



## National registry tracks weight loss

### Which is better to lose weight, cutting fat or cutting carbs?

Actually, the best answer is “cutting calories.” If you trim the calories you consume and increase calories you burn, then you’re on the right road to losing weight.

Still, your question is a sound one, and one that researchers have taken seriously. While juries are still out on definitive answers for long-term weight loss, a study presented at the North American Association for the Study of Obesity sheds some light.

The study, led by researchers at Brown Medical School, examined more than 2,700 participants in the National Weight Control Registry (<http://www.nwcr.ws/>), which began in 1993. The registry asks people who have lost at least 30 pounds and maintained the loss for at least a year to keep track of their weight ups and downs. More than 4,000 people are now registered. Most are women, and they average a weight loss of about 60 pounds.

In the recent study, researchers examined members who had enrolled in 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001 and 2003. No matter what year they joined, participants reported consuming about 1,400 calories a day — that, at least, remained somewhat consistent.

However, members who joined the registry more recently reported increasing intake of both overall fat and saturated fat, while the

percent of calories from carbohydrates dropped from 56 percent to 49 percent. In addition, the proportion of members who ate less than 90 grams of carbohydrates per day increased from 6 percent in 1995 to 17 percent in 2003. The low-carb aficionados were out in force.

The researchers said that the type of diet — low-carb, low-fat or low-calorie — that participants initially used to lose weight didn’t appear to make much of a difference in whether they were able to lose weight. But researchers found that those who increased their fat intake and cut carbs over the course of a year tended to re-gain at least some of the pounds they had lost.

An earlier study of registry participants, published in 1999 in the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, reported that those who regained weight tended to decrease physical activity and increase fat intake. They also were more likely to have lost a lot of weight more recently. Those researchers concluded that the longer you can keep the weight off, the easier it gets. So, no matter how you decide to cut calories, remember to keep at it, and keep moving. That should lead to success.

*Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1044, or [filipic.3@osu.edu](mailto:filipic.3@osu.edu).*



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