

# YOUR KETO BAR:

## 3 TECHNICAL CHALLENGES & HOW TO OVERCOME THEM

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At FONA, we believe signs point to a long-term future for keto. With an active and committed consumer base, the time to capitalize on the keto is now. Our research shows that this consumer base is looking for convenient products that taste great. Of course, with high fat and low carb requirements – there are challenges in creating a consumer-friendly bar. Check out the common pitfalls – and our tips on overcoming them.

### 1 ALL ABOUT THE BINDING

In my opinion, there are few things more disappointing than a bar that just falls apart. Unfortunately (or fortunately for the brands able to take advantage), it's a regular occurrence with the keto bars on the market today. The proteins and carbs that would typically help bind a bar can be used only minimally in a truly "keto" product. Almond flour crumbles and fats tend to leech out over time.

#### **Our Advice: Blending is your friend & Consider plant-based**

The balance can come from getting the texture right so that it sets fast enough and firm enough to pack it during production, but doesn't become oily or brittle by the time it gets to the shelf. You may consider blending multiple types of fat to get the right result, such as liquid, semi-solid and something like a palm kernel oil or cocoa butter – which are solid fats at room temperature. Keto requires relatively low protein compared to what is normally

included in a protein bar. If you're using dairy proteins, your ratios aren't as keto friendly. Plant-based proteins may work better to absorb more binder (where all of your fat is found) and add less protein than dairy. Also weigh your options for positioning as it can help you understand your technical requirements. Are you seeking a third-party keto certification or is less restrictive "keto-friendly" positioning an option? Answering that at the outset will help you prioritize and work quickly.



## 2

### MASTER THE MOUTHFEEL

One of the biggest technical challenges for developers in keto is mouthfeel. The fat content is so high (75%) and the carbs are so low (5-10%) – it can be difficult to find the right ingredients to achieve desired mouthfeel. Some gums that might typically help actually can contribute to the carbs, and therefore are a no-no for keto.

#### **Our Advice: Be original & Iterate**

It can be tempting for some brands to start with the ingredient list of a competitor and “tweak.” We say that your best bet to avoid unpleasant mouthfeel is to start from scratch when you begin formulating. Have confidence in your instincts from the start. Just because a similar bar is using inulin syrup – that doesn’t mean that you should. There are more ingredient and flavor options than you may realize. And plan on multiple iterations to end up with a better product in the end. Identify your goal, communicate it openly, and you’re more likely to get guidance from your ingredient vendors about your options.

## 3

### BALANCING SWEETNESS & FLAVOR

A keto bar is a complex proposition. Getting sweetness into your bar while you’re replacing your sweet, carb-heavy syrups with fiber syrups and using high intensity sweeteners (each of which may impacts the tongue at different times and different ways...) let’s just say it’s a lot to calculate. Add to that the fact that the flavor impact tends to disappear in these high-fat bases – what are your options?

#### **Our Advice: Balance & Communication**

It can feel like a balancing act – how do you deliver sweetness at 0 net carbs – and without any “artificial-tasting” off-notes? Tweaking and adjusting is key – as is communication with your flavor vendor. There may be customizable options available, such as sweetness enhancers and bitterness blockers. When it comes to flavor impact, we suggest working *with* your profile instead of against it. For example, brown and buttery flavors can work well with a fatty base and hit those indulgent notes.



## TIME TO CAPITALIZE ON KETO?

If you’re dipping your toe in the keto pool – or are already well-versed in the technical implications of these products – you deserve the right information right now. From flavor creation to applications; regulatory to taste modification, FONA’s experts are ready to help you grow in keto.

Email Kaylind at [kcook@fona.com](mailto:kcook@fona.com) or visit [fona.com/chat](https://fona.com/chat) to ask a question or get more information.

**Let’s empower you with the guidance  
you need to move forward.**