

The Inspiration

When I looked at the picture of me and my son as we dropped him off at college, I didn't recognize myself. The person in the pic looked overweight and out of shape. He looked old, and he felt old. I was disappointed in myself and had felt that feeling before, but this time it was different. Previously, that short term guilt would lead to a short term effort that fizzled out over time. Then I realized the problem; I was making it about me. My motivation in the past was, "You've gotta do it for yourself" and to be honest, that was the problem. It was about how I felt and the motivation ended when "I" didn't want to do it.

But this time it was different. Seeing my son take this huge step in his life made me start to realize how selfish I had been making it be about me. The thought hit me, the guy in that pic will never play with his grandkids. Heck, with the trajectory of my health, that guy may not even see his grandkids. And, in that moment I found a greater motivation; the next generation. That picture fuels me to sacrifice for someone else, so on days I didn't want to work out...it wasn't about me. On days where I didn't want the disciple to deny my flesh, Christ gave me the strength to be led by the spirit so that I could serve someone that wasn't even alive yet.

Why Carnivore?

Honestly, I have a highly addictive personality and do not do well with "moderation". When I looked back, I recognized the pattern that I tend to thrive with an all or none program. Small or slight changes make sense for other people, but I tend to do better with extreme commitments. I ran into a great friend, Daryl, who was thriving on Carnivore. As he shared what it was and how he was doing it, it resonated. I felt like I could not only do it, but could sustain it.

Carnivore is not a tip-toe diet, it's committing to a new lifestyle. It flies contrary to a lot of conventional dietary practices and it's results are experienced through a consistency to the journey. The biggest surprise wasn't the weight loss, which was significant, but it was the way I felt physically, mentally and emotionally.

What is Carnivore?

Depending upon the source, you may get slightly different definitions. Most definitions agree that it's a dietary plan that focuses on eating meat and eggs. No grains, no sugars, no vegetables and no fruits. The goal is a high protein/high fat diet with virtually no carbohydrates. We'll get more specific a little later in some of the "what about" questions you may have.

How long should you do it?

Consistency is key. I started with an 86 day commitment from September 3 - November 24. I chose to do it through Thanksgiving with a cheat day and re-evaluate where to go after that. If you're just getting started, pick a length of time (I'd recommend a minimum of 30 days) and jump in. Along the way take note of how you're feeling physically, mentally and emotionally. It will take your body 14-21 days to find a "new normal". You have to get through that timeframe to allow your body and mind to adjust. Stick with it, the results will come!!

Pre and Post Carnivore Pics

Exercise level - 2-3 times per week with Mild to moderate intensity

Dietary intake - high carbs (breads, pastas and deserts) and meats, very little fruit/veggie

Snacking - typically 3-4 snacks per day, constantly craving something and driven by food.

September 3rd - 211lbs



November 27- 183 lbs (86 days of carnivore)



Total Weight Loss 28 Pounds

Meal Planning

A key to this lifestyle change is committing to meal prep. If you fail to prepare, it's difficult to run out and grab something to eat. I would prepare all the meat in advance on Thursday's and Sunday's. Breakfast was fresh each morning, lunches were prepared in advance and dinner was generally made fresh. I don't get bored eating the same thing, so my meal selection may be a little narrow for some people.

Typical meals:

- Breakfast
 - 3 eggs scrambled with ½ a ribeye or a pork sausage link and cheddar cheese.
 - 3 egg omelet with bacon or sausage with cheddar cheese.
 - 3 egg bites (I made my own)
- Lunch
 - Baby back ribs with salt and pepper and a hard boiled egg.
 - Pork tenderloin with salt and pepper and a scoop of cottage cheese.
 - Chicken breast with an egg bite.
 - Turkey breast with a hard boiled egg.
- Dinner
 - Smash burger with 3 sunny side eggs.
 - Ribeye with cottage cheese.
 - Salmon filet with egg bite
 - Ribs with scrambled eggs.

Preparing/cooking the Meat

I'm big on flavor and I actually enjoy cooking the meats. For me, a large part of the enjoyment of this lifestyle change was the process of cooking the meat. If you fall in love with the process, it's a much easier transition. First, season the meat. It's hard to find rubs/spices that don't use sugar. My go to was "Blanco" from MeatChurch. Read the labels and find the ones that work for you. Ensure you liberally put the rub on at least an hour prior to cooking, but many times I'd put it on the night before.

