

Knowledge and Awareness of the Ketogenic Diet in the University of Saskatchewan Community

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Introduction: The ketogenic diet is low in carbohydrates, high in fats, and has moderate protein. The diet was originally used as a treatment option for children with epilepsy that is difficult to manage with medications. Within recent years, celebrities and social media influencers have been promoting this diet for weight loss.

Objective: Our objective was to investigate awareness and knowledge about the ketogenic diet in the University of Saskatchewan community.

Methods: Survey questions to investigate the research question along with demographic questions were drafted and mounted on SurveyMonkey. The survey was conducted in October 2019. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Results: There were 398 respondents. 94% of respondents had heard of the ketogenic diet. The most common sources from which respondents had heard of the diet were social media posts, social media influencers, and friends and family members. When asked about their knowledge of the original purpose of the ketogenic diet, only 28% of the respondents were correct in selecting that the purpose was for pediatric epilepsy, 43% did not know, and the remaining 28% submitted an incorrect response. The percentage of accurate responses about the intended use of the ketogenic diet increased with being registered in a basic undergraduate nutrition class and increased even more with course completion.

Conclusions: Our data shows that the most reported sources of information regarding the ketogenic diet consist of potentially unreliable sources. Correspondingly, most of the respondents were unaware of all the associated risks with the diet and did not know the original intended use of the diet. However, respondents who had completed a basic nutrition course were more likely to know more about the ketogenic diet.

Significance: These results suggest that more education is needed regarding the keto diet for the general public. Dietitians have an important role in this process.

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