

Nutritional wisdom makes you thin

TRANS FAT : A WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

Which is worse for your heart and waistline – a McDonald's Quarter Pounder, a large order of fries, Dunkin' Donuts, or a Haagen-Dazs ice cream? The answer is that it doesn't matter : they all contain significant disease-promoting substances such as saturated fat or trans fat. Even cholesterol-free foods are deceptively dangerous. One found that people eating more monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats were less likely to suffer from heart disease than people on a lower-fat diet. A low-fat diet can be worse than a higher-fat diet if it has more saturated fat or trans fat and if it contains an excessive amount of refined carbohydrates.

Trans fats do not exist in nature. They are laboratory-designed and have adverse health consequences. They interfere with the body's production of beneficial fatty acids and promote heart disease. As trans fatty acids offer no benefits and only clear adverse metabolic consequences, when you see the words partially hydrogenated on the side of the box, consider it poisonous and throw it in the trash.

The government doesn't require manufacturers to disclose how much trans fat is in their products. Trans fats are surely cancer promoting and raise your cholesterol as much as saturated fat. Considering that they also reduce HDL (the good cholesterol), trans fats may be even more atherogenic than even saturated fatty acids. Convincing evidence indicate that trans fats are as closely associated with heart attacks as the fats in animal products.

Trans fats are found ubiquitously in processed food : crackers, cookies, cakes, frozen foods, and snacks. Consequently, most of these enticing desserts, fried foods and convenience foods are deadly, heart-attack-causing foods, even if they contain no animal products and no cholesterol.

The fatty conclusion

There is no question that a high-fat diet increases the risk of many cancers. This has been demonstrated in hundreds of animal and human studies. Here are the main points why :

1. Any extracted oil (fat) can promote cancer, because consuming even the healthiest fats, such as olive oil, in excess, adds too many empty calories. Excess calories have toxic effects, contributing to obesity, premature aging, and cancer.
2. Excess omega-6 fatty acids promote cancer risk, while omega-3 fats, which are harder to come by, tend to lower risk. Omega-6 fats are found in polyunsaturated oils like corn oil and safflower, whereas the omega-3 fatty acids are rich in seeds, greens, and some fish.
3. The most dangerous fats for both heart disease and cancer are saturated fats and trans fatty acids. They are the fats listed as partially hydrogenated on food labels.
4. Whole natural plant foods (whole grains, greens, nuts, and seeds) supply adequate fat. If you eat an assortment of natural foods, you will not be deficient in fat. We do not need to take fish oil, evening primrose oil, or any other oil when we eat healthy foods.

This is the percentage of calories from animal foods and saturated fat in the diet that is correlated with heart attack risk, rather than the total amount of fat. Animal products, dairy, eggs, chicken,

turkey and red meat contain the most dangerous type of fat. Both type and amount of fat are linked to increased risk, but the type of fat is more important than its amount.

Lean meat or fowl, which contains two to five grams of fat per ounce, contains less saturated fat, and fewer calories per ounce than cheese, which has eight to nine grams of fat per ounce. And cheese has much more saturated fat (the most dangerous fat), about ten times as much saturated fat as chicken breast. Cheese is the food that contributes the most saturated fat and is one of the most dangerous foods in the world to the consumer. Though it tastes good, it should be used very rarely, if at all. Most cheeses are more than 50 percent of calories from fat, and even low-fat cheeses are very high-fat foods.

Americans have this fetish with watching fat and forgetting everything else we know about nutrition. Fat is not everything. If the fats you consume are those healthy fats found in raw seeds, nuts, and avocados, and if your diet is rich in unrefined foods, you needn't worry so much about the fat - unless you are overweight. In conclusion : Avoid saturated fats and trans fats (hydrogenated fats) and try to include some foods that contain omega-3 fat in your diet.

A CLOSER LOOK AT HIGH-FAT DIETS LIKE ATKINS

Are you dying to lose weight?

Since it is estimated that more than 75 percent of all Americans are overweight, it is not surprising that diet and weight-loss books abound! Recent investigations report such a sweeping and rapid increase of obesity globally that it is considered a serious medical epidemic, affecting a significant portion of our world's population.

Because overweight and obesity dramatically increase the risk of all the major causes of death, it may be the most serious health issue facing the world. The success of diet books can be measured in a number of ways : by its popularity, by how well the program it describes works, or by how many pounds you can reasonably expect to lose. However, there are more important considerations.

