Healthy Keto VS Mediterranean Diet : Which one is actually better ? Transcript

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Diet debate introduction

In my last In my last video, we talked about a video, we talked about a fascinating clinical fascinating clinical study where a study where a ketogenic diet ketogenic diet reduced reduced reduced liver fat by 67%, and I liver fat by 67%, and I immediately understood what had immediately understood what had happened. Some people heard happened. Some people heard this and said, "See, this and said, "See, keto wins." And keto wins." And others said, "No others said, "No way, the way, the Mediterranean Mediterranean Mediterranean diet is the healthiest diet is the healthiest diet in the world." And somewhere in diet in the world." And somewhere in the middle, someone the middle, someone is eating an avocado and is eating an avocado and wondering which wondering which team to team to join. Isn't that right join. Isn't that right? So today I? So today I want to resolve this want to resolve this dispute. But dispute. But I'm not going to I'm not going to announce the announce the announce the winner. Because that would be a winner. Because that would be a great great great title for a video, title for a video, I know, but it's bad I know, but it's bad medicine. I am Dr.

medicine. I am Dr. Ahmet Ergin. I'm Ahmet Ergin. I'm an endocrinologist, a an endocrinologist, a specialist in diabetes specialist in diabetes and metabolism, and and metabolism, and today we're going to today we're going to compare a healthy compare a healthy ketogenic diet to a ketogenic diet to a Mediterranean diet.

Not internet keto. Not Not internet keto. Not the diet where you the diet where you add butter to your coffee, add butter to your coffee, bacon on top of bacon on top of bacon, and all that other stuff bacon, and all that other stuff. Where for some reason you. Where for some reason you convince yourself that convince yourself that vegetables are dangerous.

vegetables are dangerous. I mean a I mean a properly designed, nutrient-rich, nutrient-rich ketogenic diet when ketogenic diet when I talk about a ketogenic I talk about a ketogenic diet. And we're diet. And we're going to compare going to compare these diets where it these diets where it really matters.

Blood sugar levels, insulin Blood sugar levels, insulin resistance resistance, weight loss,, weight loss, triglycerides, triglycerides, triglycerides, LDL cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, fiber, fiber, fiber, heart health, and perhaps the heart health, and perhaps the most underrated most underrated category of all.

category of all. Can you really Can you really eat like this for the eat like this for the next 5 years without going next 5 years without going crazy? So, crazy? So, let's begin.

Defining healthy keto

First, what does healthy keto actually mean? Keto healthy keto actually mean? Keto is defined is defined is defined primarily by primarily by primarily by carbohydrate restriction. But carbohydrate restriction. But restricting carbohydrates restricting carbohydrates tells me almost nothing tells me almost nothing about the quality of the diet. Think about it.

. Think about it. Two people can Two people can consume 30 g of consume 30 g of carbohydrates per day. The first person eats first person eats salmon, extra virgin olive oil salmon, extra virgin olive oil,,, avocado, avocado, avocado, walnuts, eggs, chicken, spinach, broccoli, cauliflower, zucchini, mushrooms,, olives, chia seeds, olives, chia seeds, flax seeds, and flax seeds, and some berries. The second some berries. The second person eats bacon, person eats bacon, sausage, butter, cheese, sausage, butter, cheese, processed meats, processed meats, more butter, and coffee with more butter, and coffee with so much so much heavy cream that it heavy cream that it could be called soup.

Technically, both Technically, both people can people can be in a state of be in a state of ketosis. Metabolically, ketosis. Metabolically, it's not the same it's not the same diet. This distinction is diet. This distinction is extremely

important. A extremely important. A healthy ketogenic healthy ketogenic diet, in my opinion, diet, in my opinion, should borrow some of the should borrow some of the best features of the best features of the Mediterranean Mediterranean Mediterranean diet. The diet. The carbohydrate levels vary, carbohydrate levels vary, but the emphasis on but the emphasis on food quality should be similar.

Your essential fats Your essential fats should should should come primarily from come primarily from foods like extra virgin olive oil, extra virgin olive oil, avocados, nuts, avocados, nuts, seeds, olives, and seeds, olives, and fatty fish. Your protein fatty fish. Your protein should come from a should come from a mix of fish, mix of fish, seafood, eggs, seafood, eggs, poultry, lean poultry, lean meats, and other meats, and other minimally minimally minimally processed sources processed sources that meet that meet your your your carbohydrate allowance. And vegetables carbohydrate allowance. And vegetables should not disappear.

should not disappear. Even the opposite. A Even the opposite. A healthy ketogenic healthy ketogenic diet should diet should contain plenty of contain plenty of non-starchy non-starchy non-starchy vegetables. Leafy vegetables. Leafy greens, broccoli, greens, broccoli, cauliflower, cauliflower, cauliflower, cabbage, cabbage, cabbage, peppers, mushrooms, asparagus, peppers, mushrooms, asparagus, zucchini, cucumbers, zucchini, cucumbers, eggplant. People sometimes eggplant. People sometimes say to me, "Doctor, say to me, "Doctor, vegetables contain vegetables contain carbohydrates." Yes, and carbohydrates." Yes, and water contains oxygen.

