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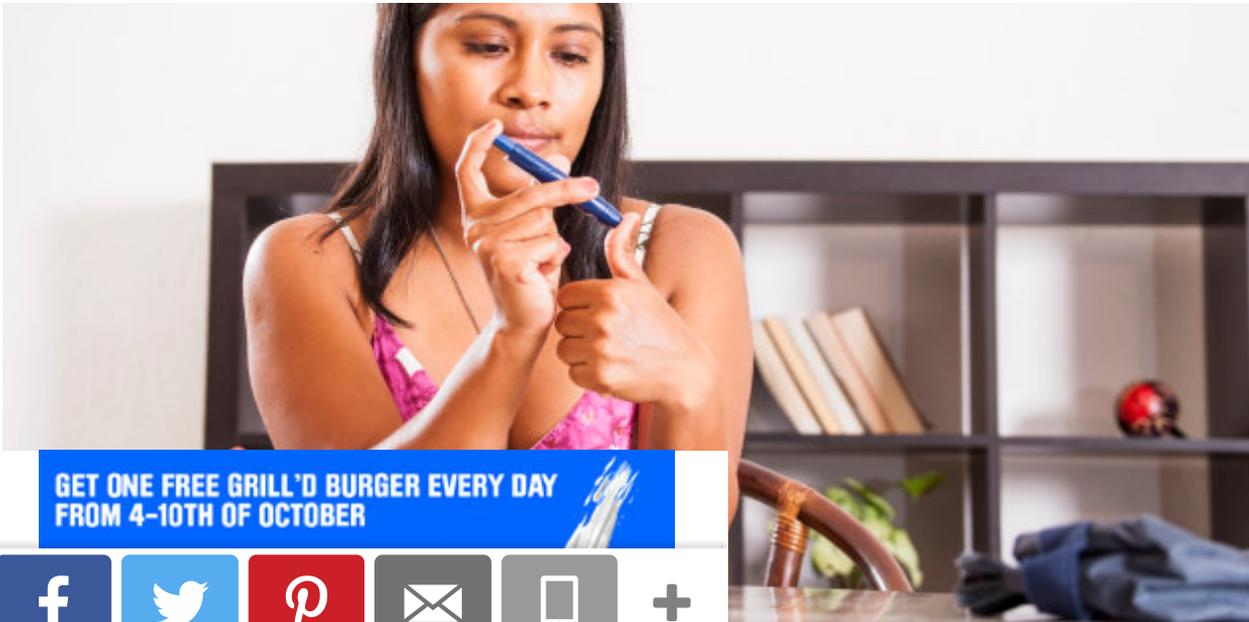


The A to O of the blood type diet and how it works.

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the Atkins diet, the vegan diet or the raw food diet to try and maintain a healthy lifestyle or fit with our ethics, how many of us have heard about the

[Blood Type Diet?](#)

Created about a decade ago but more popular today than ever, this diet program has been developed specifically to match your blood type and how your body reacts to food.

Let's take a look at if it works, what the benefits are, and is it dietitian recommended.

What is the Blood Type Diet?

Designed by American naturopathic physician [Dr Peter D'Adamo](#), the blood type diet aims to alter your eating habits to reflect your body's natural reactions to food and stress and your susceptibility to disease.

According to D'Adamo, the idea was first developed by his father.

"My father first identified the idea that no two individuals were alike, and that differences between the blood types played a role in defining individualised lifestyle programs," D'Adamo told HuffPost Australia.

"I've continued to refine personalised nutrition programs through identifying additional markers to individuality."

Dr Jason Mallia, Blood Type Practitioner at [Integrated Health Australia](#) told HuffPost Australia the diet is designed to help people eat according to the needs of their gut health.

"The diet is a system to help people get more specific with what they really should be eating," Mallia said.



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"What's happened with all the confusion with dieting and all the marketing out there is people are no longer listening to their gut -- the blood type diet helps people get back to what intuitively feels right."

Mallia said the aim of the blood type diet was to reduce stress and inflammation on the body that occurs when eating foods that can potentially negatively effect natural gut health.

"Everything you put into your body has to be digested so if you're having foods more suitable for your gut, that's going to reduce the inflammation and the stress that food puts on your gut, potentially reducing over-inflammation," Mallia said.

However, like all diet regimes, Tania Ferraretto, accredited practising dietitian and spokeswoman for the [Dietitians Association of Australia](#) told HuffPost Australia restrictive eating patterns aren't good for general health and wellbeing.

"In this diet everyone does require quite specific foods to eat or avoid and there is a need to change what you're eating because of the blood type you have," Ferraretto said.

"We know that any restrictive eating pattern where people are encouraged to avoid certain food groups is not good for your health or your relationship with food."

Can your blood type determine what you eat?

While Ferraretto explains there is limited evidence to support the claim there are foods specific to one's blood type, according to Mallia, the gene that determines your blood type is linked to other functions in the body, allowing the blood type diet to take into account gut bacteria, blood pressure and stress hormones.

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If you don't know your blood type, it's like not knowing your second name.

"This gene is linked to stress hormone production and how your digestive system functions -- for example, in blood type A, they have less protein breaking down acids compared to blood type O," Mallia said.

"It also helps us understand digestive systems, how your body might respond to stress and also trends of certain diseases related to certain blood types."

It is these elements of general health that help influence the blood type diet and therefore what we can eat based on our blood types. However, as Ferraretto points out, dietary recommendations must be tailored to individual circumstances.

"With any diet there's always something that might be a good thing, such as cutting out processed food or eating more fruit and vegetables, so those factors are good things but they're also things you can do with general recommendations that are sustainable too," Ferraretto said.

"The Dietitians Association would discourage people from eliminating important foods or food groups because there are some really severe nutritional risks of doing that."

