

carbfusion

*how confusion about the role of carbohydrates
in our diet is damaging the nation's health*



introduction

Obesity is one of the greatest threats to our national health. Almost daily we read new statistics that show rising rates of obesity, and rising numbers of people suffering from cardiovascular disease, cancer, Type 2 diabetes and many other health conditions linked to being very overweight. As well as affecting the daily lives of millions of people, this has an enormous impact on our already over-stretched health service.

OBESITY, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND DIET¹ STATISTICS SHOW THAT:

- In 2016/17, there were 617,000 admissions in NHS hospitals where obesity was a factor*. This is an increase of 18 per cent on 2015/16.
- In 2016, 26 per cent of adults were classified as obese, while 40 per cent of men and 30 per cent of women are overweight.
- In 2016/17, 1 in 5 children in Year 6 and 1 in 10 children in Reception were classified as obese.

* Hospital admissions with a primary or secondary diagnosis of obesity.

Recently there has been a great deal of debate and rising controversy over the role of carbohydrates in the diet and their effect on weight.

On one hand, studies appear to show that high-carbohydrate/low-fat diets are a good way to lose and manage weight. Those studies are then questioned or rebuffed by new reports suggesting high-carbohydrate diets are a risk to health and cause weight gain so low-carb diets are the way forward – leading to statements such as ‘experts have been wrong for years, promoting a low-fat diet’, ‘carbohydrates make you fat’, ‘we should be avoiding carbohydrates’, ‘eat as much fat as you want’.

New research by YouGov², commissioned by Slimming World, shows that, as a result of these conflicting reports and the promotion of low-carb diets, there is a great deal of confusion about the most effective, healthy and sustainable way to lose weight and maintain your weight loss. The best weight-loss plan is, of course, the one that you can stick to.

This report focuses specifically on the essential role of carbohydrates in a healthy, balanced diet, discusses why there is such confusion around carbohydrate consumption and weight management, and explains why carbohydrates are important to following a sustainable and liberating diet that contains all the essential nutrients our bodies need.



Maxine Wren

Height: 5ft 3in

Starting weight: 27st 12lbs

Weight now: 9st 10½lbs

Weight loss: 18st 1½lbs

Maxine, 39, lives in Chester-le-Street, County Durham, with her husband John.

“I was born with a rare bone disease, which affected my mobility and meant I have struggled with my weight from a very young age. Throughout my adult life I tried slimming clubs, calorie-controlled shakes and fad diets, including low-carb plans, but, sadly I couldn't stick to them. I became resigned to the fact that I was meant to be big.

“I struggled with asthma and polycystic ovary syndrome, however, when my GP told me – aged 34 – that if I didn't do something about my weight I might not be around in 12 months' time, it was still a complete shock. He prescribed slimming pills and referred me for weight-loss surgery.

“The pills my GP gave me made me so poorly, I had to stop taking them and, after finding out my sister was expecting a baby, I turned down the operation because I didn't want to die on the operating table, never meeting my nephew. I joined Slimming World instead and I'm so happy I did.

“I lost 12lbs in my first week following the Food Optimising plan, which was a huge surprise. I was convinced I wouldn't have lost any weight as I'd been eating carbohydrates like pasta and potato with most of my meals and I hadn't felt hungry.

“I've tried low-carbohydrate diets in the past and, before Slimming World, I thought that you had to cut out – or cut down on – carbs in order to lose weight – how wrong was I?

“I've learned it's about how you cook food that makes the biggest difference. I've swapped takeaways and convenience foods for home-cooked meals – now my favourite dish is a Slimming World-style kebab with chips, it's really satisfying and tastes so naughty but it's not at all. And I have jacket potatoes all the time – they're a great quick and easy lunch option.

“Since joining Slimming World I've lost 18st 1½lbs and I hope I'm proof to people that there's no amount of weight you can't lose. Everything's changed. I don't hide away anymore. I always say Slimming World didn't just save my life, it's given me life.”



I've lost 18st 1½lbs without giving up carbs!

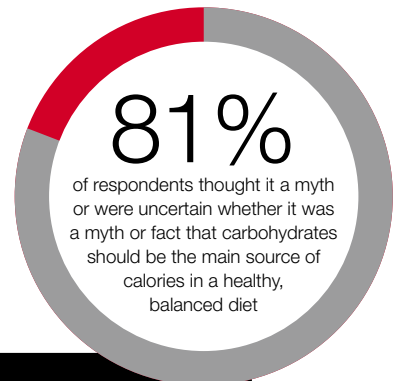
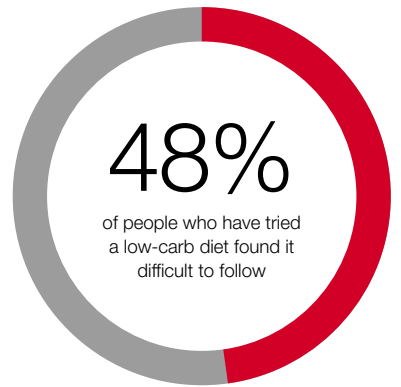
carbfusion

Despite consistent evidence and health advice about the importance of carbohydrates in a healthy balanced diet, carbs continue to be demonised when it comes to weight loss. And low-carbohydrate diets have been popularised and promoted by the media and celebrities.

The recent Big Carb Survey by Slimming World and YouGov of 2,103 UK adults found that 73% of those surveyed have actively tried to lose weight and that more than a third (37%) of this group have attempted a low-carbohydrate diet.

