

KETOGENIC DIET

WHAT IS IT?

THE KETOGENIC DIET IS PRIMARILY USED TO TREAT EPILEPSY IN CHILDREN. IT IS A DIET THAT IS HIGH IN FATS, LOW IN CARBOHYDRATES, AND PROVIDES ADEQUATE PROTEIN. AROUND 80% OF THE PARTICIPANT'S CALORIES COMES FROM FAT. THIS DIET MIMICS STARVATION BY FORCING THE BODY TO RELY ON FATS FOR ENERGY. THE KETOGENIC DIET IS A STRICT DIET THAT REQUIRES A STRONG COMMITMENT BY THE PARTICIPANT AND THEIR CARE TAKERS. THE AMOUNT OF FOOD AND LIQUID AT EACH MEAL, INCLUDING SNACKS, IS PRECISELY CALCULATED FOR EACH PERSON. EVEN A SLIGHT DEVIATION FROM THE DIET CAN CAUSE A SEIZURE IN THE CHILD.

WHY DOES IT WORK?

ON A REGULAR DIET, CARBOHYDRATES ARE CONVERTED TO GLUCOSE WHICH IS THEN TRANSPORTED TO THE REST OF THE BODY AND USED FOR ENERGY. GLUCOSE IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IN PROPER BRAIN FUNCTION. HOWEVER, WHEN THE BODY DOES NOT HAVE ENOUGH CARBOHYDRATES TO BREAK DOWN, IT RELIES ON FATS. FATS ARE BROKEN DOWN BY THE LIVER AND CONVERTED TO FATTY ACIDS AND KETONE BODIES. THESE KETONE BODIES ARE TRANSPORTED THROUGHOUT THE BODY AND REPLACE GLUCOSE AS THE ENERGY SOURCE. CURRENT RESEARCH INDICATES THAT A HIGHER LEVEL OF KETONE BODIES IN THE BLOOD LEADS TO A REDUCTION OF SEIZURES IN CHILDREN.

IS IT EFFECTIVE?

THE KETOGENIC DIET IS EFFECTIVE IN REDUCING SEIZURES IN 2 OUT OF 3 CHILDREN AND MAY PREVENT SEIZURES ENTIRELY IN 1 OUT OF 3 CHILDREN.

SIDE EFFECTS TO WATCH FOR

- DEHYDRATION
- CONSTIPATION
- KIDNEY AND GALL STONES
- DECREASED BONE DENSITY
- EYE PROBLEMS

THINGS TO BE AWARE OF

- THE PARTICIPANT MUST FINISH EACH MEAL. MEALS AND SNACKS ARE DETERMINED BY PRECISELY BALANCING THE AMOUNT OF FAT, PROTEIN, AND CARBOHYDRATES. IF THE MEAL IS NOT FINISHED THE BALANCE IS LOST, WHICH MAY LEAD TO A SEIZURE.
- REMIND YOUR DOCTORS THAT MEDICATIONS MUST BE PRESCRIBED IN SUGAR-FREE AND CARBOHYDRATE-FREE FORMS. READ ALL MEDICATION LABELS AND ASK YOUR PHARMACIST IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS.
- CONFER WITH YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER PRIOR TO STARTING YOUR CHILD ON THIS DIET