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Introduction

When it comes to choosing the optimum diet for our health, there is a lot of conflicting information, ranging from vegetarianism to macrobiotics (grains and vegetables) to the Paleolithic diet (meat, vegetables and no grains). We like to take the same approach with humans that we take with our pet's diets. With dogs and cats, it makes sense to look at what their wild ancestors ate, since that is what their bodies are designed for (raw meat, bones and organs). With humans, it makes sense to look at what was eaten by healthy primitive cultures before they were exposed to Western civilization and processed foods. You might be surprised at what this reveals about optimum nutrition, since it is contrary to what the government and popular media tell us about nutrition. Despite the common assumption in our culture that vegetarianism is the healthiest way to eat, this is not how our ancestors ate. Our ancestors also did not eat large quantities of soy; in fact, they did not eat soy at all unless it was fermented, despite its reputation today as a health food. Also, the food they ate was much higher in minerals than our food today, since our soils have become depleted. We will explore these topics and list some resources where you can learn more about optimal nutrition for you and your family.



Is a vegetarian diet the healthiest way to eat?

Most people would answer this question “yes.” Based on our research, we would answer this question “no.” Vegetarianism is the politically correct way to eat but we do not agree that it is healthier or better for the environment. The assumption in most media is that a vegetarian diet is healthier (such as cancer preventive and “heart healthy”), kinder to the environment and more spiritually advanced. In recent years, many teenage girls have become vegetarians (eats no fish or meat from any animal but they do eat dairy and eggs) or even vegans (eats no fish, meat, dairy or eggs, nothing from an animal) because it is “cool” and they feel it is healthier and kinder to animals.

For the short term, a vegetarian diet can be cleansing but in the long-term, the body does not get the nutrients it needs to be healthy, particularly for children, teenagers, parents-to-be and nursing mothers. And despite assumptions to the contrary, a vegetarian diet is not necessarily kinder to animals or the planet than a diet containing meat. Did you know that soy farming in South America claims more acres of rainforest than beef? While much of this is grown to feed European animals, the soy industry is also vigorously promoting soy for people, and soy is often a major component of the diet of vegetarians. Soy is not an appropriate, healthy or natural food for either animals or people unless it is slowly fermented, as we explain later. And eating a vegetable-based diet doesn't prevent animals from being harmed either. Most vegetables, even organic, are grown on large farms that use mechanized vegetable farming, resulting in numerous animals being killed (the soil organisms, insects, rodents and birds that live wild in the vegetable fields). In addition, monoculture agriculture (growing one plant in

great quantity) depletes the soil and is ecologically damaging. *Neanderthin* author Ray Audette states “The production of wheat in ancient Sumeria transformed once-fertile plains into salt flats that remain sterile 5,000 years later.”

Slate, the online magazine, ran an article on Whole Foods pointing out that most of the organic produce at their store rarely comes from the small, local, family-run farms they promote but rather from a few large corporate farms in California. Transporting organic food from these farms cross-country uses a tremendous amount of energy. Growing plants for food is not always the best use of land, either. Two thirds of the earth’s land is unsuited for cultivation but can be used to graze animals and these animals can subsist on plants that are not fit for human consumption. The Maasai people in Africa are nomadic herders and they believe that tilling the land for crop farming is a crime against nature. Once you cultivate the land, it is no longer suitable for grazing.

We realize that many people are vegetarians because they object to killing animals and then eating them. Our feeling is that since we are biologically designed to need nutrients only found in animal products, and our bodies have the physiology (teeth and digestive system) of omnivores (animals that eat both animal and plant material), then it cannot be wrong for us to kill animals for food anymore than it is wrong for a lion to kill its prey. What is wrong is the inhumane manner in which animals are raised and killed today in factory farms. These animals are fed inappropriate food for their species (such as animal parts being given to herbivores), raised in filthy conditions, do not have room to move around and are given antibiotics and hormones to keep them alive in these horrid conditions and maximize production. We agree that meat from these animals is not very healthy to eat and the animals are cruelly treated.

On the other hand, eating animals raised on pasture without hormones or antibiotics, from a mixed-used farm run by small farmers, is not cruel in our opinion, nor does it damage the environment. In fact, a farm that integrates animal husbandry with growing vegetables is the most ecologically sound use of land and kindest to the environment. The manure from the animals is used to fertilize the plants and the animals help to protect the plants from destruction (such as chickens eating insects that destroy plants). The meat, dairy and eggs from such a farm will contain far more nutrients and a more appropriate balance of fats than factory-farmed food. This food is more expensive and difficult to find but is becoming more widely available as people request it. The meat is typically labeled as “grass fed” and can be found at some health food stores. The dairy and eggs usually must be purchased direct from the farm.



