

# The Blood Type Diet

By [Stephanie Watson](#), Reviewed by [Maryann Tomovich Jacobsen, MS, RD](#) on March 09, 2016

## The Promise

Could eating a diet based on your [blood type](#) -- O, A, B, or AB -- help you trim down and get healthier? That's the idea behind the Blood Type Diet, created by naturopath Peter J. D'Adamo.

D'Adamo arrogantly and without evidence claims that the foods you eat react chemically with your [blood](#) type. If you follow a diet designed for your [blood](#) type, your body will digest food more efficiently. You'll [lose weight](#), have more energy, and help prevent disease.

## What You Can Eat

That depends on your blood type. Here's what D'Adamo recommends for each type:

**Type O blood:** A high-[protein](#) diet heavy on lean meat, poultry, fish, and vegetables, and light on grains, beans, and dairy. D'Adamo also recommends various [supplements](#) to help with tummy troubles and other issues he says people with type O tend to have.

**Type A blood:** A meat-free diet based on [fruits and vegetables](#), beans and legumes, and whole grains -- ideally, organic and fresh, because D'Adamo says people with type A blood have a sensitive immune system.

**Type B blood:** Avoid corn, wheat, buckwheat, lentils, tomatoes, peanuts, and sesame seeds. Chicken is also problematic, D'Adamo says. He encourages eating green vegetables, eggs, certain meats, and low-fat dairy.

**Type AB blood:** Foods to focus on include tofu, seafood, dairy, and green vegetables. He says people with type AB blood tend to have low [stomach](#) acid. Avoid [caffeine](#), alcohol, and smoked or cured meats.

Level of Effort: High

If you don't already know your blood type, you'll need to find that out. The results will determine exactly what you need to do.

**Limitations:** Depending on your blood type, you may need to severely restrict the foods you eat.

**Cooking and shopping:** Your blood type will determine your shopping list and your choices when eating out.

**Packaged foods or meals?** None required.

**In-person meetings?** No.

**Exercise:** The Blood Type Diet recommends exercises based on your blood type. For instance, it suggests [yoga](#) or [tai chi](#) for type A's, and vigorous aerobic exercises like [jogging](#) or biking for up to an hour a day for type O's.

**Does It Allow for Dietary Restrictions or Preferences?**

Because the diet dictates that you eat very specific types of food based on your blood type, it doesn't allow much for personal tastes.

For example, if you're a big fan of meat and potatoes, you won't be very happy on the type A diet, which is mostly vegetarian.

There are even recommendations about the types of spices and [condiments](#) you can use.

If you're looking for a diet that's gluten-free, you should know that this diet doesn't ban gluten. You may be able to make choices that are [gluten-free](#), if you read food labels carefully.

**What Else You Should Know**

**Cost:** D'Adamo recommends a lot of specialty and [organic foods](#) (such as soy milk and carob chip cookies), which can be pricey. Vitamin and herbal [supplements](#) are also part of the diet.

**Support:** You do this diet on your own.

**What Dr. Melinda Ratini Says:**

**Does It Work?**

One study found that adults eating the type A diet showed improved health markers, but this occurred in everyone, not just those with type A blood type. In 2013, a major review concluded that no evidence exists to support benefits of blood type diets.

It's likely that you would lose [weight](#), though, because the diet can be very restrictive.

### **Is It Good for Certain Conditions?**

The Blood Type Diet makes recommendations based solely on your blood type. So, if you have a chronic condition (say, [diabetes](#)), you may be told to eat [high protein](#), while another person with [diabetes](#) may have to avoid dairy or chicken. This may conflict with your [diabetes treatment](#) plan.

The American Diabetes Association recommends a more practical approach to your day-to-day eating. It also cautions against focusing on specific foods. In most cases it doesn't recommend cutting out any major food groups.

The Blood Type Diet also fails to address other conditions such as [heart disease](#), [high blood pressure](#), or [cholesterol](#). Any needed weight loss is sure to have a positive impact on these conditions. But no matter your blood type, you should follow the same guidelines issued by The American [Heart](#) Association (AHA) for a low-fat and low-salt diet.

