



What's that sound? Your stomach is growling ... again. Those diet pills, which cost a fortune, aren't curbing your appetite like the advertisement promised. What you really want is something delicious and filling, but you're trying to be good and follow the rules this week.

Does this sound familiar? Maybe weight loss doesn't have to be this difficult or ineffective. In fact, Dr. Jeffrey Gerber, MD, has a patient who told him that weight loss was a "piece of cake."

Dr. Gerber is a board certified family physician and owner of South Suburban Family Medicine in Littleton, Colorado, where he is known as Denver's "Diet Doctor." Nutrition and its effects on health have always been areas of interest for him. He says that his goal is to redefine healthy nutrition and improve patients' health through weight loss programs based on the science of Low-Carb High Fat (LCHF) nutrition.

Today's USDA official dietary guidelines, which are the basis of low-fat, low-calorie diets, are largely supported by the for-profit food industry, he says, and this relationship creates bias in the information that is provided to the public. These guidelines promote the sale of the most abundant (and yet unhealthy) plant-based food commodities, he adds. These include refined and processed foods from sources such as corn, wheat, rice, sugars, soy, and polyunsaturated vegetable oil seeds. These foods wreak havoc on our metabolism and make us hungrier, says Dr. Gerber.

These official guidelines are based on rather weak scientific principals known as the "lipid hypothesis and food energy balance" dating back to the 1950s, according to Dr. Gerber. These guidelines vilify saturated fats and calorie-dense foods, suggesting that saturated fats lead to heart disease and that eating less and exercising more cures obesity. Thus, we should avoid saturated fats and calorie-dense foods and replace them with carbohydrates, proteins, and/or polyunsaturated fats instead, Dr. Gerber explains. Ultimately, long-term weight loss on low-fat, low-calorie diets is difficult because it leaves most people hungry, he says.

Dr. Gerber points out that the federal guidelines have it wrong. It is not just mere coincidence that when the USDA released these official nutritional guidelines in 1980, that we saw the obesity rates double in adults and triple in children, he states. We are now one of the heaviest countries in the world. These guidelines are actually causing chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, atherosclerosis, and heart disease, he adds. These are the same chronic diseases that we are trying to prevent in the first place.

These traditional guidelines do not work because we now understand that it is metabolism and hormones such as insulin and Leptin that regulate food energy, hunger, and weight, Dr. Gerber states. These hormones are exquisitely sensitive to dietary carbohydrates. Consumption of dietary fat has little effect. A lifetime of carbohydrate overload is ultimately fattening and inflammatory. If we reduce dietary carbohydrates in our diets and increase our consumption of nutrients and calorie-dense foods like natural saturated fats, including coconut oil, butter, cream, animal fat, and olive oil, patients lose weight, control their appetites, and reduce their risk of developing chronic diseases, he says. These concepts present a paradigm shift in our thinking as it relates to nutrition and health.

So what is the solution? Dr. Gerber provides his patients with personalized plans based on the science of low-carb, high-fat nutrition. A variation of the LCHF diet now known as the Paleolithic or Evolutionary diet has gained recent interest. The idea is that primal man and early civilizations were healthy and ate natural, whole, clean, and unprocessed foods containing fewer carbohydrates and more saturated fats. These included animal-based foods and seasonal foods such as nuts, roots, and fibrous vegetables and fruits. These types of diets cause us to burn body fat for energy, control our appetite, promote weight loss, and restore health, he states.

One success story is of a patient named Pat. He had high cholesterol and was overweight when he first saw Dr. Gerber. After being on a low-carb, high-fat diet, Pat lost 40 pounds and says it was very easy to do. Before his weight loss, Pat believed that being on a diet meant starvation, and he disliked going to the gym.

His new diet has given him the energy to exercise and do activities he enjoys such as morning walks. He says he has become a big fan of Dr. Gerber's methods. "It has been a piece of cake. It's not salads and celery sticks all day." Pat is very enthusiastic about his experience with Dr. Gerber because it has changed the way he views nutrition. He isn't hungry, and his cholesterol and triglycerides are now in the normal range. He comments, "What more could you want?"

Another patient of Dr. Gerber's has experienced unexpected health benefits. Marcia lost 70 pounds in eight months. She had many immune conditions and sensitivities to food and the environment. Her asthma has improved significantly and her joint inflammation is gone. "Changing my eating has not only helped me lose weight, but improve my health as well. I feel great and have plenty of energy. Dr. Gerber helped put me on the right track to a healthy life," she says. No diet pill can give people the energy and health benefits that these types of diets can provide, Dr. Gerber points out.

Dr. Gerber is frustrated with the spiraling health care costs related to treating the complications of obesity. He wants to eliminate these costs by addressing obesity and "rewriting the book" on nutrition, he says. Consumption of dietary saturated fat has never been unhealthy. Teaching patients how to make better food choices based on the carbohydrate content of food improves health and will ultimately help control the cost of health care, he says.

In contrast to most weight loss centers, Dr. Gerber's program works with health insurance companies and accepts most plans. The goals are long-term, and treat associated and coexisting medical conditions along with weight issues. Being obese and overweight are complex metabolic conditions that should be appropriately treated by physicians who truly understand and embrace nutrition as an important tool to improve patients' health, he states.

Dr. Gerber attended Temple University School of Medicine in Philadelphia and graduated in 1986. He completed a medical residency in family medicine at Abington Memorial Hospital in 1990, is board certified in family medicine, and is a member of the American Society of Bariatric Physicians. He has been providing health care to patients in Colorado since 1993.

Dr. Gerber's office is located at 7780 South Broadway, Suite 250 in Littleton. The phone number is 303-346-9490. For more information, please visit [denversdietdoctor.com](http://denversdietdoctor.com).

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## SOUTH SUBURBAN FAMILY MEDICINE, JEFFREY N. GERBER, MD

### *The Perils of Dietary Carbohydrates*

By Robyn Kaplan

