sample t-test (two-tailed).

Table 2: Nutritional Profiles on the High and Low Carbohydrate Diets (n=39)

	High Carbohydrate		Low Carbohydrate		Between-Treatment Difference ^c	P-value ^d
	Week 0 ^b	Ad Libitum ^b	Week 0 ^b	Ad Libitum ^b		
Calories (kcal)	1598 [1421, 1775]	1347 [1140, 1553]	1840 [1550, 2130]	1388 [1234, 1541]	-248 [-391, -106]	0.001
% of Total Calories						
Available Carbohydrate	46.3 [42.2, 50.4]	53.9 [50.2, 57.5]	43.8 [40.2, 47.4]	39.6 [35.7, 43.6]	-10.5 [-13.6, -7.5]	< 0.001
Protein	20.6 [18.7, 22.5]	18.4 [17.4, 19.5]	20.1 [18.0, 22.2]	22.7 [20.1, 25.4]	5.9 [4.3, 7.5]	< 0.001
Vegetable Protein	5.6 [5.0, 6.1]	6.7 [6.1, 7.3]	5.7 [5.3, 6.1]	15.0 [11.7, 18.2]	8.2 [6.5, 9.9]	< 0.001
Soy Protein	0 [0, 0]	0.2 [0.1, 0.2]	0 [0, 0]	4.7 [2.7, 6.8]	3.6 [2.9, 4.4]	< 0.001
Fat	30.8 [27.3, 34.4]	27.5 [24.6, 30.4]	34.4 [31.4, 37.5]	36.0 [31.5, 40.5]	5.2 [2.6, 7.7]	< 0.001
Saturated	10.8 [9.1, 12.6]	7.6 [6.2, 8.9]	11.8 [10.3, 13.3]	7.5 [6.6, 8.4]	-0.4 [-1.4, 0.6]	0.401
Monounsaturated	12.3 [10.7, 13.8]	10.4 [9.3, 11.6]	13.0 [11.9, 14.2]	14.8 [13.1, 16.6]	4.6 [3.1, 6.1]	< 0.001
Polyunsaturated*	5.2 [4.6, 5.8]	6.3 [5.4, 7.2]	6.6 [5.5, 7.8]	8.4 [7.5, 9.4]	0.4 [-0.5, 1.4]	0.350
Alcohol	2.2 [0.3, 4.2]	1.9 [0.7, 3.2]	1.6 [0.0, 3.3]	1.1 [0.1, 2.1]	-0.5 [-1.3, 0.2]	0.160
Dietary Fibre (g/1000 kcal)	10.9 [9.2, 12.5]	18.2 [15.2, 21.1]	12.1 [9.9, 14.4]	21.3 [18.8, 23.8]	1.5 [-0.5, 3.5]	0.127
Dietary Cholesterol (mg/1000 kcal)	149 [129, 169]	87 [61, 113]	157 [136, 177]	117 [44, 189]	11 [-22, 23]	0.954
Adherence with "Eco-Atkins" Components ^a						
Viscous Fiber (out of 33.3%)	---	---	---	14.0 [9.4, 18.6]	---	---
Vegetable Protein (soy and gluten) (out of 33.3%)	---	---	---	14.7 [10.3, 19.1]	---	---
Nuts (out of 33.3%)	---	---	---	6.3 [3.3, 9.3]	---	---
Total Adherence (out of 100%)	---	---	---	33.6 [22.1, 45.2]	---	---

Values represent mean \pm 95% confidence intervals (CIs).

^aAdherence represents the mean percentage intake of the prescribed intake of the 3 cholesterol-lowering components [viscous fiber, vegetable protein (soy and gluten), nuts] by expressing the recorded intake for each component as 33.3%. The sum of the 3 components if consumed as prescribed would equal 100% adherence.

^bValues represent multiple imputation (taking the mean of 5 sets of randomly imputed values) to generate data for those who dropped out or had missing values.

^cBetween Treatment Difference = Change from baseline between the two diets using all available data.

^dP-values assessed using all available data and a repeated measures mixed model accounting for time of assessment. The response variable was change from baseline, with diet and week as fixed effects and subject ID nested in diet. There was no adjustment for baseline.

*Significantly different between treatments at baseline assessed by two sample t-test (two tailed), P=0.025.

