North Americans are in record numbers dieting to lose weight – an estimated 50 million of us will go on a diet this year. The sheer number of diet books on the market today – more than 1,200 at last count – makes losing weight overwhelming as well as confusing.

Many people are trying to fight the fat by cutting out the “carbs.” According to a recent ACNielsen Homescan Survey, low-carbohydrate diets are already being followed by 17 percent of Americans, a number that is growing by the day.

What exactly are “low-carb” diets? Generally speaking, they are based on restricting the consumption of processed and refined carbohydrates, especially sugars, breads, pastas, and starchy vegetables. They are controversial in the eyes of many because they fly in the face of conventional weight loss wisdom that emphasizes reducing fats, not carbohydrates.

There are numerous variations on the low-carbohydrate theme. They differ in their recommendations as to just how low one’s carbohydrate intake should be and whether all carbs are created equal. One of the most popular allows unlimited consumption of protein and fats – including bacon, cheese, eggs, and butter – along with very limited quantities of all types of carbohydrates, even fruits and vegetables.

Dr. Katz extends an important caution to low-carb dieters in this regard: be smart when it comes to consuming new low-carb products. Low-carb offerings, from crustless pizzas to bunless burgers, are popping up on restaurant and fast food menus everywhere. In grocery stores, low- or reduced-carb products – including low-carb beer, cereal, cookies, chocolate bars, chips, pork rinds, even low-carb marshmallows – are flying off the shelves, while their “high-carb” counterparts are seeing dramatic declines in sales. Last year, for example, Nielsen reported sales of instant rice were down 8.2%; pasta, down 4.6%; and, white bread, down 4.7%.

Dr. Katz says that it’s a case of history repeating itself. “Why don’t low-fat diets work? Snackwells, that’s the answer,” he explains, referring to a popular line of reduced-fat cookies and crackers.

(continued on next page)
Juice Plus+® helps bridge the Diet Debate.

A Primer for the Diet Debate

In the debate over “low-carbohydrate” and “low-fat” diets we hear a lot about “good” and “bad” carbohydrates and fats. What types of foods fall into each of these categories? Most nutritional experts seem to agree on the following definitions:

“GOOD CARBS” So-called “complex carbohydrates” – fruits, vegetables, beans, and whole grains – that are rich in fiber and nutrients and are more slowly absorbed into the digestive system.

“BAD CARBS” Sugary foods, starches, and refined white flour products that are more quickly absorbed into the digestive system and raise blood sugar levels.

“GOOD FATS” Liquid oils found in most plants, as well as the fats in nuts, seeds, and many fish, such as salmon and mackerel.

“BAD FATS” Saturated animal fats, trans-fatty acids, and the “hydrogenated” or “partially hydrogenated” oils found in vegetable shortening, most margarines, and most processed foods.

There’s nothing wrong with Snackwells per se, of course. In fact, our focus on lowering fat has led Americans to reduce their consumption of fat by 40% of calories in 1968 to 33% in 2000, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. We have similarly reduced the amount of saturated fat in our diets from 18% to 11%. So why are more than a third of Americans 30 pounds or more overweight today, and why has that percentage continued to grow?

It’s because, in the final analysis, a calorie is a calorie is a calorie. According to the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES III) the average amount of fat in the American diet has actually increased from 81 grams to 83 grams per day, even though the percentage of calories from fat has gone down. How is that possible? It’s because the number of calories the average person eats has increased as well, from 1,989 to 2,153 calories per day. A low-fat diet only “works” (in terms of losing weight) if you reduce the percentage of calories from fat while maintaining or reducing the total number of calories.

The same problem could occur with low-carb diets as well. Dr. Katz describes the problem this way: as the food industry produces more and more products labeled “low-fat” or “low-carb,” Americans line up to eat them. “There are 3,800 calories produced in the U.S. every day for every man, woman, and child in America.

“We eat too much because there are too many calories available.”

Another potential problem with low-carb product offerings is that there is presently no FDA definition for the term “low-carb.” This allows food manufacturers to make low-carb claims about products that may not be so low in carbohydrates after all.