However, the survey showed that almost half (48%) of people who have tried a low-carbohydrate diet found it was difficult to follow. The reasons for this were that they enjoyed eating carbohydrates too much (52%), were often hungry (46%), felt limited in what they could eat (40%), and found the diet boring (30%).

Interestingly, two thirds of respondents (66%) reported that they had heard that low-carbohydrate diets are better for weight loss, and more than one third of respondents (35%) reported that they had heard that it was impossible to lose weight without cutting carbohydrates.



Respondents reported being on the receiving end of many conflicting carbohydrate messages, coming from a number of sources.

Statements about carbohydrates that respondents (UK adults) reported having heard were:

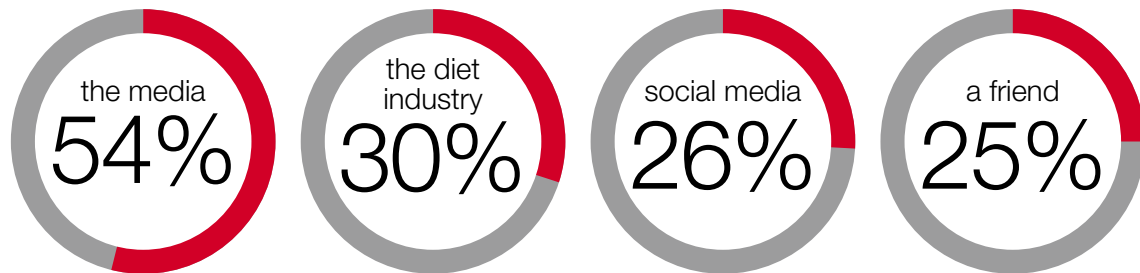
- 84% have heard sugar causes diabetes
- 66% have heard low-carbohydrate diets are better for weight loss
- nearly a third (31%) have heard that all carbohydrates are bad
- more than a third (35%) have heard it is impossible to lose weight without cutting carbohydrates
- almost half (46%) have heard that fruit is full of sugar so should be avoided
- almost a third (31%) have heard carbohydrates aren't essential for a healthy balanced diet.

When asked whether these statements were a myth or fact, the survey found a lot of people were confused, responding 'don't know':

- more than half (52%) didn't know that per gram, carbohydrates contain less calories than fat
- more than a third (39%) didn't know that starchy carbohydrates should be the main source of calories in a healthy, balanced diet, with the majority of respondents (43%) believing this to be a myth
- 39% didn't know that starchy carbohydrates can be a good source of vitamins and minerals
- although a myth, more than a third (36%) of people replied 'don't know' when asked if eating carbohydrates increases the risk of heart disease
- 33% of respondents said they didn't know if low-carbohydrate diets were better for weight loss, and 37% thought this was true

what causes confusion?

When asked where they have heard statements regarding carbohydrates, respondents to the Big Carb Survey reported that the information came from:



Given the vast number of views and reports on the role of carbohydrates within weight loss, it's easy to understand why people are confused, and why more than a third (37%) of respondents to the Big Carb Survey thought it a fact that low-carbohydrate diets are better for weight loss, even though overwhelming evidence shows that carbohydrates are an important part of a balanced diet, and can – indeed should – be part of a sustainable weight-loss diet.

Slimming World members

A separate study³ of Slimming World members conducted alongside the Big Carb Survey investigated slimmers' attitudes towards carbohydrates. Almost two thirds (62%) said they were very surprised when they were told, on joining Slimming World, that they could eat starchy carbohydrates and still lose weight, 97% were pleased they could enjoy carbs while following Slimming World's Food Optimising* plan, and 93% surprised by the fact.

Slimming World members reported that they ate starchy carbohydrates on average two to three times a day.

On average members completing the survey had lost around 2st (28lbs) the equivalent of 13% of their body weight.

* Food Optimising is based on three simple steps: Free Food, foods such as fruit, vegetables, lean meats, fish, pulses, potatoes, pasta and rice which can be eaten freely; Healthy Extras, measured amounts of foods like milk, cheese and high-fibre breakfast cereals which provide essential calcium and fibre; and Syns, controlled amounts of high fat, high calorie food products such as chocolate and alcohol.

Dave Lancaster

Height: 5ft 10in

Starting weight: 34st 8½lbs

Weight now: 14st

Weight loss: 20st 8½lbs

Dave, 45, lives in Warwick and is Slimming World's Man of the Year.

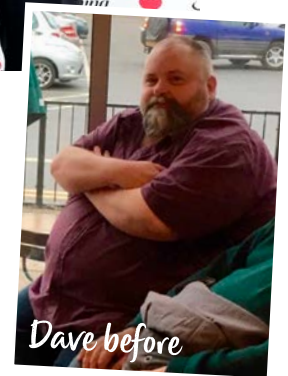
“At my heaviest I suffered from a long list of health complaints, including Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, crippling joint pain, high cholesterol, the beginnings of gout and sleep apnoea. I found it difficult to walk to the end of my road and I went out so rarely except for work that I was close to becoming a recluse, and I was nearing almost complete immobility. It felt as though as I was getting bigger and bigger, my world was gradually shrinking.

“So in April 2016 I bit the bullet and joined my local Slimming World group, run by my former neighbour Angie Baker. As I walked through the door, Angie instantly recognised me. However, I got a huge shock when I stepped on the scales and discovered I was nearly 3st heavier than I'd expected – I couldn't believe what I'd done to my body and, that evening, I'm not ashamed to say I cried.

“The following day I filled my cupboards with healthy ingredients and began to embrace Slimming World's Food Optimising eating plan with vigour, cooking a range of dishes including stir-fries, salads and pasta from scratch. I loved the emphasis on eating food that you prepare yourself rather than ready meals and processed food. And I found that I could still eat hearty meals – full of filling carbohydrates – while losing weight.

