

POTATOES AND WEIGHT LOSS FACT CHECK



Q: If I am trying to lose weight, do I need to avoid potatoes?

A: No. Research demonstrates that people can eat potatoes and still lose weight.

FACTS

There is no evidence that potatoes, when prepared in a healthful manner, impede weight loss.

- In fact, a study published in the Journal of the American College of Nutrition demonstrates that people can eat potatoes and still lose weight.¹
- The study, a collaborative effort between the University of California at Davis and the Illinois Institute of Technology, sought to gain a better understanding of the role of calorie reduction and the glycemic index (GI) in weight loss when potatoes are included in the diet. Ninety overweight men and women were randomly assigned to one of three groups: (1) reduced calorie/high GI, (2) reduced calorie/low GI, (3) control group with no calorie or GI restrictions. All three groups were provided potatoes along with healthful recipes and instructions to consume 5-7 servings of potatoes per week. All 90 participants were involved in light to moderate exercise. At the end of the 12-week study period, the researchers found that all three groups had lost weight and there was no significant difference in weight loss between the groups.
- Although this is a single study and more research is needed, a recent systematic review and meta-analysis concluded that existing research does not provide convincing evidence to suggest an association between intake of potatoes and risks of obesity.²
- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans assert that managing calorie intake is fundamental to achieving and maintaining calorie balance - the balance between the calories taken in from foods and the calories expended from metabolic processes and physical activity. And calorie balance, not a particular food, is the key to weight management. Accordingly, to lose weight, most people need to reduce the number of calories they get from foods and beverages and increase their physical activity.³

REFERENCES

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2. Borch D, Juul-Hindsgaul N, Veller M, Astrup A, Jaskolowski J, Raben A. Potatoes and risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease in apparently healthy adults: a systematic review of clinical intervention and observational studies. *Am J Clin Nutr.* 2016. 104(2):489-98.
3. 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. <https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/executive-summary/> Accessed May 28, 2018.