Table 3: Effect of high and low carbohydrate diets on body weight, blood lipids, apolipoproteins and 10-yr CHD risk (n=39)

	High Carbohydrate		Low Carbohydrate		Between Treatment Difference ^b	P-value ^c
	Week 0 ^a	Ad Libitum ^a	Week 0 ^a	Ad Libitum ^a		
Body Weight, kg	85.4 [79.3, 91.6]	80.4 [74.2, 86.6]	83.7 [78.5, 89.0]	76.9 [71.9, 81.9]	-1.1 [-2.1, 0.0]	0.047
BMI	31.1 [29.9, 32.4]	29.2 [27.9, 30.5]	31.1 [29.8, 32.4]	28.7 [27.3, 30.1]	-0.4 [-0.8, 0.0]	0.039
Body Fat, %	38.9 [34.0, 43.8]	35.0 [30.7, 39.2]	35.6 [30.1, 41.1]	31.4 [26.1, 36.6]	-1.7 [-4.0, 0.7]	0.161
Waist Circumference (cm)	102.8 [99.4, 106.2]	97.4 [93.1, 101.6]	99.8 [96.1, 103.5]	93.7 [89.8, 97.7]	0.1 [-1.1, 1.3]	0.861
Fasting Glucose	5.2 [4.9, 5.4]	4.6 [4.5, 4.7]	5.2 [5.0, 5.4]	4.6 [4.4, 4.9]	0.1 [-0.1, 0.2]	0.447
HbA1c (%)	5.2 [5.0, 5.4]	5.2 [5.0, 5.3]	5.3 [5.0, 5.5]	5.2 [5.0, 5.4]	0.0 [-0.2, 0.1]	0.852
Fasting Insulin	50.0 [38.3, 61.7]	36.4 [27.5, 45.4]	47.3 [36.9, 57.6]	33.3 [22.8, 43.9]	-0.6 [-9.1, 8.0]	0.898
HOMA-IR	1.65 [1.17, 2.13]	1.11 [0.81, 1.41]	1.53 [1.19, 1.88]	0.99 [0.68, 1.30]	0.01 [-0.30, 0.33]	0.937
Satiety (-4 to 4)	1.0 [0.7, 1.4]	0.9 [0.7, 1.2]	1.2 [0.8, 1.7]	1.1 [0.8, 1.4]	-0.1 [-0.4, 0.2]	0.440
Exercise, METs	17.4 [12.4, 22.4]	25.8 [21.1, 30.6]	24.0 [12.9, 35.0]	23.9 [15.3, 32.6]	-9.3 [-16.4, -2-2]	0.012
Cholesterol, mmol/L [†]						
Total	6.75 [6.28, 7.21]	6.49 [5.97, 7.02]	6.76 [6.21, 7.31]	6.10 [5.67, 6.53]	-0.62 [-0.86, -0.37]	<0.001
LDL-C	4.40 [3.99, 4.82]	4.40 [3.91, 4.90]	4.53 [4.14, 4.93]	4.06 [3.71, 4.42]	-0.49 [-0.70, -0.28]	<0.001
HDL-C	1.36 [1.22, 1.50]	1.35 [1.22, 1.48]	1.21 [1.06, 1.36]	1.25 [1.10, 1.39]	0.03 [-0.02, 0.07]	0.245
Triglycerides	2.16 [1.62, 2.70]	1.71 [1.35, 2.07]	2.23 [1.65, 2.80]	1.50 [1.22, 1.77]	-0.34 [-0.57, -0.11]	0.005
Ratios						
Tchol:HDL-C	5.17 [4.54, 5.80]	4.92 [4.49, 5.34]	5.81 [5.20, 6.41]	5.13 [4.65, 5.62]	-0.57 [-0.83, -0.32]	<0.001
LDL-C:HDL-C	3.35 [2.95, 3.75]	3.34 [3.00, 3.68]	3.89 [3.49, 4.29]	3.48 [3.06, 3.90]	-0.42 [-0.60, -0.24]	<0.002
Apolipoproteins, g/L [‡]						
Apo A1	1.69 [1.60, 1.78]	1.69 [1.60, 1.77]	1.57 [1.45, 1.69]	1.57 [1.46, 1.67]	-0.02 [-0.06, 0.02]	0.316
Apo B	1.38 [1.26, 1.50]	1.23 [1.13, 1.33]	1.42 [1.30, 1.54]	1.20 [1.10, 1.31]	-0.11 [-0.16, -0.06]	<0.001
Apo B: Apo A1	0.83 [0.74, 0.91]	0.74 [0.68, 0.80]	0.92 [0.84, 0.99]	0.78 [0.70, 0.86]	-0.05 [-0.09, -0.02]	0.003
hs-CRP, mg/dL	2.1 [1.0, 3.3]	1.9 [1.3, 2.4]	3.0 [1.5, 4.5]	2.6 [1.0, 4.1]	-0.4 [-0.9, 0.1]	0.082