“Inspired by the other members in my group, I also began walking around my local park. I like this form of exercise because instead of costing me, like a gym membership or exercise class would, it saves me money on petrol. Now instead of meeting friends at my house, they join me for a walk!

“Thanks to the changes I've made my health has improved dramatically and I no longer need to take any medication. My blood sugar reading has dropped from 94 to 25, meaning the doctor says I show no Type 2 diabetes symptoms. I've got my life back and I couldn't be happier. The world isn't shrinking anymore; it's getting bigger and bigger by the day! ”



I love the emphasis on eating real food!

problems with a low-carbohydrate diet

The success or failure of specific weight-loss plans depends on how well people can stick to them and this goes beyond their nutrient composition (e.g. the amount of fat vs carbohydrate) to issues of palatability (how happy we are to eat them), convenience (how practical and easy it is to follow them) and, importantly, satiety (how much they satisfy us and don't leave us feeling hungry).

Very low-carb diets often do result in short-term weight loss but they're hard to sustain – people soon give up on a diet if they feel they are deprived of many everyday foods. Carbohydrates, particularly fibre-rich carbohydrates, are also very beneficial for satiety, helping us feel full on fewer calories. Restricting carbohydrate-rich foods also makes it difficult to achieve a balanced diet and get all the essential nutrients you need for good health.

Feeling hungry, which the Big Carb Survey found almost half of those (46%) who tried a low-carbohydrate diet often were, is one of the main reasons why people give up a weight-loss diet⁴.

Eating more satiating and lower energy dense foods, which include carbohydrates such as pasta and potatoes, enables people to consume a larger volume of food while reducing their overall calorie intake.

Slimming World has been actively involved in this field of research, and there is now a robust evidence base which shows that foods higher in protein and carbohydrates are far more satiating than foods rich in fat and fill you up sooner and for longer for fewer calories. Fat contains over double the amount of calories per gram than protein and carbohydrate. Fibre-rich carbohydrates are particularly satiating, fibre adds bulk to foods, takes more chewing and makes foods take longer to digest and absorb, all of which makes them more filling.

Recent research⁵ sponsored by Slimming World found that eating a diet based on eating unlimited amounts of low energy dense foods (lower calories per gram), which included carbohydrates, was more effective for weight loss than traditional calorie counting because it allowed slimmers to feel more satiated and less hungry.

Slimming World's Food Optimising plan is based on the scientific principles of appetite regulation and energy density, embracing them in a practical way to regulate energy intake. This enables slimmers to eat unlimited amounts of highly satisfying foods, including carbohydrates such as pasta and potatoes, and naturally limit calorie intake without feeling hungry, bored or deprived. As a result, sticking with the plan is easier and more sustainable.

Dr Jacquie Lavin, Head of Nutrition and Research at Slimming World, says:

“A diet to aid weight loss needs to be healthy and balanced and filling. It should give people the freedom and flexibility to enjoy a wide range of foods, which includes protein, carbohydrate, healthy fats and provides all the important vitamins, minerals and fibre needed for good health. Importantly it needs to be sustainable, so people who lose weight manage to maintain their weight loss.”



carbohydrates in the diet

The most recent UK review of all the available evidence and an update of current recommendations on carbohydrate took place in 2015. The Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN), a panel of independent experts, conducted a thorough examination of hundreds of high-quality, robust studies into the role of carbohydrates to provide clarification of the relationship between dietary carbohydrate, fibre, sugar and health⁶.

Since the SACN review in 2015, further large-scale studies published in high-quality journals such as *The Lancet* have been in line with the original SACN findings, recommending that carbohydrates should be included as part of a healthy balanced diet.

The evidence from the review supports current advice from the World Health Organisation and global government bodies – including UK and USA guidelines – which recommends that carbohydrates provide about half our daily energy (calorie) needs.

The SACN review concluded that there was no evidence linking a high-carbohydrate intake with any of the health problems examined:

- total carbohydrate intake wasn't linked to poor heart health
- there was no association between total carbohydrate intake and risk of Type 2 diabetes
- the evidence doesn't support the suggestion that diets higher in carbohydrate cause weight gain
- there was no indication that a higher carbohydrate intake results in a higher energy (calorie) intake.

the SACN review proposed that
evidence suggests higher carbohydrate,
lower-fat diets are effective for weight loss

However, while evidence indicates that overall carbohydrate intake isn't linked with any detrimental effect on health, it's important to also consider different types of carbohydrate.

Many foods contain carbohydrate: starches and fibre are found in foods such as potatoes, bread, pulses, grains, pasta and rice; intrinsic sugars are bound into the cellular structure of fruits and vegetables and 'free' sugars (unbound sugars) are found in table sugar, honey, fruit juices and confectionery.

There are many benefits of some forms of carbohydrate:

- diets high in fibre are associated with lower risk of Type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and colorectal cancer
- fibre is also important for digestive health, it can aid digestion and prevent constipation
- starches provide an important source of energy
- many carbohydrate-rich foods, the starchy and fibre-rich carbohydrates, often contain other useful nutrients such as iron and calcium and particularly B vitamins such as folate which are important for overall good health including normal metabolism and release of energy from food, digestive health, healthy blood cells and prevention of birth defects.
- some forms of carbohydrates such as those found in oats and pectin found in fruit are thought to help reduce blood cholesterol levels
- without carbohydrates in the diet there's a greater risk of nutrient deficiencies, especially in fibre and various B vitamins such as thiamin.

