

SHOULD THE KETOGENIC DIET EVER BE ADVISED FOR ADULTS? - NO

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Ketogenic diet and the Modified Atkins Diet (MAD) are now recognized as a potential treatments in the adult refractory epilepsy population. The MAD has a 2:1 ratio of calories in fat to carbohydrate and is more palatable while the classic ketogenic diet has a 4:1 ratio. The purpose of the diet is to produce ketone bodies, which seem to have an anticonvulsant effect in multiple seizure types and epilepsy syndromes.

The problems involved with these diets, however, are many and make implementation very difficult in adults. First of all adults have already established eating habits and if not highly motivated often are not compliant after a few months, even if seizure free. Other problems include gastro-intestinal distress (about 30%), long term cardiovascular complications, cholesterol and triglyceride increases, acidosis, weight loss, hypoglycemia, kidney stones, cardiomyopathy, osteoporosis and even more problems which will be discussed during the debate.

Therefore the ketogenic diet should not be recommended in adult patients except in those who are really committed and accept potential serious side effects which may become medical problems in their own right.