What about the argument that vegetarians can obtain all the nutrients they need from food if they combine proteins (beans & grains) and take B₁₂ supplements? And what about cultures such as in India that have been successfully vegetarian for thousands of years? The fact that vegetarians do need to take an artificial supplement (B₁₂) to meet their needs for vitamins indicates that the diet is inappropriate. If a species is eating the diet designed for it by Mother Nature, it should contain all the nutrients in the food the animal needs for optimal health,

without having to add man-made substances created in a laboratory. Some people argue that soy and blue green algae contain B₁₂, however these are forms of B₁₂ that cannot be absorbed by humans and, in fact, increase the need for B₁₂. Vitamin B₁₂ is found in dairy and eggs, so it is primarily vegans who are at risk of B₁₂ deficiency. The argument against veganism being a “natural” way of eating is that if these same people who are vegans had lived just a few decades ago, when fortified foods and vitamins were unavailable, they would have died.

So, how do Indians stay healthy on a vegetarian diet? There are two factors: 1) their diet usually contains dairy products (and raw milk, in the era before pasteurization, is very high in nutrients) and 2) their grains are infested with insects, which provide many beneficial nutrients including B₁₂. Some Hindus are vegans but apparently the insects infesting their grains provide the B₁₂ they need. When they later moved to England, they developed megaloblastic anemia (caused by B₁₂ deficiency) within a few years. In England, the food supply is cleaner and does not contain insect parts as in India.

However, it’s not just B₁₂ that is lacking in a vegetarian diet. Other critical nutrients lacking are the fat-soluble nutrients, particularly Vitamins A and D. The beta carotene found in vegetables is not the same as Vitamin A (though it may be listed on the label as the same). It has to be converted by the body into Vitamin A and not all bodies can make this conversion, particularly children, people with hypothyroid issues and diabetics. So maybe children really do have a sound reason for not wanting to eat their vegetables (their bodies are not as good as adults as absorbing the nutrients in plant foods). Vitamin A is critical for a healthy immune system and many former vegetarians have found that they are healthier and get fewer illnesses when they eat animal products.

Vitamin D is also critical to health and to the absorption of minerals such as calcium and magnesium. It is difficult to get enough Vitamin D from brief periods of time in the sun at the latitude of the U.S. Only sunning at midday during the summer months with most of the body surface exposed will produce enough. Traditional cultures, even in the tropics, ate diets high in Vitamin D such as intestines, organ meats, skin and fat from certain land animals, as well as shellfish, oily fish and insects. The Standard American Diet (S.A.D.) does not provide sufficient Vitamin D and vegetarians get even less, since it is primarily found in animal foods, particularly animal fat.



What about the frequent statements in the media that eating meat and animal fats produces cancer and heart disease? Many scientists have shown these claims to be false or to only be associated with processed or overcooked meats. Instead, a ***high-carbohydrate diet as well as excessive consumption of polyunsaturated fats from refined vegetable oils is associated with cancer.***

Primitive cultures, such as the Eskimos, Aborigines and Maasai traditionally eat diets high in animal products and animal fats but show low rates of cancer and heart disease unless they switch to a modern Western diet. Then they are prone to the same rates of degenerative diseases that plague us. The media frequently uses the term “artery clogging saturated fats”, however, studies have shown that arterial plaque is composed mostly of unsaturated fats, especially polyunsaturated. Mary Enig, the Ph.D. expert on fats

who first sounded the alarm on trans-fatty acids, has shown that both *trans-fatty acids and polyunsaturated fats are the major culprits behind cancer and heart disease, not saturated fats.*

Numerous studies show that *low fat diets are associated with many problems such as depression, violence, cancer and fatigue, as well as growth problems, failure to thrive and learning disabilities in children. High-carbohydrate/low-fat diets tend to increase insulin in the body which is now known to cause inflammation leading to heart disease, cancer and diabetes.* Excessive carbohydrates as well as monounsaturated fats, like olive oil, also lead to weight gain. Vegetarian diets and in particular vegan diets are by nature high-carbohydrate and low-fat. Maybe it's not just junk food that is making our children obese and prone to mental problems—autism, violence, learning disabilities, depression, etc. Animal products and especially animal fats (including the fats in whole, raw milk) provide nutrients that are especially needed for growing bodies and the developing brain and nervous system. Instead, schools are providing low-fat, pasteurized milk to “counteract” the obesity epidemic and well-meaning parents think a vegetarian diet is healthy for children.