Blood Pressure, mmHg							
Systolic	122 [116, 128]	118 [114, 122]		128 [123, 132]	123 [119, 128]		-2 [-5, 2] 0.356
Diastolic	75 [72, 79]	74 [71, 77]		77 [74, 80]	76 [71, 80]		-1 [-3, 1] 0.288
10-yr CHD risk (%)*	8 [6, 9]	7 [6, 9]		12 [9, 14]	9 [7, 11]		-2 [-2, -1] <0.001

Values represent mean \pm 95% confidence intervals (CIs).

†To convert total cholesterol, LDL-C, and HDL-C to mg/dL, divide by 0.0259; to convert triglycerides to mg/dL, divide by 0.0113.

‡To convert apolipoprotein A1 and B to mg/dL, multiply by 100.

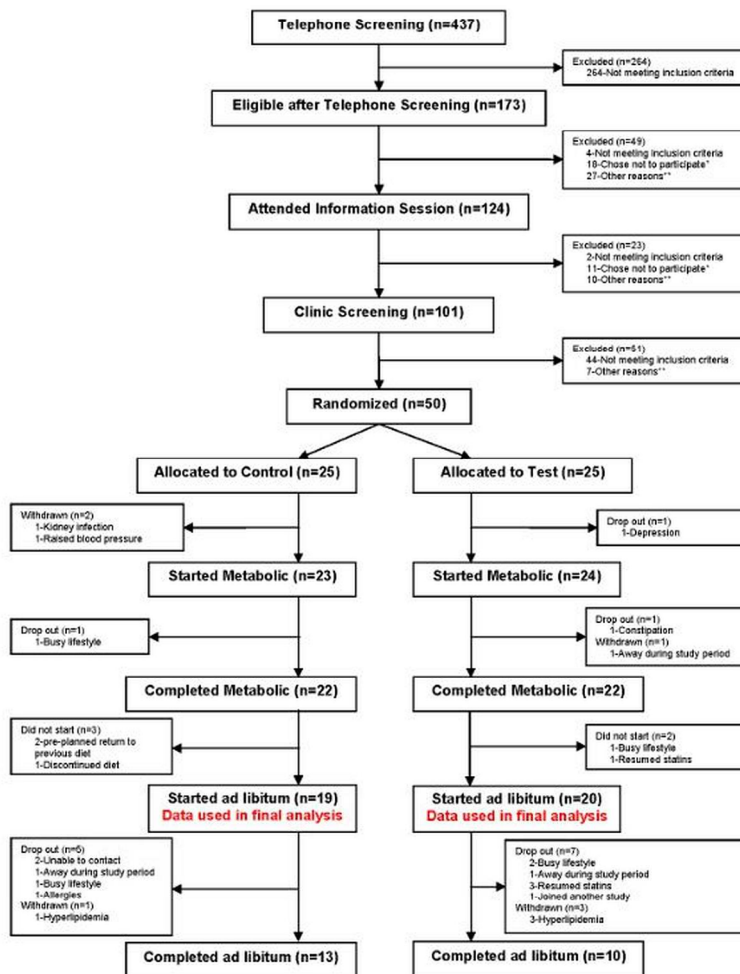
^aValues represent multiple imputation (taking the mean of 5 sets of randomly imputed values) to generate data for those who dropped out or had missing values.

^bBetween Treatment Difference = Change from baseline between the two diets using all available data.

^cP-values assessed using all available data and a repeated measures mixed model accounting for time of assessment. The response variable was change from baseline, with diet and week as fixed effects and subject ID nested in diet. There was no adjustment for baseline.

*Significantly different between treatments at baseline assessed by two sample t-test (two tailed), P=0.007.