Jill Ross

Height: 5ft 8in

Starting weight: 19st 3½lbs

Weight now: 12st 8½lbs

Weight loss: 6st 9lbs

Jill, 50, lives in Leeds with husband Andy and has one grown-up daughter.

“I can’t remember a time when I wasn’t overweight, but I put on a significant amount of weight around 10 years ago after swapping a reasonably active job for desk work.

“I lost weight a couple of times with a slimming club, but found that I became obsessed with counting and measuring my food. In truth, I’ve always described myself as a ‘carb queen’ so having to be careful with the amounts of yummy pasta and rice I was eating didn’t suit me at all and I gave up.

“I decided to join Slimming World after shopping for clothes for my holiday – I felt such despair at how little choice I had and how awful I looked. I knew the time had come to do something, I was 48 and I didn’t want to be overweight at 50.

“Slimming World gave me a whole new way of eating, a whole new way of looking at food opened up for me. I could have my beloved pasta and rice without having to weigh every spoonful. When I first started following the plan I couldn’t see how it would work, but it does – and I love it! The key is that I’ve changed the way I prepare dishes, so I don’t add extra fat and I load up my plate with veggies alongside my pasta or rice dish.

“I love picking up new recipes in my Slimming World group and sharing my own food ideas too. There’s no reason to make separate meals for my family and friends either – it’s not diet food, so if I’m cooking, people eat what I’m eating or they don’t eat! Recently I did a curry night for eight friends and no one even realised they were eating a Slimming World-friendly curry until I told them, they loved it.

“As well as changing my eating habits, I joined my local running club and at 50 I’m in better shape than I’ve ever been – I feel great!

“Diets might work in the short-term, but Slimming World has given me a way of eating that I can maintain for life. It’s changed my relationship with food and for the first time in my life food doesn’t control me.”



I’ve always been
a carb-queen!

what about sugar?

The exception when it comes to carbohydrates and health and weight control is sugar – the ‘free’ unbound sugars in products like table sugar, honey, fruit juices and confectionery. Although sugar is a carbohydrate, on its own sugar is more energy (calorie) dense than most carbohydrate-rich foods – because it doesn’t contain the fibre, water and bulk of foods such as potatoes and grains and so packs in more calories per gram of food – it’s easy to eat a lot of calories from sugar without feeling full. Evidence shows high-sugar diets are linked to weight gain because sugar adds a lot of extra calories to the diet. Sugar-sweetened drinks are particularly associated with increased risk of weight gain because liquids have very little effect on feelings of fullness, so it’s very easy for a lot of calories to slip down when you have sugary drinks without you even noticing.

The SACN review highlights that:

- higher consumption of ‘free’ (or unbound) sugars is associated with greater risk of tooth decay
- a higher percentage energy intake consumed as free sugars corresponds with an increase in total energy intake
- intake of sugar sweetened drinks is linked to weight gain and higher BMI in children and adolescents
- greater consumption of sugar sweetened drinks (but not sugar itself) is associated with an increased risk of Type 2 diabetes

There is a clear and consistent link between a high-sugar diet and conditions like obesity. However, there isn’t any unique mechanism by which sugar directly increases the risk. It’s not the sugar itself, it’s the weight gain that results from the calories it provides. It’s simply sugar’s energy density and palatability, making it easy to consume a lot of calories which leads to weight gain.



weight, diet and diabetes

Diabetes is one of the fastest growing conditions in the UK. The number of people diagnosed with the condition has more than doubled over the last 10 years⁷. In 2017 there were almost 3.7 million people who had been diagnosed with diabetes in the UK; around 90% of people have Type 2 diabetes, and 10% have Type 1 diabetes⁸.

Type 1 diabetes cannot be prevented, but a major cause of Type 2 diabetes is being overweight or obese. With almost two in three people in the UK living with obesity or overweight, there are now 12.3 million people at risk of developing Type 2 diabetes⁹.

Treating Type 2 diabetes is an urgent focus of the NHS as diabetes drugs alone are costing the health service £1 billion¹⁰ a year in treatment. However, the prevention of obesity is also critically important; reducing the number of people who are overweight or obese would reduce the number of people developing Type 2 diabetes.

Clearly, ensuring that people understand how to sustainably lose weight by following a healthy and balanced diet is essential for the future health of the nation.

Almost 1 in 5 children are overweight or obese when they start primary school, rising to 1 in 3 when they start secondary school. By 2020 it's estimated half of all children will be overweight or obese. Obese children are much more likely to be obese adults, causing significant health risks as well as low self-esteem and body image.

State of Child Health 2017, Royal Society of Paediatrics and Child Health



Jodie Rigby-Mee

Height: 5ft 6in

Starting weight: 16st 7lbs

Weight now: 10st 7lbs

Weight loss: 6st

Jodie, 32, lives in Royal Leamington Spa with her husband Nigel and sons Jenson and Carter.

“I was just 17 and on my first girls’ holiday with friends when I overheard a group of young men refer to me as ‘the fat friend’ – I ended up back in the hotel room in tears. Back home I joined my local Slimming World group and lost 6st.

“Losing weight when I did completely changed my life. It gave me so much more confidence in every respect. I was able to pursue a career as cabin crew, including moving to Dubai for five years and becoming a safety trainer teaching people how to put out fires, jump down slides and float on life-rafts, which I’d never have been able to do at my heaviest.

“I’ve maintained my weight for 12 years now – even following the Food Optimising plan throughout my two pregnancies*.