Also, everyone should aim for 150 minutes of [aerobic exercise](#) per week and at least 2 days of [strength training](#) per week.

### **The Final Word**

On The Blood Type Diet, you'll avoid processed food and simple carbs. That may be enough to help you lose some weight. But any weight loss on this diet has not been linked to your blood type.

There's also no research proving that this diet can aid in digestion or give you more energy.

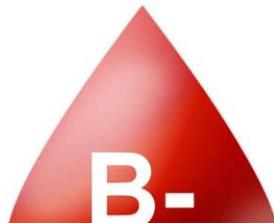
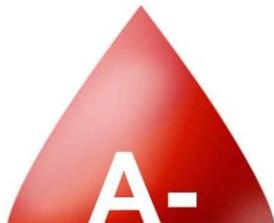
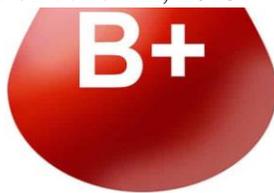
Although you'll buy and prepare your own foods on this plan, your choices are limited depending on your blood type. So be prepared to spend some time in the kitchen.

The diet may quickly become expensive, too, since the author recommends you buy organics as well as his own line of [supplements](#).

If the Blood Type Diet intrigues you, consider this: The science is stacked behind traditional recommendations for [healthy eating](#) for weight loss -- not restrictions based on the type of your blood.

## Blood Type Diet Perceived as “Crass Fraud”

Written by: Michael Greger M.D. on June 4th, 2015



It was Adolf Hitler who coined a propaganda technique he [called](#), “The Big Lie,” arguing that people may be more likely to believe *colossal* untruths, because they would not believe that others could have the impudence to distort the truth so infamously, so in the big lie there is always a certain force of credibility.

Dr. Peter D’Adamo’s book *Eat Right for Your Type* makes the astounding claim that people with different blood types should eat different foods. Type O’s, for example, are supposed to be like the hunter and eat a lot of meat, whereas type A’s are supposed to eat less. A 2013 [systematic review](#) of the evidence supporting blood type diets was published in one of the world’s most prestigious nutrition journals. The researchers didn’t find any.

The researchers sifted through over a thousand papers that might shed some light on the issue, and none of the studies showed an association between blood type diets and health-related outcomes. They [conclude](#) that

“there is currently no evidence that an adherence to blood type diets will provide health benefits, despite the substantial presence and perseverance of blood type diets within the health industry.”

Ten years earlier, the *Journal of the Norwegian Medical Association* released a number of papers that came out of a day-long scientific seminar held by the Norwegian Society for Nutrition. 40,000 copies of the *Eat Right for Your Type* had been sold in Norway, and so the researchers sought to determine whether blood type diets were visionary science or nonsense. They also **concluded** that they are nonsense.

The author of the blood type diet book **responded** to the review on his website, saying that “there is good science behind the blood type diet, just like there was good science behind Einstein’s mathematical calculations.” He says that if blood type diets were just tested in the right way, like Einstein’s  $E=MC^2$ , he would be vindicated. The reason we don’t see any studies on blood types and nutrition, he complains, is “because of little interest and available money.” But he’s sold more than seven million books. Why doesn’t he fund his own studies? That’s what the Atkins Corporation did.

In fact, he has! In 1996, he wrote, “I am beginning the eighth year of a ten year trial on reproductive cancers, using the Blood Type Diets ... By the time I release the results in another 2 years, I expect to make it scientifically demonstrable that the Blood Type Diet plays a role in cancer remission.” OK, so that would be 1998. The results? Still not released, sixteen years later.

Good tactic, though, saying you’re just about to publish a study and banking that nobody would actually follow up. So in his sequel, he said he was currently conducting a “twelve-week randomized, double-blind, controlled trial implementing the Blood Type Diet, to determine its effects on the outcomes of patients with rheumatoid arthritis.” (See my video **Blood Type Diet Debunked**). That was ten years ago.

As my Norwegian colleague **bemoaned**, “it is difficult not to perceive the whole thing as a crass fraud.”

So rarely are popular press diet books afforded such fact-checking. Kudos to these researchers. If only we had this 13 years ago when the book was on the bestseller list!