Context matters Context matters. You don't have to. You don't have to worry about the 3 grams of worry about the 3 grams of carbs in carbs in broccoli when you drink it with a carb-free beverage alongside a carb-free beverage alongside a plate of processed plate of processed meat. This means not meat. This means not seeing the forest for the trees seeing the forest for the trees. Keto doesn't mean. Keto doesn't mean eating as much eating as much fat as possible. This is probably the fat as possible. This is probably the biggest biggest biggest misunderstanding about misunderstanding about ketogenic diets. Keto ketogenic diets. Keto means that your means that your carbohydrate intake is so carbohydrate intake is so low that your low that your metabolism metabolism metabolism switches to more switches to more active active active fat oxidation and fat oxidation and ketone production. This does not ketone production. This does not mean that your mean that your mission is to consume the mission is to consume the maximum maximum maximum amount of dietary amount of dietary fat. You have your own fat. You have your own fat stores. If you're fat stores. If you're trying to lose weight, we'd like your, we'd like your body to body to body to use use use some of them. You won't some of them. You won't get a medal for get a medal for your coffee your coffee containing 500 calories from containing 500 calories from butter. In fact, it butter. In fact, it can be detrimental to can be detrimental to achieving the goal. Fat is achieving the goal. Fat is extremely extremely extremely energy-intensive. So if energy-intensive. So if someone puts butter in their someone puts butter in their coffee, pours cream on everything coffee, pours cream on everything, eats handfuls of, eats handfuls of cheese, snacks on nuts all day, cheese, snacks on nuts all day, and and and drizzles oil on every drizzles oil on every meal because fat doesn't meal because fat doesn't raise insulin, they raise insulin, they can still consume a can still consume a huge amount of huge amount of energy. Insulin energy. Insulin matters, but calories matters, but calories didn't disappear from human didn't disappear from human physiology when keto physiology when keto became popular. Both are became popular. Both are important.

important.

Comparing diet philosophies

Now let's look at the Now let's look at the Mediterranean Mediterranean Mediterranean diet. The diet. The Mediterranean Mediterranean Mediterranean diet is very diet is very different from different from strict keto, but they strict keto, but they also have a lot also have a lot more in common than more in common than people think. The Mediterranean Mediterranean diet diet diet emphasizes emphasizes emphasizes foods such as vegetables, extra virgin olive oil, extra virgin olive oil, nuts, seeds, fish, nuts, seeds, fish, seafood, legumes, whole seafood, legumes, whole fruits, whole fruits, whole grains, and relatively grains, and relatively moderate amounts of moderate amounts of highly processed highly processed foods, foods, foods, refined refined refined carbohydrates, carbohydrates, carbohydrates, sweets, sweets, sweets, processed meats, and processed meats, and excess saturated excess saturated fats. So, you fats. So, you may notice something may notice something interesting right away. A healthy keto diet interesting right away. A healthy keto diet and a Mediterranean and a Mediterranean diet

diet diet differ greatly in differ greatly in how many carbohydrates how many carbohydrates you should consume.

you should consume. But they But they agree on agree on many other things. many other things. Both can Both can emphasize emphasize emphasize natural foods.

natural foods. Both can Both can emphasize emphasize emphasize vegetables. Both can vegetables. Both can emphasize fish. emphasize fish. Both can Both can emphasize emphasize emphasize olive oil.

olive oil. Both may Both may include nuts and include nuts and seeds. Both seeds. Both can eliminate can eliminate sugary drinks. Both sugary drinks. Both can significantly can significantly limit refined limit refined carbohydrates. And both carbohydrates. And both can minimize can minimize ultra-processed ultra-processed ultra-processed foods. The main foods. The main disagreement is what disagreement is what happens next. The happens next. The Mediterranean Mediterranean Mediterranean diet says: “ Legumes are good.” Legumes are good.” Lentils are good.

Lentils are good. Fruit is good. " Fruit is good. " Whole grains can Whole grains can be beneficial." Healthy Keto says: “ These foods may These foods may be nutritious, but be nutritious, but many of them many of them contain enough contain enough carbohydrates to carbohydrates to interfere with nutritional interfere with nutritional ketosis. And this is where the ketosis.

