



# Popular Diet Trends: Myths, Facts & Decisions

Megan Wroe, MS, RD, CNE, CLEC  
Manager & Dietitian, St. Jude Wellness Center

# Agenda

- Framework for evaluating diet trends
- Evaluation of Popular Trends
  - Vegan
  - Carnivore
  - Paleo
  - Keto
  - Mediterranean
- Deciding How to Eat



# Framework for Evaluating Dietary Trends

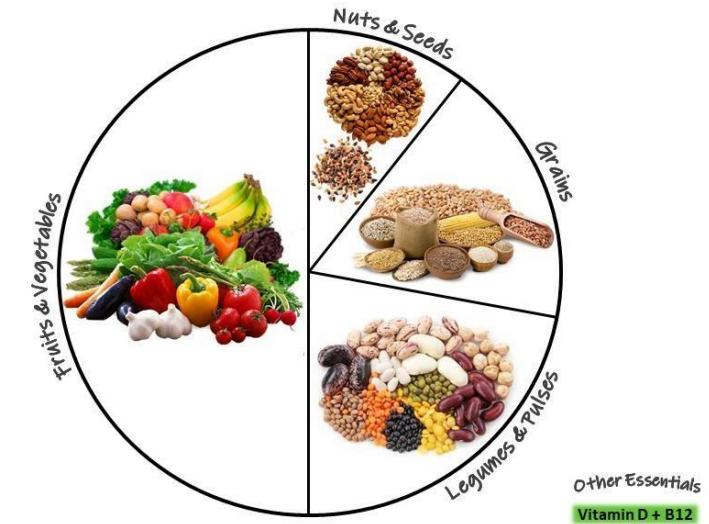
1. Is it meeting caloric needs?
2. Are there sufficient macronutrients for your health?
3. Are there sufficient micronutrients for your health?
4. Does it improve/reduce risk of metabolic concerns?
5. Can you realistically adhere to and sustain the diet?



# Vegan

A way of eating (and often philosophy of living) that excludes all form of animal product or derivative of animal.

Yes Foods	No Foods
Fruits	Meat
Vegetables	Poultry
Grains	Fish & Seafood
Legumes	Eggs
Soy	Dairy
Nuts & Seeds	Butter



# Vegan Evaluation

## 1. Is it meeting caloric needs?

- For most people yes. Can be difficult for those with gain goals.

## 2. Are there sufficient macronutrients for your health?

- Protein is often low, although can be met with intentional eating.

## 3. Are there sufficient micronutrients for your health?

- B12, Zinc, Omega3s, Iodine & Calcium very commonly insufficient and supplements usually recommended.

## 4. Does it improve/reduce risk of metabolic concerns?

- Can be extremely beneficial for those with cardiac or obesity concerns.
- May not be best option for those with insulin resistance or autoimmune.
- Beware ultraprocessed vegan products

## 5. Can you realistically adhere to and sustain the diet?

- More easy nowadays but not easy in social settings.

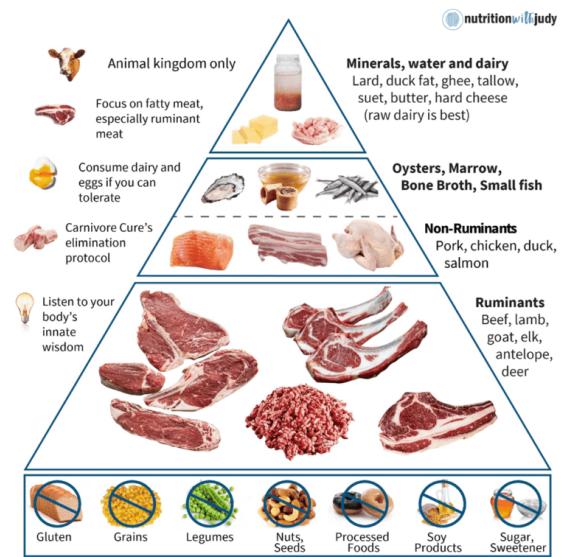


# Carnivore

Exact opposite of vegan: eating only animal foods and animal derivative products with no intake of any plant foods.