“I’d tried other diets in the past but none of them taught me anything about food – I’d ‘spend’ all my allowances on unhealthy foods or end up starving hungry on shakes and pills. With Slimming World it was completely different and I still eat the same way today. It’s great because my husband and sons can eat the same meals, which wouldn’t have been possible with other diets – I’d obviously never put my sons on a low-carb plan!

“I’m currently training to run the London Marathon this April and Food Optimising allows me to fuel up properly before a long run. Plus, it’s easy to make healthy choices when I eat out too – nothing’s off the menu, because Food Optimising isn’t a diet to go on and go off, it’s a plan for life.”

* Slimming World is the only national weight-loss organisation to support women through their pregnancy and while breastfeeding. You’ll find lots of information and expert advice about getting well, staying active and managing your weight at slimmingworld.co.uk/rcm



my whole family
eat healthily now

conclusion

The British Dietetic Association describes faddy diets as: “the kind of plan where you eat a very restrictive diet with few foods or an unusual combination of foods for a short period of time and often lose weight very quickly. However, most people then get fed up, start over-eating, choose less healthy foods and pile the pounds back on”¹¹.

Promotion of low-carbohydrate diets fuels conflicting and confusing messages about the role of carbohydrates in health and weight control. Attracted by the promise of easy, quick weight loss, slimmers are tempted to follow a low-carbohydrate diet even though, as the Big Carb Survey suggests, it is difficult to maintain in the long term due to hunger, enjoying carbohydrates, and boredom.

Nearly half (46%) of the respondents to the Big Carb Survey reported eating starchy carbohydrates on average two to three times a day. As a nation of carbohydrate lovers, rather than restrict carbohydrates we need to understand the different types of carbohydrates, such as starch, sugar and fibre, the important part they play in a healthy, balanced diet and their role in a sustainable weight loss plan. As well as potentially cutting out a group of foods that are essential for a healthy, balanced and varied diet, evidence indicates that very low-carbohydrate diets are unsustainable and therefore not always realistic for long term weight loss maintenance.

Carbifusion is damaging our health. It can lead to fluctuating weight loss and weight gain, cause an unhealthy relationship with food and anxiety about what we dare to eat. At worst, it leads us to avoid foods that are actually vital to our health.

Alison Tedstone, Chief Nutritionist at Public Health England, has in the past commented on the confusion and conflicting opinions about the role of carbohydrates and healthy weight-loss diets, saying:

“Diet-related chronic disease is a major problem in the UK and is a leading cause of morbidity and early death.

“What we all need is advice that reflects the best available evidence, reported and interpreted accurately in helpful and meaningful terms...they (the public) certainly don't need to be told to eat fewer fruit and veg, more saturated fat or unbalanced diets missing starchy, high fibre carbohydrates¹².”

The UK is experiencing an obesity timebomb that will have detrimental effects on personal health, as well as the health of the NHS from treating patients with obesity-related conditions. Advising people who are overweight to follow restrictive low-carbohydrate diets, which we know are unsustainable in the long term, is irresponsible, sets people up to fail, and likely leaves them struggling with feelings of guilt and low self-esteem as well as regaining the weight they lost.

“To end this vicious cycle, it's vitally important we provide people who'd like to lose weight with accurate information, alongside effective support for maintaining healthy, flexible and sustainable diets, which should help to reduce the burden on the NHS in the long term,”

concludes Dr Jacquie Lavin.

Matt Briggs

Height: 6ft 2in

Starting weight: 31st 3½lbs

Weight now: 13st 10lbs

Weight loss: 17st 7½lbs

Matt, 35, lives in York and is a Slimming World Consultant.

“I was just 15 when my mum was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis and her home-cooked meals were replaced with unhealthy convenience foods as we all helped care for her. After her death two years later, I turned to food for comfort and slowly increased in size. I weighed more than 31st at my heaviest.

“It was nearly 10 years later, though, before I did anything about my weight. I saw a photo of myself and my dad on Christmas Day on Facebook and I was mortified – to see myself looking so big was a real shock and I couldn’t believe it was really me.

“So when my step-mum suggested we join Slimming World together in January 2010, I couldn’t say no.

“I began following Slimming World’s Food Optimising eating plan and it’s completely changed my relationship with food. I used to be a picky eater but now I have a really varied diet. I would skip breakfast and lunch, thinking I was being healthy, but then I’d have something full of fat for dinner. Since joining Slimming World I’ve discovered a new love of cooking and my favourite meal is homemade chicken curry with rice. I realised losing weight and keeping it off isn’t about going on a diet, counting calories, having small portions or cutting carbs, it’s about a complete change of lifestyle.

“I’ve also become much more active, although that didn’t happen overnight. I started by parking my car a mile away from my previous job in a phone shop and walking there and back. Now I love cycling, running and going to the gym – my friend’s joke that I’m like the Duracell bunny because I’ve got so much energy now.