Blood sugar and metabolism

And this is where the real real real discussion begins. Let's talk discussion begins. Let's talk about blood sugar. about blood sugar. If you have If you have insulin resistance insulin resistance, prediabetes, or, prediabetes, or type 2 diabetes, type 2 diabetes, carbohydrates carbohydrates carbohydrates matter. This does not matter. This does not mean that carbohydrates are poison. This are poison. This means that carbohydrates are the macronutrient are the macronutrient that has the most that has the most direct impact on direct impact on glucose levels after a glucose levels after a meal. So, reducing meal. So, reducing carbohydrates carbohydrates carbohydrates can be a very can be a very powerful powerful powerful tool. This is one tool. This is one reason why some reason why some patients patients patients use use use continuous continuous continuous glucose monitoring glucose monitoring and are surprised when they and are surprised when they start eating on a start eating on a keto diet. Their keto diet. Their glucose graph glucose graph suddenly becomes boring.

suddenly becomes boring. And with diabetes, a boring And with diabetes, a boring glucose graph is glucose graph is often a good thing. Fewer often a good thing. Fewer spikes, lower post-meal glucose readings, sometimes post-meal glucose readings, sometimes lower lower lower fasting glucose, often fasting glucose, often less less less insulin requirement in those who insulin requirement in those who use it. This is use it. This is especially noticeable in especially noticeable in people who previously people who previously consumed large consumed large amounts of bread, rice, pasta, potatoes,, pasta, potatoes, sweets, juices, and sweets, juices, and processed processed processed carbohydrates. But here's an carbohydrates. But here's an important comparison. The important comparison. The Mediterranean Mediterranean Mediterranean diet doesn't diet doesn't require you require you to eat a huge to eat a huge bowl of pasta and bowl of pasta and then baklava. A then baklava. A properly designed properly designed Mediterranean Mediterranean Mediterranean diet also limits diet also limits refined carbohydrates refined carbohydrates and added sugar. The remaining carbohydrates usually come usually come from foods such from foods such as legumes, whole as legumes, whole fruits, vegetables, and fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. These whole grains. These foods behave foods behave very differently than very differently than soda and soda and white bread. So it's white bread. So it's not so much carbs not so much carbs vs. no vs. no carbs. It's a carbs. It's a question of how many question of how many carbohydrates, which ones, for which patient,, for which patient, and what happens to the and what happens to the rest of the metabolic rest of the metabolic picture.

Evidence from the KetoMed trial

picture. picture. Keto-Med research. Fortunately, Keto-Med research. Fortunately, researchers have actually researchers have actually compared these approaches.

One extremely One extremely interesting study interesting study was the was the Keto-Med randomized crossover study from Keto-Med randomized crossover study from Stanford. People with Stanford. People with prediabetes or prediabetes or type 2 diabetes type 2 diabetes followed two followed two diets. A well- diets. A well- balanced balanced balanced ketogenic diet and a Mediterranean Mediterranean Plus diet. This is an interesting Plus diet. This is an interesting comparison because comparison because both diets were both diets were designed to be designed to be relatively healthy.

relatively healthy. Both emphasized Both emphasized non-starchy non-starchy non-starchy vegetables. Both vegetables. Both eliminated added eliminated added sugars. Both sugars. Both limited limited limited refined grains. The refined grains. The main difference main difference was that the was that the Mediterranean Mediterranean Mediterranean diet included diet included foods such as foods such as legumes, fruits, and legumes, fruits, and whole grains. The whole grains. The ketogenic diet ketogenic diet restricted them. So what restricted them. So what happened? After 12 happened? After 12 weeks, HbA1c levels were weeks, HbA1c levels were not significantly not significantly different between the different between the two diets. Both two diets. Both indicators indicators indicators improved improved improved compared to compared to baseline. This is interesting.

baseline. This is interesting. Keto didn't kill the Keto didn't kill the Mediterranean Mediterranean Mediterranean diet. The diet. The Mediterranean Mediterranean Mediterranean diet didn't kill keto. But when the researchers. But when the researchers looked deeper, the looked deeper, the differences became differences became more interesting.

more interesting. Triglycerides Triglycerides Triglycerides decreased more decreased more during the ketogenic phase. during the ketogenic phase. This is physiologically This is physiologically logical. Reducing logical. Reducing carbohydrates can carbohydrates can significantly improve significantly improve triglyceride levels triglyceride levels in many patients in many patients with with with insulin resistance insulin resistance. But LDL cholesterol. But LDL cholesterol changed in the changed in the opposite opposite opposite direction. LDL direction. LDL increased during the increased during the ketogenic phase and ketogenic phase and decreased during the decreased during the Mediterranean Mediterranean Mediterranean phase. So, keto phase. So, keto got the point. Then the got the point. Then the Mediterranean Mediterranean Mediterranean diet got a point.

diet got a point. Welcome to the Welcome to the science of nutrition. science of nutrition.

