

Boiled eggs and mayo? Is that all I get for dinner, mummy?

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That's what we imagine Kate Middleton must have asked Mom Carole while on the Dukan diet, rumoured to be behind the soon-to-be HRH's recent and rather drastic weight-loss. Active! gets the lowdown on the diet designed by Frenchman Pierre Dukan, plus expert diet tips that actually work

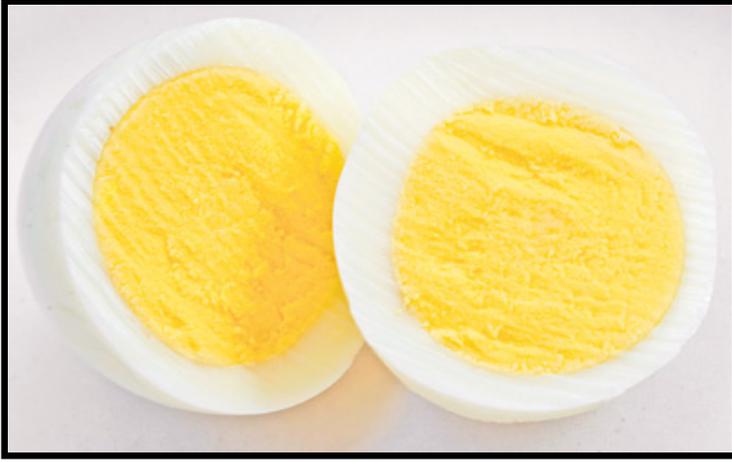
As the world prepares for the soon-to-be 'most watched' wedding of the century, Kate Middleton's (Prince William's bride-to-be) dream is no different from the 'regular' bride. She wants to look her best for 'the most important day of her life', which might mean her skinniest-best. Kate is allegedly on the popular Dukan diet, and is rumoured to have lost an unhealthy five kilos in one month.



According to nutritionist and homeopath Dr Nandita Shah, the diet is no more than a quick fix for short-term benefits. "Our species is designed to digest complex carbohydrates like fruits and vegetables, and if we stick to that the tendency to put on weight or fall ill will be automatically diminished," says Dr Shah. Consuming more fruits and veggies than protein is not a key principle of the Dukan diet. Described as being 'Atkins-like', the diet comprises four phases, including an "only high-protein intake" during the first week.

This is followed by the 'allowance' phase or incorporating vegetables into the diet in equal proportions to the protein-intake for one week. You can eat as much as you like in these phases. Post this phase, you can eat both refined (pastas and rice) and complex carbohydrates (fruits and veggies). Things start to get more complicated at this point. Carb intake is restricted depending on the number of pounds lost.

The final stage is the stabilisation or weight-maintenance phase. In this phase, you can eat as much as you like of whatever you like, as long as you remember to consume only protein on one day of the week. This is a life-long plan. Whew! How does Kate manage to keep track with the programme!



The only pros of the diet, according to nutritionist Purwa Duggal are that it provides a jumpstart to people with a sluggish metabolism. "It (also) does not reduce the calorie intake, which will initiate weight loss," says Dr Duggal.

So has Pierre Dukan, creator of the diet, introduced the equivalent of a Mercedes in the weight-loss market? "Excessive protein intake can lead to a whole host of health problems, ranging from gout and kidney problems to immuno-deficiency disorders. It is always better to avoid diets and lose weight in a balanced manner," advises Dr Shah. We guess this is one instance where the public need not follow in royalty's footsteps. As for the princess-to-be we say, "Let her eat cake!"

Expert diet rules that Kate (and you) could benefit from

- 1 Start your day with a good breakfast. Include fruits, grains and protein, followed by several small meals all through the day.
- 2 Make dinner your last meal of the day. Avoid 'after-dinner snacks'. This includes fruits and vegetables.
- 3 Do not exclude any food group entirely. Also, eat fruits and vegetables that are in season, as they are nutritionally dense.
- 4 Consume fibrous foods. Fibre provides us with a feeling of 'fullness', minus caloric intake. For example, eat three oranges rather than juice made from six oranges.
- 5 Eat more alkaline foods (fruits and vegetables). Our bodies are alkaline, and when we eat acidic food products (high-protein, mainly) we end up leaching our bodies of calcium, which is required to neutralise the effect of the acid in our digestive systems.