

High-fat, low-carb keto diets reportedly help patients manage their mental illnesses

Around a [dozen clinical trials](#) are in the works, testing the [low carb, high fat ketogenic] diet's effect on mental illness, most notably for bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and depression, but also for conditions like anorexia, alcoholism and PTSD.

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"It's not a fad diet," says Dr. [Shebani Sethi](#), who's leading [research](#) into the diet's potential for mental health at Stanford University. "It's a medical intervention."

The ketogenic diet was developed over a hundred years ago for pediatric epilepsy and has seen a resurgence in that field over the last three decades.

"It's a general standard of care for epilepsy," says [Dr. Eric Kossoff](#), a pediatric neurologist at Johns Hopkins University.

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This [track record](#) in epilepsy, the thinking goes, paves the way for its adoption in psychiatry. There [are links](#) between the conditions. Medications developed for seizures are [regularly prescribed](#) for a range of psychiatric conditions such as bipolar disorder.

"We use them off label, even when we don't have studies to suggest or prove that they are helpful for people with mental illness," says [Harvard Medical School psychiatrist Chris] Palmer. "So, in many ways, this is nothing new."

There's also a [well-documented](#) association between a variety of psychiatric conditions and metabolic problems like high blood sugar and [insulin resistance](#), [Type 2 diabetes](#), obesity and [hypertension](#).

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