“I’ve been maintaining my weight loss now for more than five years and instead of dreading seeing photos of myself online, now I love posting pictures of my transformation as well as my delicious Food Optimising meals on Instagram!”



losing weight is about a complete change of lifestyle

Slimming World's 7-day eating plan

The following 7-day eating plan incorporates carbohydrates into a healthy, balanced diet aiding weight loss.*

HOW IT WORKS:

- 1 Follow the menu below – it's Extra Easy! You can start on any day you choose, swap days around if there's a meal you really fancy or repeat days if there's something you particularly enjoy! Foods printed in **bold** are 'Free Food', which you can enjoy freely to satisfy your appetite without needing to weigh, measure or count at all. Base meals around Free Food, like **lean meat, fish**, meat substitutes including plain **tofu, Quorn** and **seitan, pasta, rice, potatoes, eggs, pulses, fat-free dairy, fruit, vegetables** and more. If you feel hungry between meals, snack on these foods. For the very best weight loss, reach for fresh **fruit** or **vegetables** first.
- 2 As well as Free Food, stock your store cupboard with fat-free dressings, herbs, low-calorie cooking spray (1 calorie or less per spray), oil-free tomato purée, seasoning, soy sauce, spices and stock cubes, which can be used freely to flavour meals.
- 3 To help support an overall healthy balanced diet, Slimming World encourages you to enjoy measured amounts of foods that provide calcium, like milk and cheese (2 per day), and those providing fibre, other essential minerals and healthy oils, such as wholemeal bread, high-fibre cereals, crispbreads, nuts and seeds (1 portion per day). These can be enjoyed as part of your meals and where we've included them as such in this plan, we've given specific measurements. Alternatively, you may choose to use them in hot drinks, or on their own as a snack. Where you're enjoying them separately in this plan:
 - Choose 350ml skimmed milk, 250ml semi-skimmed milk or 400ml plain and unsweetened soya milk with added calcium, or you can opt for 30g full-fat hard cheese or 40g reduced-fat hard cheese.
 - Boost your fibre intake by enjoying two slices of wholemeal bread (from a small 400g loaf), a 60g wholemeal roll or pitta, 60g brown, high-fibre white or multi-seed, gluten-free bread/roll, 40g plain porridge oats or 45g bran flakes.
- 4 Treat yourself. Enjoy up to two treats from the list provided every day.

TOP TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Trim all visible fat off meats and remove skin from poultry.
- For extra health benefits and filling power, choose wholegrains, e.g. wholemeal pasta or wholegrain rice, where you can.
- Aim to have between 6 and 8 drinks a day – choose water, sugar-free drinks, tea and coffee. Remember any milk needs to come from your allowance.
- More vegan, dairy-free and gluten-free options are also available, you'll find out more when you join Slimming World.

* Slimming World recommends a safe and steady weight loss of 1-2lbs a week, but you may lose more weight in your first weeks.

Monday

BREAKFAST

Fruity muesli

Pour milk from your allowance over 45g Jordans No Added Sugar Natural Muesli. Top with fresh or defrosted frozen blueberries.

LUNCH

Tomato pasta

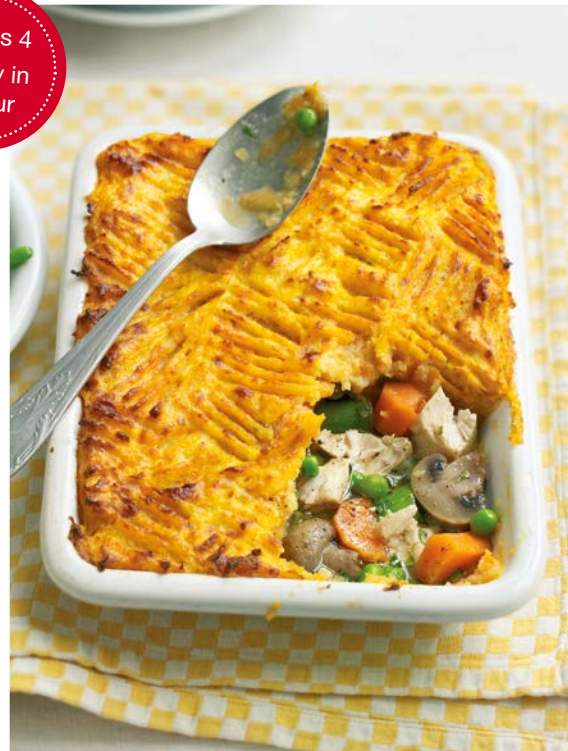
Cook dried wholewheat pasta according to the pack instructions, then drain. Fry diced red onion and red pepper in a pan sprayed with low-calorie cooking spray until softened. Add canned chopped tomatoes, season and cook until heated through. Stir the sauce through the pasta and serve hot or cold.

DINNER

Chicken and leek pie

- 400g each of sweet potato and white potato, peeled and roughly chopped
- 400ml chicken stock
- 4 tbsp finely chopped parsley
- 2 leeks, washed, trimmed and finely sliced
- 1 garlic clove, peeled and crushed
- 300g carrots, peeled and cut into 1.5cm dice
- 200g fresh or frozen peas
- 100g mushrooms, sliced
- 600g cooked skinless chicken, cut into 1.5cm dice
- 3 tbsp finely chopped fresh tarragon
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- Boiled green beans, to serve

Serves 4
Ready in
1 hour



Preheat the oven to 180°C/fan 160°C/gas 4. Boil all the potatoes in a large saucepan of lightly salted water for 15-20 minutes or until tender. Drain and return to the pan with 100ml of stock, mash until smooth and season well. Stir in the parsley and set aside. Meanwhile, put the remaining stock, leeks, garlic, carrots, peas and mushrooms in a saucepan and cook over a gentle heat for 12-15 minutes, stirring often, until the leeks have softened. Add the chicken to the pan and stir to mix well.

Add the tarragon, season well and cook gently for 3-4 minutes, stirring often. Remove from the heat and transfer to a medium-sized pie dish. Spread the mash over the chicken mixture and brush the top with the beaten egg. Bake in the oven for 20-25 minutes or until golden and bubbling. Serve immediately with green beans.

TREATS

- x2 Cheese straws/twists
- 30g bag chocolate buttons

Tuesday

BREAKFAST

Egg and soldiers

Soft boil an egg or 2 to your liking and serve with 2 slices of wholemeal bread (from a small 400g loaf) cut into soldiers.

