

Draft report on low-carb diets for adults with type-2 diabetes

Public Health England (PHE) asked the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN), an independent committee of experts that advises government on nutrition and related health matters, to review the evidence base on lower carbohydrate diets alongside current UK government advice, for people with type 2 diabetes. [The consultation](#) is published today, Thursday 20 February 2020.

The comprehensive review was conducted by a joint working group comprising members of SACN and members nominated by Diabetes UK, NHS England, the British Dietetic Association, Royal College of Physicians and Royal College of GPs.

The effect of lower compared to higher carbohydrate diets were considered on a range of outcomes including body weight and measures of blood glucose concentrations.

Following a robust, systematic assessment of the available evidence, the draft conclusions are:

- for body weight, there is no difference between lower and higher carbohydrate diets in the long-term (at or beyond 12 months). Short term weight change was not considered
- for blood glucose (sugar) levels, lower carbohydrate diets may have benefits over higher carbohydrate diets in the short term, but their longer-term effects are unclear

Current UK government advice (represented by the [Eatwell Guide](#)) is that for the general population, around 50% of total dietary energy should be from starchy carbohydrates (such as potatoes, bread and rice), opting for higher fibre or wholegrain versions where possible. People with type 2 diabetes are currently advised to follow healthy eating advice for the general population.

This is based on recommendations made by SACN following its 2015 review of the evidence on carbohydrates and health.

Dr Adrienne Cullum, head of nutrition science at PHE, said:

The Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition, with support from a range of partners including Diabetes UK and NHSE, have undertaken a thorough review of the evidence on low-carb diets for adults with type-2 diabetes.

SACN is consulting on the draft report to make sure it has considered all the relevant evidence, and to invite comments on the draft conclusions. All comments on the draft report are welcome.

Professor Ian Macdonald, co-Chair of the SACN joint Working Group, said:

The draft report is based on a robust and transparent review of the best available evidence on lower carb diets for adults with type-2 diabetes.

SACN and the joint Working Group will consider all consultation responses before publishing final recommendations.

Once SACN has considered all the responses to the consultation, it will publish its final report and make recommendations to government.

The consultation opens today, 20 February 2020, and closes 8 April 2020.