Figure 1



*Chose not to participate (29): busy lifestyle (13), not interested (6), study too demanding (3), currently on another diet (2), no compensation (2), work-related (2), dislike prepackaged foods (1)

**Other reasons (44): unable to contact (19), unable to come to clinic (13), away (5), throat surgery (1), bowel resection (1), high potassium and BP (1), high potassium (1), raised liver function tests (1), not interested (1), medical insurance issue (1)

180x239mm (300 x 300 DPI)

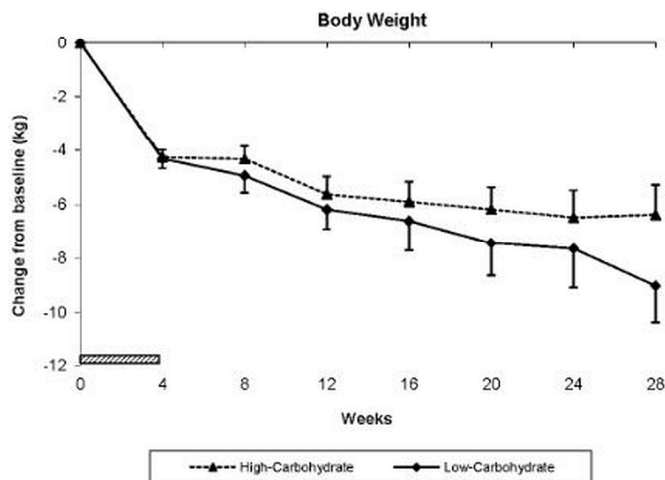


Figure 2: Weight loss during the study on both diets. Values represent mean \pm SEM of the change from baseline during the metabolic and ad libitum phases, using multiple imputation (taking the mean of 5 sets of randomly imputed values) to generate data for those who dropped out or had missing values on the ad libitum phase.

The change in weight during the ad libitum phase was significantly reduced ($P=0.047$) on the low versus the high carbohydrate diet using all available data in the repeated measures mixed model analysis.

▨ Represents the metabolic phase.

171x190mm (300 x 300 DPI)

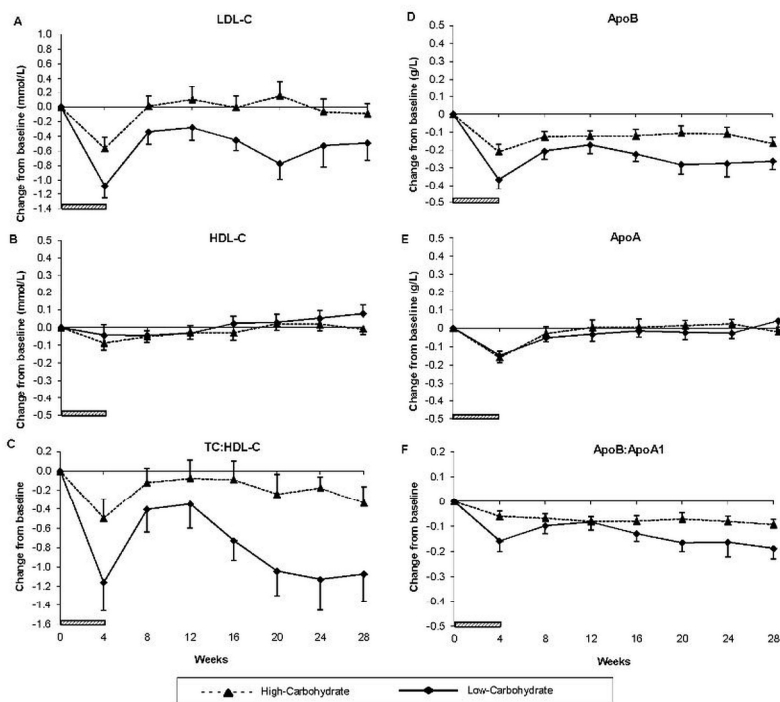


Figure 3 Change in (A) LDL-C, (B) HDL-C, (C) TC:HDL-C, (D) Apolipoprotein B (apoB), (E) Apolipoprotein A1 (apoA1), (F) ApoB:ApoA1 ratio between the two treatment groups during the metabolic and ad libitum phases. Values represent mean \pm SEM of the change from baseline using multiple imputation (taking the mean of 5 sets of randomly imputed values) to generate data for those who dropped out or had missing values for the ad libitum phase. Significant treatment differences were seen for LDL-C ($P < 0.001$), apo B ($P < 0.001$) and the ratios TC:HDL-C ($P < 0.001$) and apoB:apoA1 ($p = 0.003$) using all available data in the repeated measures mixed model analysis during the ad libitum phase.

▨ Represents the metabolic phase.