I've been an avid meat smoker for a few years. All the meat I ate was prepared on the smoker, a timberline 1300 if you're into that thing. The process of infusing smoke into the meat enhances the flavor and creates an even more enjoyable process. Inexpensive electric smokers are a cost effective way to jump into the smoking world. All steaks were first smoked on the smoker to 121 degrees, then reverse seared on the griddle. The process of placing a steak on the 500 degree griddle for 90 seconds on each side created a charred/caramelized texture.

Benefits I Experienced from Carnivore:

- Cravings/Snacking - prior to carnivore I was driven by food cravings. I'd have a snack in the morning, a snack in the afternoon and multiple snacks in the evening. My kryptonite was ice cream; a bowl of cookies and cream was the way I'd end many nights. When you eat carbs, they break down quickly and spike your blood sugars. Then, comes the crash as your body produces insulin to bring it down. When your body senses the roller coaster it thinks it's in starvation mode and tells you...eat, and it craves more carbs. There's a physiological cause of the crave coming from the blood sugar instability. But, there's also a psychological cause to the crave, your mind begins telling you to eat. As I started to stabilize, the blood sugars in my body were no longer craving food, but my mind took a whole lot longer. It made me realize how addicted to food I had become and even when my body wasn't hungry, my mind was screaming that I needed to feed it. It took about 17 days for that voice to quiet and realize I didn't need a snack. During that season, it was a mental battle. But on day 17, it was like the cloud cover lifted and the sun popped out. On that day I didn't crave a snack and actually didn't want or need a snack. It may seem small, but the freedom was significant. In all honesty, I purchased a lot of snacks before in preparation, but they've sat on the shelf and I haven't eaten a snack since I switched to Carnivore.

- Mental Clarity - one of the most shocking benefits of Carnivore was mental clarity. Unbeknownst to me, my ability to think clearly correlated with stable blood sugars. As I progressed through the weeks of carnivore I noticed a greater recall and mental processing.
- Satiety - At the 60 day mark something significant happened, I had my normal breakfast and started to feel full. Not the bloated full of overeating, but a satisfied full and stopped eating. My whole life was filled with eating my entire plate and generally still feeling hungry. This monumental breakthrough made me realize how much I was driven by food and letting it control me.
- Energy - my energy flow during the day was directly connected to my blood sugars. They would spike with a high carb meal and come crashing down only to produce a low energy afternoon where it felt like I needed a nap. That low energy moment created the craving for a snack and there you have the vicious cycle of blood sugars spiking and dropping that I was stuck in for years. Now, I go through the day and don't experience those low moments and come home with something to give my family rather than falling on the couch and passing out.
- Body Aches - In my life I've had 13 major surgeries. From both shoulders, both knees and elbow to plates and rods in my back, I've contributed a lot to orthopedic surgeons. I can't remember a time where it wouldn't take me a couple hours for my body to loosen up and begin moving. I felt like an old school lawn chair trying to unfold. I noticed that through getting rid of the preservatives and the carbohydrates my joints weren't inflamed and my body wasn't irritated. I literally feel 20 years younger.

Other considerations:

1. Water intake - With this lifestyle, you'll tend to be dehydrated. I drank very little water up to Carnivore. But, now I'll drink 10-12 bottles of Grape propel a day. Some would say you should stay away from artificial sweeteners. I like the taste of the grape propels and the sweeteners do not affect the blood sugar levels.
2. Salt intake - Your body needs more salt so I'll put a couple pinches of salt in each water bottle throughout the day.
3. Portion Control - I've tried other things that focused on portion control, like just eat smaller portions. That didn't work, if it was on my plate I'd eat it and still feel hungry. Now, eating a high protein/high fat diet I will experience satiety and will stop when I'm satisfied. Learning how to truly listen to your body is a great gift from this lifestyle.
4. Gut health - I love bread; I've made an entire meal from bread. But, the bloating that would follow was uncomfortable at best and painful at worst. Since eliminating grains, I don't experience bloating. This may be TMI, but one of my concerns was bowel movements. But since Carnivore those have not been an issue.
5. Cholesterol levels - one knock that people have on Carnivore is over cholesterol levels. There's a lot of conflicting information depending upon who you read. Traditional viewpoints maintain that LDL is the bad cholesterol with HDL being the good cholesterol. If you have those questions or concerns do your research and discover what you believe.
6. Exercise - I worked out 6 of 7 days a week through the entire process. Exercise is a key element of this lifestyle change.
 - a. 30 minutes of walking, moderate pace covering approx 1.7 miles at 1.5 incline.
 - b. 30 minutes of weight lifting alternating upper body one day and lower body the next.
 - c. 15-30 minutes of core strength training and flexibility.