Weight loss and overall health are inseparable. A weight-loss program can be considered successful ONLY if the weight loss is permanent, safe, and promotes overall health. Temporary weight loss is of little or no benefit, especially if it compromises your health. Unfortunately, some of the most heavily promoted and best-selling books are also among the most dangerous. Some of the more popular are Dr Atkins' Health revolution and New diet revolution and The zone by Barry Sears. Their popularity is evidence that people are looking for a quick, effortless way to lose weight without having to curtail their dangerous love affair with rich, unhealthful foods. People are desperate to lose weight, and these books preach what people want to hear : that you can eat lots of fat, cholesterol, and saturated fat and still lose weight. This illicit romance can lead to tragic consequences.

High-protein-diet gurus usually claim that they hold the truth and that all other doctors and scientists are wrong, they promote the idea that their recommended diet is the healthiest. They would have their devotees believe there is a worldwide conspiracy of more than 3,500 scientific studies involving more than 15,000 research scientists reporting a relationship between the consumption of meats, poultry, eggs, and dairy products and the incidence of heart disease, cancer, kidney failure, constipation, gallstones, diverticulosis, and hemorrhoids, just to name a few health problems.

Reviewing and understanding both the positive and negative aspects of various popular diets will aid in your understanding of nutritional science in general...

The Atkins' cancer revolution

Robert Atkins' books, as well as other authors advocating high-protein weight-loss plans recommend diets for health and weight loss with significantly more animal protein than is typically consumed by the average American. Americans already eat approximately 40 percent of their calories from animal products : we have seen a tragic sky-rocketing in cancer and heart disease rates in the past fifty years as a result of such nutritional extravagance. You can lose some weight on the Atkins' Diet, but you run the risk of losing your health at the same time.

Atkins recommends that you eat primarily high-fat, high-protein, fiberless animal foods and attempt to eliminate carbohydrates from your diet. His menus average 60-70 percent of calories from fat and contain no whole grains, no starchy vegetables and no fruit. Though it would be wrong to say that animal foods are the sole cause of cancer, it is now clear that increased consumption of animal products combined with the decreased consumption of fresh produce has the most powerful effect on increasing one's risk for cancer. Atkins convinces his followers that he knows better than leading nutritional research scientists who proclaim that 'meat consumption is an important factor in the etiology of human cancer.'

Dr. Atkins' books actually recommend such foods as fried pork rinds, heavy cream, and bacon cheeseburgers. The first page of Dr. Atkins' Health Revolution states : "Imagine loosing weight with a diet that lets you have bacon and eggs for breakfast, heavy cream in your coffee, plenty of meat and even salad with dressing for lunch and dinner!" A meat-based low-fiber diet, like the one Atkins advocates could more than double your risk of certain cancers...

It is not only that his menu plans are incredibly high in saturated fat, it is that Atkins' menus prohibit and restrict the foods known to offer powerful protection against cancer. Fruit consumption shows a powerful dose-response association with a reduction in heart-disease, cancer, and all cause mortality. The Atkins' Diet, along with other similar plans, is virtually the opposite of the one dictated by our primate heritage. It utilizes instead the precise foods that science has established as the primary causes of cancer and heart attacks, and specifically excludes the foods that have been shown to have a powerful anti-cancer effect. Then you are told to take hundreds of dollars of supplements each month to make up for the deficiencies... A meat-based low-fiber diet, like the one Atkins advocates could more than double your risk of certain cancers...

The *Atkins' Diet* contains :

FIBER	5.4 gm
PROTEIN	188 gm
FAT	167 gm
SATURATED FAT	60 gm
CARBOHYDRATES	67 gm
SODIUM	5,920 gm
VITAMIN C	30 gm
CALCIUM	543 gm
MAGNESIUM	187 gm

The *Eat to Live* Diet* contains :

77 gm
60 gm
19 gm
2 gm
314 gm
592 gm
625 gm
877 gm
593 gm

IRON	18 gm	22 gm
VITAMIN E	17 iu	22 iu
FOLATE	316 mcg	1,242 mcg

The EAT TO LIVE menu has fewer calories and almost no saturated fat and is much higher in fiber and other (anti-cancer) plant-derived nutrients.

An obese individual following the Atkins' Diet may derive some marginal benefit if he or she can use it successfully to keep his or her weight down, because of all the various adverse medical complications associated with obesity and because the added supplements provide some missing micronutrients. However, no matter how many supplements are taken and how much psyllium fiber is prescribed, it is simply impossible to make up for so many important nutrients that have never met the inside of a vitamin jar, and no supplement gymnastics can ever offset the destructive effects of so much animal food and so little fibrous produce.

High-fat diets are unquestionably associated with obesity, and eating meat actually correlates with weight gain, not weight loss, unless you radically cut carbs from your diet to maintain a chronic ketosis. Researchers from the American Cancer Society followed 79,236 individuals over ten years and found that those who ate meat more than three times per week were much more likely to gain weight as the years went by than those who tended to avoid meat. The more vegetables the participants ate, the more resistant they were to weight gain.