Yes Foods	No Foods
Meat	Fruits
Poultry	Vegetables
Fish & Seafood	Grains
Eggs	Legumes
Dairy	Soy
Butter	Nuts & Seeds

## CARNIVORE FOOD PYRAMID



# Carnivore Evaluation

## 1. Is it meeting caloric needs?

- Yes, and may exceed caloric needs depending on portion sizes.

## 2. Are there sufficient macronutrients for your health?

- Deficient in fiber.

## 3. Are there sufficient micronutrients for your health?

- Yes, although may need omega3 and vitamin D supplementation depending on types of meat ingested.

## 4. Does it improve/reduce risk of metabolic concerns?

- Not appropriate for those with cardiac or cognitive concerns.
- Unknown impact on insulin resistance.
- MAY provide benefit for gut and autoimmune short-term.

## 5. Can you realistically adhere to and sustain the diet?

- Socially, probably, depending on how strict you are on marinade ingredients.
- No known impact on gut or immune health long-term from low fiber.



# Paleo

A dietary approach to “mimic what our ancestors ate” by avoiding foods that cannot be eaten either raw or from basic cooking with flame.

Yes Foods	No Foods
Meat	Grains
Poultry	Legumes
Fish & Seafood	Soy
Eggs	Dairy Products
Milk	
Butter & Oil	
Nuts & Seeds	
Fruits	
Vegetables	

**FITFLUENTIAL**  
**IS IT PALEO?**  
The FitFluential Guide to Paleo

**IS IT A VEGETABLE OR FRUIT?**  
Broccoli, Asparagus, Spinach, Kale, Brussel Sprouts, Squash, Apples, Oranges, Berries, Pears, Pineapple, Banana, 

**IS IT A GRAIN?**  
Rice, Quinoa, Crackers, Bread, Pasta, Oats, 

**IS IT A LEGUME?**  
Beans, Peas, Soy, Alfalfa, Peanuts, 

**IS IT DAIRY?**  
Milk, Yogurt, Cheese, Ice cream, 

**IS IT PROCESSED?**  
Sugar, Candy, Chips, Seed oils, Artificial sweeteners, 

**DEFINITELY NOT PALEO**

**ENJOY! IT'S PALEO**

# Paleo Evaluation

## 1. Is it meeting caloric needs?

- Yes most likely

## 2. Are there sufficient macronutrients for your health?

- Yes most likely

## 3. Are there sufficient micronutrients for your health?

- Likely, but calcium, D3 and omega3s should always be assessed.

## 4. Does it improve/reduce risk of metabolic concerns?

- Overall does seem to improve health markers assuming it is followed without a lot of ultra-processed foods.
- Sugar & carb content should still be monitored for those with insulin resistance. Not a low carb diet.

## 5. Can you realistically adhere to and sustain the diet?

- Very common now so fairly simple although ordering modifications may be needed and socially will depend on community.



# Keto

Does not focus on source of food, but instead on macronutrient balance.  
Follows very low carb pattern in order to consistently produce ketones.



# Keto Evaluation

## 1. Is it meeting caloric needs?

- Likely yes. Can easily exceed needs without monitoring.

## 2. Are there sufficient macronutrients for your health?

- Possible and plausible, but if not diligent may be lacking in fiber.

## 3. Are there sufficient micronutrients for your health?

- If removing plant carbs too much may be low in antioxidants.

## 4. Does it improve/reduce risk of metabolic concerns?

- Very good research around improving almost all metabolic concerns, IF not the dirty keto pattern.
- Mixed research on cardiac outcomes.