LUNCH

Jacket and beans

Cook a baking potato in the oven (or microwave) until soft. Serve topped with hot baked beans, 40g grated reduced-fat Cheddar cheese (from your allowance) and salad on the side.

DINNER

Spaghetti bolognese

- 500g lean beef mince (5% fat or less)
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 4 celery sticks, finely chopped
- 2 carrots, peeled and diced
- 4 garlic cloves, crushed
- 200ml boiling beef stock
- 400g can chopped tomatoes
- 500g passata
- 6 tbsp tomato purée
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 500g dried white or wholewheat spaghetti
- 200g baby spinach leaves
- Fresh basil or oregano leaves, to garnish

Serves 4
Ready in
1 hour



Put the beef in a heavy-based non-stick saucepan with the onion, celery, carrots and garlic.

Dry-fry over a medium heat for 8-10 minutes or until the beef is no longer pink, stirring from time to time. Drain off any liquid in the pan. Add the stock, tomatoes, passata, tomato purée, bay leaf and dried oregano. Season to taste, stir and bring to a simmer. When the liquid is bubbling, reduce the heat to low and simmer gently for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Cook the spaghetti according to the packet instructions and drain well. While the spaghetti is cooking, increase the heat under the sauce to medium and cook for 5 minutes or until the liquid has reduced and the sauce is rich and thick, stirring often. Add the spinach and cook for another 5 minutes or until it has wilted. Divide the spaghetti between bowls, spoon the bolognese sauce on top and scatter over the fresh herbs to serve.

TREATS

- x5 Brazil nuts
- 1 French Fancy

Wednesday

BREAKFAST

Overnight oats

Layer 40g plain porridge oats, 200g fat-free natural yogurt and chopped fresh fruit of your choice. Cover and chill overnight. In the morning, stir all the layers together and add more fresh fruit, if desired.

LUNCH

Prawn noodle soup

Cook dried egg noodle nests according to the pack instructions. Pour 300ml hot chicken stock into a pan with 1 tsp soy sauce, the juice of half a lime and a pinch of sweetener. Add cooked prawns, chopped mangetout and frozen green beans, and boil until piping hot. Stir in the noodles and serve topped with chopped spring onions.

DINNER

Black bean and Quorn chilli

- Low-calorie cooking spray
- 1 large onion, roughly chopped
- 2 carrots, peeled and diced
- 4 celery sticks, thinly sliced
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 2 tsp ground coriander
- 1 heaped tsp chilli powder
- 2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes
- 300ml boiling vegetable stock
- 500g Quorn mince, thawed if frozen
- 1 red pepper, deseeded and cut into small chunks
- 1 orange pepper, deseeded and cut into small chunks
- 400g can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 198g can sweetcorn, drained
- A splash of Tabasco
- Finely chopped fresh coriander, to serve
- Boiled dried basmati or wholegrain rice, to serve
- Fat-free natural yogurt sprinkled with cayenne pepper, to serve
- Lime wedges, to serve

Serves 4
Ready in 30
minutes, plus 4
hours in the
slow cooker



Spray a large non-stick frying pan with low-calorie cooking spray and place over a medium heat. Add the onion, carrots and celery and cook for about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in the garlic and cook for 1 minute then sprinkle over the spices and cook for another minute. Add the chopped tomatoes, stock, Quorn, peppers, black beans, sweetcorn and a splash of Tabasco. Stir well and bring to the boil over a high heat. Pour it all into the slow cooker pot, cover and cook on high for 4 hours. Season to taste, scatter over the coriander and serve with rice, the spiced yogurt and lime wedges to squeeze over.

TREATS

- 25g Bombay mix
- 2 chocolate-coated digestive biscuits

Thursday

BREAKFAST

Apple porridge

Cook 40g plain porridge oats with water or milk from your allowance. Top with fat-free natural fromage frais, apple slices and a sprinkle of cinnamon.

LUNCH

Pizza omelette

Fry a 2-3 eggs in a pan sprayed with low-calorie cooking spray to make an omelette. When almost set, scatter with chopped tomatoes, sliced peppers, lean strips of ham (all visible fat removed) and dried oregano and finish under a hot grill. Scatter with fresh basil leaves and serve with salad.

DINNER

Aubergine and chickpea tagine

- Low-calorie cooking spray
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 tsp garlic granules
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 400g can chopped tomatoes
- 400ml boiling vegetable stock
- 1 large aubergine, cut into chunks
- 560g can new potatoes in water, drained
- 400g can chickpeas, drained
- Chopped fresh parsley and sprigs, to serve
- Plain dried couscous, to serve

Spray a large frying pan with low-calorie cooking spray and place over a medium heat. Add the onion, garlic granules, cumin, ginger and cinnamon. Cook for 5 minutes then add the chopped tomatoes and stock and bring to the boil. Add the aubergine and new potatoes. Cover

reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer for 10 minutes. Stir in the chickpeas and cook for

a few minutes then scatter with chopped fresh parsley and sprigs, season and serve with couscous, made according to the pack instructions.

Serves 4
Ready in
25 minutes



TREATS

- 25g Cashew nuts & raisins
- 150g pack fish sushi pack

Friday

BREAKFAST

'Fry-day up'

Grill back bacon rashers (all visible fat removed), portobello mushrooms and halved tomatoes. Serve with hot baked beans.

LUNCH

Grazing lunchbox

Fill a lunchbox with cooked turkey slices, a hard-boiled egg, carrot and celery crudités, pickled gherkins, a 60g wholemeal roll, 3 mini Babybel Lights (from your allowance) and 1 level tbsp sandwich pickle.