Lisa Sanders, M.D., also from the Yale Preventive Medicine Research Center, believes that regardless of which side health professionals are on in the low-carb/low-fat diet debate, the reality is that “patients are using these [low-carb] diets. We need to work with that.” That’s where Juice Plus® can play an important role, both for low-carb dieters and the health professionals who look after them.

“Everyone needs Juice Plus®,” suggests Anita Boddie, Ph.D., R.D., Director of Clinical Research at NSA, the maker of Juice Plus®. “But certainly no one needs Juice Plus® more than the low-carb dieter.”

The problem, Dr. Boddie explains, is that while no one questions the nutritional value of the thousands of antioxidants and other phytonutrients found in fruits and vegetables, fruits and vegetables contain carbohydrates. Low-carbohydrate diets thus recommend that you eliminate or drastically reduce the consumption of all fruits and most vegetables “other than a few green leafy ones.”

“In a very real sense, the nutritional baby is getting thrown out with the carbohydrate bathwater.”

Dr. Boddie reviewed several popular low-carb diets and determined that they typically “allow” only four or five of the 17 different fruits, vegetables, and grains used to make Juice Plus®. “The few that they do allow tend to be ones like spinach, parsley, and kale that most people don’t like anyway – especially people who are being told that they can eat as much meat, butter, and cheese as they want.”

Dr. Boddie explains that Juice Plus® is the perfect addition to any low-carb diet because it helps provide the wide variety of healthful antioxidants and phytonutrients
that can only be found in fruits and vegetables. “Our recommended daily serving of Juice Plus® – two Orchard Blend and two Garden Blend capsules – contains only 2 grams of carbohydrates.” For perspective, the most popular low-carb diet limits carbohydrate intake to 20 grams a day, a mere fraction of the 250 grams of carbohydrates that the average person takes in.

Boddie recommends that doctors and dieters concerned about the potential negative nutritional implications of low-carb dieting should take a serious look at Juice Plus®.

“Juice Plus® is also perfect for everyone watching the fat content of his or her diet,” Dr. Boddie adds, “because Juice Plus® contains no fat at all.”

Boddie points out that despite the emerging popularity of low-carb diets, major disease prevention organizations, such as the American Heart Association and the American Cancer Society, still recommend that we eat at least five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables every day.

So, the diet debate rages on. But whether you believe that low-carb or low-fat is the best way to shed pounds, there’s one thing you can count on: the nutritional goodness of Juice Plus® will be a good fit with any diet you choose.
Food companies respond to weight-conscious Americans.

Low-carb diets are not the only place North Americans are turning to try to trim their waistlines. The “super-size” phenomenon of the 1990s is also taking a hit, as companies scramble to respond to our growing appetite for smaller portion sizes.

“Portion sizes are one of the major culprits in the obesity epidemic,” observes John Blair, Vice President of Product Research and Development at NSA, the maker of Juice Plus+. “Whether you are a proponent or opponent of the popular low-carb diets, most people agree that we simply eat too much of whatever we eat. Portion sizes and obesity rates have both been increasing since the early 1970s.”

To help stem this trend, fast food giant McDonald’s has begun phasing out extra-large “super size” fries and soft drinks in its more than 13,000 U.S. restaurants, and will stop selling them altogether by year’s end, except in promotions. The move is part of McDonald’s “Eat Smart, Be Active” campaign, which it launched last year. McDonald’s has also added entree salads to its menus and has been moving to provide more fruit, vegetable, and yogurt options with its Happy Meals.

Quiznos Sub, who for years served up giant, over-stuffed 16-ounce sandwiches for super-sized American appetites, now offers a 4.5-ounce “Mini Melt” alternative. “It was needed on our menu to satisfy our consumers who didn’t want a regular-sized sandwich,” says Zach Calkins, head of Quiznos.

These changes exemplify an emerging trend in the food industry to rein in out-of-control portion sizes. It’s even reaching supermarket shelves, where Coca Cola is introducing new 12-ounce bottles and Pepsi is offering 8-ounce cans.

Why the sudden interest in reducing portion sizes after all these years? “Consumers finally appear to be listening to health warnings about obesity, and companies are seeing the impact on their bottom lines,” Blair explains. “Now those companies are acting to prop up declining sales.”