## 5. Can you realistically adhere to and sustain the diet?

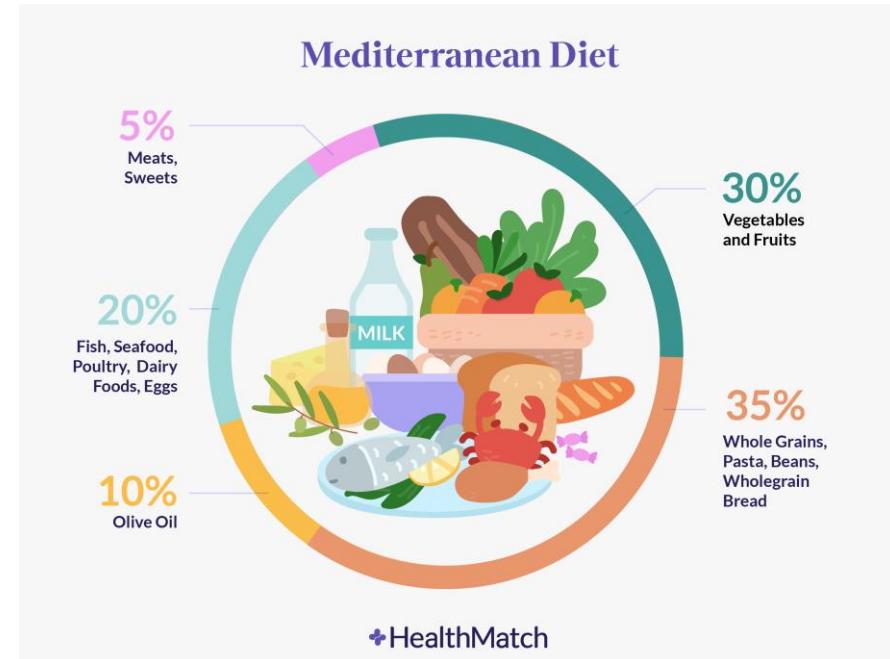
- More difficult to sustain and requires some consistent self-monitoring.



# Mediterranean

Pattern of eating that mimics the traditional meal style of those from the Mediterranean: primarily plants alongside legumes, nuts, olive oil, fish and sustainably raised meat.

Best research on health, but also VERY difficult to define since other cuisines also follow this pattern (aka the Blue Zones).



# Mediterranean Evaluation

## 1. Is it meeting caloric needs?

- Likely yes

## 2. Are there sufficient macronutrients for your health?

- Likely yes

## 3. Are there sufficient micronutrients for your health?

- Likely yes (monitor omega3 unless lots of fish)

## 4. Does it improve/reduce risk of metabolic concerns?

- Huge body of research points to yes when followed consistently.

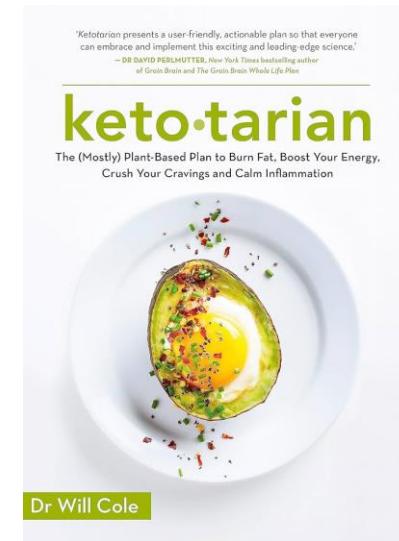
## 5. Can you realistically adhere to and sustain the diet?

- Yes? Again so hard to define especially culturally and therefore potentially hard to adhere to. Also highly marketed as a catchy name in food advertising.



# Other Dietary Strategies to Consider

- Pescatarian: Vegan + Fish + Dairy + Eggs
  - Benefits of vegan without insufficiencies of micronutrients & protein
  - More sustainable
- Ketotarian
  - Pescatarian in a keto structure
  - Significant metabolic benefits of keto, with more fiber and more flexibility



# Deciding How to Eat

1. What is your caloric need?
2. What macro amounts best support your health?
3. What micronutrients might be deficient or insufficient based on your health or dietary choice and can you optimize with nutrition or with supplements?
4. What are your metabolic concerns?
5. Can you realistically adhere to and sustain the diet that feels best for you? Or could you consider a seasonal fluctuation of diets?



## Next Up:

- \*Fibermaxxed Cooking 12/3
- \*Dietitian Deep Dive 12/3 & 12/10
- \*Finding Calm Mini Classes
- \*The Power of Slowing Down 12/11

[stjudewellness@stjoe.org](mailto:stjudewellness@stjoe.org)  
[www.stjudewellnesscenter.org](http://www.stjudewellnesscenter.org)