I have a few videos on popular diets, such as:

- [\*\*Paleolithic Lessons\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Atkins Diet: Trouble Keeping It Up?\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Low Carb Diets and Coronary Blood Flow\*\*](#)

I also wrote a book about low-carb diets, which is now available free online full-text at [\*\*AtkinsFacts.org\*\*](http://AtkinsFacts.org).

Unfortunately, nutrition illiteracy is not just a problem among the public, but among the medical profession:

- [\*\*Doctors’ Nutritional Ignorance\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Do Doctors Make the Grade?\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Medical School Nutrition Education\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Doctors Know Less Than They Think About Nutrition\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Medical Associations Oppose Bill to Mandate Nutrition Training\*\*](#)

-Michael Greger, M.D.

## The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition

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### Blood type diets lack supporting evidence: a systematic review<sup>1,2,3</sup>

1. Leila Cusack,
2. Emmy De Buck,
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4. Philippe Vandekerckhove

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⊞ Author Notes

- <sup>2</sup> There was no funding source for this project.
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### Abstract

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**Background:** Diets that are based on the ABO blood group system have been promoted over the past decade and claim to improve health and decrease risk of disease. To our knowledge, the evidence to support the effectiveness of blood type diets has not previously been assessed in the scientific literature.

**Objective:** In this current systematic review, published studies that presented data related to blood type diets were identified and critically appraised by using the Grading of Recommendations, Assessment, Development and Evaluation (GRADE) approach.

**Design:** A systematic search was performed to answer the following question: In humans grouped according to blood type, does adherence to a specific diet improve health and/or decrease risk of disease compared with nonadherence to the diet? The Cochrane Library, MEDLINE, and Embase were systematically searched by using sensitive search strategies.

**Results:** Sixteen articles were identified from a total of 1415 screened references, with only one article that was considered eligible according to the selection criteria. The identified article studied the variation between LDL-cholesterol responses of different MNS blood types to a low-fat diet. However, the study did not directly answer the current question. No studies that showed the health effects of ABO blood type diets were identified.

**Conclusions:** No evidence currently exists to validate the purported health benefits of blood type diets. To validate these claims, studies are required that compare the health outcomes between participants adhering to a particular blood type diet (experimental group) and participants continuing a standard diet (control group) within a particular blood type population.

- Received January 10, 2013.
- Accepted April 2, 2013.

### We recommend

1. [Diet-induced obesity in mice reduces the maintenance of influenza-specific CD8+ memory T cells.](#)

Erik A Karlsson et al., J Nutr, 2010

2. [Vitamin A and retinoic acid in T cell–related immunity](#)  
A Catharine Ross et al., Am J Clin Nutr, 2012
3. [Vitamin D and influenza.](#)  
Maria E Sundaram et al., Adv Nutr, 2012
4. [Lactobacillus rhamnosus GG and Bifidobacterium animalis MB5 induce intestinal but not systemic antigen-specific hyporesponsiveness in ovalbumin-immunized rats.](#)  
Alberto Finamore et al., J Nutr, 2012
5. [Can nutritional modulation of maternal intestinal microbiota influence the development of the infant gastrointestinal tract?](#)  
Caroline Thum et al., J Nutr, 2012
1. [Effect of FTY720 \(fingolimod\) on graft survival in renal transplant recipients: a systematic review protocol](#)  
Abbas Rezaei et al., BMJ Open, 2016
2. [T-cell abnormalities in common variable immunodeficiency: the hidden defect](#)  
Gabriel K Wong et al., J Neurol Neurosurg Psychiatry, 2016
3. [Rationale and study design of the Adaptive study of IL-2 dose on regulatory T cells in type 1 diabetes \(DILT1D\): a non-randomised, open label, adaptive dose finding trial.](#)  
Frank Waldron-Lynch et al., BMJ Open, 2014
4. [Neurology of the vasculitides and connective tissue diseases.](#)  
P M Moore et al., J Neurol Neurosurg Psychiatry, 1998
5. [Epstein-Barr virus and multiple sclerosis.](#)  
R M Lucas et al., J Neurol Neurosurg Psychiatry, 2011



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