Like any attempt to improve health and well-being and potentially kick-start weight loss, the blood type diet also includes lifestyle changes and a controlled exercise regime.

Blood Type A

According to the blood type diet, type As are encouraged to eat a vegetarian-based diet with organic produce including green vegetables, blueberries, garlic and ginger.

"Blood type As often feel tired as a result of eating too much red meat," Mallia said.

"Their blood type diet would see a lot less or no red meat and it would actually be more vegetarian based with more chicken and fish."

How does this work? Mallia explains type As struggle to digest red meat because their system can't break it down as well as other blood types due to a sensitive immune system.

In terms of exercise, according to Mallia type As carry a higher base level of the stress hormone [cortisol](#). How does this relate to exercise?



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"What this means is when it comes to exercising is if someone is blood type A, you don't want to be doing stressful exercises as it tends to be problematic in terms of the immune

system, creating more stress and will cause a breakdown in muscle mass," Mallia said.

"They're more suited to meditation or calming exercises, not high-intensity training, as this reduces cortisol to help the overall wellbeing and maintain cardiovascular fitness."

Blood Type O

Blood Types Os tend to thrive on a high-protein diet, or a [ketogenic diet](#) that is moderate protein, including foods like broccoli, spinach, pineapple and lamb.

"In terms of a blood type diet, what it often does for blood types Os when they go to a diet more specific to their blood type is they eat a lot less carbohydrates and more meat," Mallia said.

"Having a higher protein, lower carbohydrate and lower wheat diet means they tend to build more muscle mass and feel more energetic as a result."

When it comes to exercise, blood type Os are on the other end of the spectrum to blood type A's.

"They tend to be much more robust in terms of physicality, they have much lower cortisol on rising, so their body thrives when they do high intensity training, helping develop muscle mass and eliminate the stress hormone."

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The main thing to point out is people are genetically quite diverse and the diet will respond differently in each person.

Blood Type B

According to Mallia, the blood type diet for type Bs aims to predominantly improve gut health.

"In blood type B, they tend to do well on a chicken-free diet because they tend to have issues with the bacteria found in chicken -- they have a blood type that resembles

particular bacterias' and so certain bacterias in chicken can cause a problem in their gut," Mallia said.

"This tends to reduce infections over time by reducing things that affect their digestive system -- as blood type B tend to have issues with their gut and infection most often."

Other foods recommended for blood type Bs include oily cold water fish, dairy, kale and herbal teas.

Blood type Bs also tend to fall into what Mallia calls a "mishmash" category when it comes to an exercise regime.

"They tend to have a balance of intensive training but interestingly experts think they have programming which causes them to need their minds to be involved in the exercise -- something with a creativity component, such as martial arts, to help with their stress relief," Mallia said.

"Blood type AB's are very similar. They need a calming exercises to calm their cortisol but they also need a little bit of intensity."

Blood Type AB

When it comes to diet, ABs have sensitive stomachs meaning they [must ensure they eat foods that are low in acidity](#), avoiding caffeine, citrus and alcohol and instead consuming cherries, vegetables and soy proteins.

While we know the exercise routine of type ABs mirror's that to type Bs, Mallia suggests paying attention to exercises that don't impact negatively on blood pressure.

"The main thing to point out," adds Mallia, "is people are genetically quite diverse and the diet will respond differently in each person.

"There's only about four percent blood type B and 11 percent blood type AB, so we generally see type A and type O and can study it that way."

While you might feel better by adjusting your diet and lifestyle to your blood type recommendations, Ferraretto explains these changes may not be long-term.



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"Diets make people's life quite restrictive -- such as eating with family, going out and socialising which are all really important things when you're looking at somebody's diet and how it fits in with their life," Ferraretto said.

"Often people are making changes in the short-term but not sustaining those, so we want to make sure people's dietary changes are healthy and balanced, but that they're also things people can do for a long time."

Does the blood type diet cater for dietary requirements or food intolerance?

The short answer is yes. The long answer is, well, it depends.

"It can cater for people with individual issues or intolerance but the difficulty comes when people have very strict beliefs about their diet, such as vegetarians," Mallia said.

"You might prefer not to eat red meat, but then you find yourself becoming quite unwell so sometimes our beliefs have to evolve to allow our health to come back to baseline."

While Mallia explains the blood type diet is not a 'one size fits all' approach and if

someone is [coeliac](#) or suffering from a specific food related allergy, the diet still needs to be modified, Ferraretto agrees, indicating conditions like diabetes and heart disease need to be considered.

I don't know my blood type. What should I do?

First thing's first. Find out what your blood type it.

"If you don't know your blood type, it's like not knowing your second name," Mallia said.



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"People who don't know their blood type will find they're intuitively eating what their body wants so they might actually be following a blood type diet without even knowing," Mallia said.

"On the other end of the spectrum, people can be doing a diet that's way off based on what they're being told, like fad diets or trends, and it's actually not right for them and that's why they're showing symptoms of gut dysfunction."

How do we know if we should be on a blood type diet?

Mallia explains the biggest signs to look out for that indicate we're eating foods that don't match our blood type are in our general health.

1. You're generally feeling unwell.
2. You're not getting a good result from what you're eating.
3. You have low energy.
4. You feel bloated or aren't digesting food properly.
5. You might experience weight gain even though you're exercising.

According to Ferraretto, people considering dietary and lifestyle changes should focus on finding credible information and focus on dietary guidelines.

"Don't focus on marketing messages -- social media can make it quite complicated because anybody can say anything on social media and often quite convincingly," Ferraretto said.

"Keep balance -- it's about a wide variety of foods and keeping long term habits that are sustained. These aren't new messages, but they are important messages."

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