DINNER

Fish and chips

- 4 thick skinless cod or haddock fillets
- 2 eggs, separated
- Lemon wedges, to serve
- Heated mushy peas, to serve
- 4 level tbsp tartare sauce, to serve

For the chips

- 800g floury potatoes, peeled and cut into chips
- Low-calorie cooking spray

Preheat the oven to 200°C/fan 180°C/gas 6. Boil the chips for 4-5 minutes, then drain, return to the pan and cover. Lightly shake to roughen up the edges and arrange on a baking tray in a single layer. Spray with low-calorie cooking spray and season well. Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until golden.

Meanwhile, line a baking tray with non-stick baking parchment. Arrange the fish on the tray and season to taste. Whisk the egg whites in a large bowl until they form soft peaks. Whisk the yolks in another bowl and fold into the egg whites along with a pinch of salt. Stir to mix well and spoon the mixture over the fish. Bake for 10-12 minutes or until the egg is lightly browned and the fish is cooked through. Serve with the chips and mushy peas.

TREATS

- 175ml glass low-alcohol red, white or rose wine
- 25g Battenberg cake

Serves 4
Ready in
25 minutes



TIP

Leave the skins on your potatoes for added fibre!

Saturday

BREAKFAST

Spinach scramble

Beat 2-3 eggs, season and scramble in a non-stick frying pan with spinach until cooked. Serve over grilled portobello mushrooms.

LUNCH

Houmous salad

Whizz together drained 400g can chickpeas, 2 tbsp fat-free natural yogurt, 2 tbsp lemon juice and 1 crushed garlic clove to make houmous. Dollop it over a salad of rocket, chopped red onion, grated carrot, diced cucumber and tomato, and chunks of toast made using 2 slices wholemeal bread (from a small 400g loaf).

DINNER

Chicken tikka masala

- Juice of 1 lime
- 150g fat-free natural yogurt
- 5 tbsp tikka curry powder
- 4 skinless and boneless chicken breasts, cut into bite-sized chunks
- Low-calorie cooking spray
- 1 onion, grated
- 4 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2cm piece of root ginger, peeled and grated
- 1 red chilli, deseeded and chopped, plus sliced chilli to garnish
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 6 tbsp tomato purée
- 5 tbsp fat-free natural fromage frais
- Small handful of roughly chopped fresh coriander, to garnish
- Boiled dried basmati or wholegrain rice, to serve
- Salad, to serve

Serves 4
Ready in 45
minutes, plus
marinating



In a large dish, mix the lime juice, yogurt and 3 tablespoons of the tikka curry powder. Season to taste, add the chicken and toss to coat well. Marinate in the fridge for 4 hours or overnight if you have time. When you're ready to cook, preheat the grill to medium. Spray a large non-stick frying pan with low-calorie cooking spray and place over a medium heat. Add the onion, garlic, ginger, chilli, cinnamon, cumin and remaining tikka curry powder, stir well and fry for 2-3 minutes. Stir in the tomato purée and 250ml of water. Bring to the boil, reduce the heat to low and simmer for 12-15 minutes, stirring often.

Meanwhile, thread the chicken pieces on to metal skewers, spray with low-calorie cooking spray and grill for 12-15 minutes or until cooked through and lightly charred, turning occasionally. Slide the chicken off the skewers and into the sauce, stirring well. Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the fromage frais. Scatter over the coriander and serve hot with rice and salad.

TREATS

- 35ml gin with slimline tonic
- 25g toffee-flavoured popcorn

Sunday

BREAKFAST

Sardines on toast

Lightly toast 2 slices of wholemeal bread (from a small 400g loaf), top with canned sardines in tomato sauce and grill until the sardines are heated through.

LUNCH

Leek and potato soup

Place 1 chopped onion in a large saucepan with 2 bay leaves and 150ml of boiling vegetable stock. Bring to the boil, cover and simmer for 5 minutes. Add 700g peeled and diced potatoes to the pan and 1 trimmed and shredded leek. Pour in 1 litre more of stock and season well. Simmer, covered, for another 25 minutes. Discard the bay leaves and blend until smooth. Then return to the saucepan, stir in 150 fat-free natural fromage frais and reheat gently without letting it boil. Season to taste and serve sprinkled with some reserved shredded leek.

DINNER

Cottage pie

- Low-calorie cooking spray
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 500g lean beef mince (5% fat or less)
- 200g kale, chopped
- 400g can chopped tomatoes
- 200g passata
- 6 tbsp tomato purée
- Worcestershire sauce, to taste
- 1 tsp dried mixed herbs
- 1kg potatoes, peeled and chopped
- 200g fat-free natural fromage frais
- Vegetables, to serve

Spray a frying pan with low-calorie cooking spray and place over a high heat. Add the onion and beef and stir-fry for 1-2 minutes. Stir in the kale, chopped tomatoes, passata, tomato purée, a splash of Worcestershire sauce and the mixed herbs. Bring to the boil, cover and cook over a high heat for 12-15 minutes, stirring often. Meanwhile, cook the potatoes in a saucepan of lightly salted boiling water for 10 minutes or until just tender.

Drain and roughly mash with the fromage frais, seasoning well. Preheat the grill to high. Spoon the beef mixture into an ovenproof dish and spread the mash over the top. Grill for a few minutes until lightly browned and serve with the vegetables.

Serves 4
Ready in 30
minutes



TREATS

- 25g baked potato crisps
- 1 large chocolate-coated rice cake

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