Weight loss and appetite

That's why anyone who That's why anyone who tells you that one tells you that one diet improves every diet improves every biomarker in every biomarker in every person is probably person is probably selling something. How about selling something. How about losing weight? Both losing weight? Both diets can diets can work. The work. The Stanford Stanford Stanford Keto-Med study Keto-Med study found weight loss found weight loss during both during both diet phases. And this is diet phases. And this is consistent with a consistent with a much larger much larger body of research in the body of research in the field of nutrition.

People can People can lose significant weight through lose significant weight through low-carb, low-carb, low-carb, Mediterranean, Mediterranean, Mediterranean, low-fat, low-fat, low-fat, high-protein high-protein high-protein diets, diets, diets, intermittent intermittent intermittent fasting, and other fasting, and other approaches. Why? Because approaches. Why? Because successful weight loss successful weight loss requires creating an requires creating an energy deficit and energy deficit and maintaining it. Diet is a remedy.

is a remedy. Compliance is the Compliance is the driving force. The keto diet may give diet may give certain people an certain people an advantage. Some advantage. Some patients tell me patients tell me something very specific.

something very specific. Doctor, I just Doctor, I just don't feel don't feel hungry anymore. This is important. Protein gives a feeling of Protein gives a feeling of satiety. Fats satiety. Fats can also be satiating.

can also be satiating. Ketosis can change Ketosis can change appetite in some people. Eliminating combinations of. Eliminating combinations of sugar, starch, and sugar, starch, and fat removes a fat removes a huge number of huge number of foods that people foods that people often overeat.

Cookies disappear. Cookies disappear. Cakes are disappearing. Cakes are disappearing. Pizza is disappearing. Pizza is disappearing. Ice cream is disappearing.

Ice cream is disappearing. French fries are disappearing. French fries are disappearing. Most fast food is disappearing. Most fast food is disappearing.

Suddenly you're eating salmon Suddenly you're eating salmon and broccoli. And people and broccoli. And people say, "Keto magically say, "Keto magically cut my cut my calories." Well, sometimes calories." Well, sometimes the magic is that you the magic is that you stopped eating chips stopped eating chips at 10:30 p.m. It still at 10:30 p.m.

Flexibility and sustainability

It still counts. But the counts. But the Mediterranean Mediterranean Mediterranean diet has another diet has another advantage—flexibility. This is where the Mediterranean Mediterranean approach becomes approach becomes extremely extremely extremely attractive. Are you going attractive. Are you going to dinner? Perfectly.

to dinner? Perfectly. Fish, vegetables, olive Fish, vegetables, olive oil, maybe legumes, oil, maybe legumes, some whole grains, some whole grains, fruit for dessert. Are you fruit for dessert. Are you traveling? This is still traveling? This is still acceptable. Family acceptable. Family holiday? Usually holiday? Usually acceptable too. Vacation acceptable too. Vacation in Italy? Very convenient. A in Italy? Very convenient. A strict keto diet may diet may require more require more planning. And this is planning. And this is important, because important, because theoretically, a perfect theoretically, a perfect diet that you diet that you follow for 19 days is less follow for 19 days is less beneficial than a very beneficial than a very good diet that you good diet that you follow for 10 years.

follow for 10 years. In the KetoMed study, In the KetoMed study, observations observations observations showed that showed that participants found it easier participants found it easier to stick to the to stick to the to stick to the Mediterranean Mediterranean Mediterranean approach. This does not approach. This does not mean that everyone. I mean that everyone. I have met patients have met patients who love keto.

who love keto. They say, "Doctor, They say, "Doctor, this is the easiest diet this is the easiest diet I've ever I've ever tried." They don't tried." They don't miss bread. They don't care miss bread. They don't care about pasta.

about pasta. They love eggs, They love eggs, fish, meat, vegetables, fish, meat, vegetables, olive oil, and olive oil, and avocados. Fantastically. avocados. Fantastically.

And I've also met And I've also met patients who patients who look at me as if I've ruined I've ruined their childhood when I their childhood when I tell them they can't have tell them they can't have fruit. Such a person fruit. Such a person may not be a may not be a suitable suitable suitable candidate for candidate for long-term keto.

.. This brings us back to the This brings us back to the previous video. previous video. The study we The study we discussed discussed discussed showed a dramatic showed a dramatic reduction in reduction in liver fat on the keto diet, and diet, and mechanistically, this mechanistically, this makes sense. Fatty makes sense. Fatty liver disease is liver disease is closely linked to closely linked to insulin resistance insulin resistance. When. When insulin levels are chronically insulin levels are chronically elevated, elevated, elevated, adipose adipose adipose tissue metabolism becomes tissue metabolism becomes abnormal. Free abnormal. Free fatty acids fatty acids fill the liver.

Thank you for watching. Thank you for watching. See you in the See you in the