A low fat diet is also likely associated with the increasing rates of infertility afflicting couples. Traditional cultures fed parents-to-be animal products that are super high in the nutrients needed for healthy reproduction such as eggs, liver, fish eggs, cream, butter, seafood, etc. Native American couples experiencing infertility would go on a “bear fat” diet, which usually resolved the problem. Today, we're told that it's healthier to eat vegetarian and that being vegan is the ultimate in health. A local paper, which runs a weekly feature on how couples met and what their wedding was like, ran a story several months ago about a vegan man who persuaded his fiancé to become vegan as well. The story focused on how wonderful it was that this couple was eating so “healthy”. Unfortunately, that couple may well have difficulty conceiving and bearing children and their children's health will likely suffer as well. They won't know why this is or even associate it with what they are eating because they think their diet is perfect.

Proponents of vegetarian diets also don't take into consideration biochemical individuality. As some former vegetarians have discovered, not everyone can be healthy on a vegetarian diet, no matter how well balanced and supplemented. Nutrition expert Sally Fallon, President of the Weston A. Price Foundation, describes the Native American and Irish races as “obligate carnivores”, meaning that their bodies require animal meat and fat to obtain all the nutrients they need and adds that they tend to become alcoholics when their diet is lacking this. People with ancestry of Inuit, Scandinavian, Northern European or sea coast peoples that ate diets high in seafood may have lost the ability to convert alpha-linolenic acid into EPA and DHA (essential fatty acids found only in animal foods). This means they can't get the fats they need from flax oil or other plant oils. If you have pets, you should note that this is also true of many dogs and *all cats*. (Cats, being pure carnivores, have no need for and therefore don't produce the enzymes that convert plant oils into EPA and DHA.) *Flax oil or seeds added to pet food and supplements is useless to a cat.*



What did traditional societies eat?

If a vegetarian diet is not the ideal healthy diet, then what is a healthy way to eat? We think it makes sense to look at what traditional cultures have eaten for thousands of years, before the advent of Western processed foods (like white flour, white sugar, refined vegetable oils, etc.). Today there are few cultures that have not had contact with civilization. Fortunately, there was a researcher who investigated the diets of many traditional cultures in the 1920's to 1930's, when travel to them became easier but before these cultures started eating Western foods. This researcher was Dr. Weston A. Price, a dentist from Cleveland. Being a dentist, he studied the teeth of these people and discovered that people on traditional diets had healthy, almost cavity-free, beautiful, straight teeth in uncrowded, broad jaws. When the children of these people changed to a Western diet, they had crowded, crooked teeth in narrow jaws with lots of cavities. The cause was clearly not genetic (unlike what we have been told), as children in the same family would either have beautiful, well-spaced teeth or crooked, unhealthy teeth depending on what their diet was.



Dr. Price studied the diets of traditional cultures all over the world, from remote villages in Switzerland to Eskimos to the South Pacific. His work is now being carried on by Weston A. Price Foundation, founded in 1999 by Sally Fallon and Mary Enig, Ph.D. Sally Fallon summarizes Dr. Price's research by identifying the 11 underlying characteristics of healthy traditional diets, as follows:

➤ The first characteristic is that they contained no refined or denatured foods. All it took to ruin the health of the primitive people that Dr. Price studied was white sugar, white flour, vegetable oils, canned foods and condensed milk. Today we have so many more refined and processed foods including high fructose corn syrup, pasteurized, skim and low fat dairy products, hydrogenated and trans fats, isolated protein powders and many food additives and preservatives.

➤ The second characteristic is that they all contained animal foods, which was actually a big disappointment to Dr. Price. He had hoped to find a healthy traditional culture that was vegetarian but he did not. What Dr. Price found was that at a minimum, the traditional cultures ate dairy products and insects. As an example, east Indians eat dairy products and their grains are typically infested with insects, which provide essential nutrients. When they move to England, their health sometimes declines since their grains are now free of insects. The people Dr. Price found with the broadest faces and thickest skulls (indicating the best diet) ate fish and shellfish. Also, he found that traditional cultures went to great trouble, energy and risk to obtain animal foods. For instance, people living in the Andes at 12,000 feet would hike down to the sea to trade for fish eggs with the tribes on the shore. When asked why they did this, they said "so we can have healthy babies."



Animal foods contain certain critical nutrients not found in any plant foods, such as the fat soluble vitamins A and D, as well as cholesterol. Cholesterol has been demonized by the