277x228mm (300 x 300 DPI)



CONSORT 2010 checklist of information to include when reporting a randomised trial*

Section/Topic	Item No	Checklist item	Reported on page No
Title and abstract			
	1a	Identification as a randomised trial in the title	1
	1b	Structured summary of trial design, methods, results, and conclusions (for specific guidance see CONSORT for abstracts)	5-6
Introduction			
Background and objectives	2a	Scientific background and explanation of rationale	7-8
	2b	Specific objectives or hypotheses	8
Methods			
Trial design	3a	Description of trial design (such as parallel, factorial) including allocation ratio	9
	3b	Important changes to methods after trial commencement (such as eligibility criteria), with reasons	NA
Participants	4a	Eligibility criteria for participants	8, also previously published from results of metabolic phase
	4b	Settings and locations where the data were collected	8
Interventions	5	The interventions for each group with sufficient details to allow replication, including how and when they were actually administered	9-11
Outcomes	6a	Completely defined pre-specified primary and secondary outcome measures, including how and when they were assessed	11-12
	6b	Any changes to trial outcomes after the trial commenced, with reasons	NA
Sample size	7a	How sample size was determined	Continuation with ad libitum phase, metabolic phase published

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Randomisation:
Sequence
generation

7b When applicable, explanation of any interim analyses and stopping guidelines

NA

8a Method used to generate the random allocation sequence

Continuation
with ad libitum
phase,
randomized
metabolic
phase
published

8b Type of randomisation; details of any restriction (such as blocking and block size)

Continuation
with ad libitum
phase,
randomized
metabolic
phase
published

Allocation
concealment
mechanism

9 Mechanism used to implement the random allocation sequence (such as sequentially numbered containers), describing any steps taken to conceal the sequence until interventions were assigned

Continuation
with ad libitum
phase,
randomized
metabolic
phase
published

Implementation

10 Who generated the random allocation sequence, who enrolled participants, and who assigned participants to interventions

Continuation
with ad libitum
phase,
randomized
metabolic
phase
published

Blinding

11a If done, who was blinded after assignment to interventions (for example, participants, care providers, those assessing outcomes) and how

11

11b If relevant, description of the similarity of interventions

NA

1				
2	Statistical methods	12a	Statistical methods used to compare groups for primary and secondary outcomes	<u>12-13</u>
3		12b	Methods for additional analyses, such as subgroup analyses and adjusted analyses	<u>12-13</u>
4				
5	Results			
6	Participant flow (a diagram is strongly recommended)	13a	For each group, the numbers of participants who were randomly assigned, received intended treatment, and were analysed for the primary outcome	Figure 1, CONSORT Diagram
7		13b	For each group, losses and exclusions after randomisation, together with reasons	Figure 1, CONSORT Diagram
8				
9	Recruitment	14a	Dates defining the periods of recruitment and follow-up	8
10		14b	Why the trial ended or was stopped	NA
11				
12	Baseline data	15	A table showing baseline demographic and clinical characteristics for each group	Table 1
13	Numbers analysed	16	For each group, number of participants (denominator) included in each analysis and whether the analysis was by original assigned groups	12
14	Outcomes and estimation	17a	For each primary and secondary outcome, results for each group, and the estimated effect size and its precision (such as 95% confidence interval)	13-15, Table 3, Figure 2 & 3
15		17b	For binary outcomes, presentation of both absolute and relative effect sizes is recommended	Relative effect sizes are given in Results 13-15 and Tables 2 & 3. The absolute differences from each treatment can be derived from Table 2 & 3 and Figures 2 & 3.
16				
17	Ancillary analyses	18	Results of any other analyses performed, including subgroup analyses and adjusted analyses, distinguishing pre-specified from exploratory	13-15
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Harms	19	All important harms or unintended effects in each group (for specific guidance see CONSORT for harms)	15
Discussion			
Limitations	20	Trial limitations, addressing sources of potential bias, imprecision, and, if relevant, multiplicity of analyses	18
Generalisability	21	Generalisability (external validity, applicability) of the trial findings	15-19
Interpretation	22	Interpretation consistent with results, balancing benefits and harms, and considering other relevant evidence	15-19
Other information			
Registration	23	Registration number and name of trial registry	2
Protocol	24	Where the full trial protocol can be accessed, if available	2
Funding	25	Sources of funding and other support (such as supply of drugs), role of funders	2, 20

*We strongly recommend reading this statement in conjunction with the CONSORT 2010 Explanation and Elaboration for important clarifications on all the items. If relevant, we also recommend reading CONSORT extensions for cluster randomised trials, non-inferiority and equivalence trials, non-pharmacological treatments, herbal interventions, and pragmatic trials. Additional extensions are forthcoming: for those and for up to date references relevant to this checklist, see www.consort-statement.org.