It is difficult to imagine a physician, practicing as a nutritional expert, selling millions of books while recommending 60 grams of disease-promoting saturated fat a day. Telling people what they want to hear sells books, products, and services. Atkins continues to make irresponsible statements in support of his dangerous advice. Take, for example, statements from his Winter 2001, "Health Revelations Special Report" : "Reverse heart disease with filet mignon!" / "Stop strokes with cheese!" / "Prevent breast cancer with butter!"

The worst part is that most people do not have a comprehensive knowledge of the world's nutritional literature and research and therefore are not in a position to evaluate his fraudulent claims."

Ketone metabolism

Some of you may wonder how these high-protein diets work. How can you eat all the fat and grease that you want and still lose weight?... We are designed just like the other large primates, to survive predominantly on plant foods rich in carbohydrates. When the human body finds that it does not have enough carbohydrates to run its 'machinery' properly, it produces ketones, an emergency fuel that can be utilized in times of crisis.

At rest, the brain consumes about 80 percent of our energy needs. Under normal conditions, the brain can utilize only glucose as fuel. However, the human organism has a remarkable adaptation that enables it to survive for long periods of time without food.

In the first few days of no carbohydrate fuel (food), the body's glucose reserves dwindle and the only way we can produce enough fuel for our hungry brain is by breaking down muscle tissue to manufacture glucose. Glucose cannot be manufactured from fat. Fortunately, our body has a built-

in mechanism that allows us to conserve our muscle tissue by metabolizing a more efficient energy source - our fat supply.

After a day or two of not eating, the body dips into its fat reserves to produce ketones as an emergency fuel. As the level of ketones rise in our bloodstream, the brain accepts ketones as an alternative fuel. In this manner, we conserve muscle and increase survival during periods of food deprivation, such as fasting.

Atkins' dietary recommendations prey on this survival mechanism. When we restrict carbohydrates so markedly, the body thinks we are calorically deprived and ketosis results. The body begins to lose fat, even if we are consuming plenty of high-fat foods, as Atkins recommends. Once you stop the diet, you'll gain all the weight back and more. If you stay on the diet, you risk a premature death. Take your pick. Once you start consuming carbohydrate-containing fruits, vegetables, or beans, the ketosis ends and the meat and fat become fattening again. Meat consumption leads to weight gain, unless you have caused a carbohydrate-deficiency ketosis.

To make matters even worse, you pay an extra penalty from a diet so high in fat and protein to generate a chronic ketosis. Besides the increased cancer risk, your kidneys are placed under greater stress and will age more rapidly. It can take many, many years for such damage to be detected by blood tests. By the time the blood reflects the abnormality, irreversible damage may have already occurred...

Enter the Barry Sears' danger zone

The zone, by Barry Sears, Ph.D., is another weight-loss book that has attracted much attention. Sears promises permanent weight loss and improved health and energy by eating more protein and fat... Are his extraordinary claims true, or just more scientific-sounding silliness? Unfortunately, most people do not have the scientific background to see through Sear's false claims and inaccurate pseudo science.

Sears' menu plans are less dangerous than Atkins', because he permits small amounts of fruit and starchy vegetables. But his gimmick of narrowly focusing on eicosanoid production (while ignoring the many other biochemical causes of disease) gives his book a failing grade with legitimate nutritional scientists. Sears advocates eating a measured portion of concentrated protein, starch, and fat at every meal and snack. His theory is that doing so will ease glucose more gently into the blood, avoiding swings in insulin secretion. He considers these swings the critical factor in driving the production of the bad inflammatory hormones, called eicosanoids.

Throughout his book, he portrays carbohydrates as the cause of the increasing girth of Americans. Sears and Atkins, as well as other high-protein advocates, argue that the continual growth in the abdominal girth of Americans is the result of misguided nutritional advice advocating lower fat consumption. They claim that low-fat diets are the cause of obesity and are actually dangerous...

Here is Sears' major error :

His claim that Americans have dramatically cut their fat intake is incorrect. In fact, nationally recognized food surveys, such as the National Food Consumption Survey and the National Health and Nutrition Survey, indicate that Americans consume somewhere between 34 and 37 percent of

their calories from fat. Americans are still eating a very high fat diet. They are eating more meals outside the home, relying more heavily on convenience foods, and consuming larger food portions.

Weight has increased in America simply, because total calorie consumption has risen and activity or exercise has fallen. Our diets are more nutrient-deficient than ever. Precisely balancing your protein and fat intake to enter some hypothetical 'zone' will not make you lose weight, unless you have reduced calorie consumption. Numerous epidemiological and clinical trials have shown that diets low in fat and high in complex carbohydrates correlate with lower body weights worldwide. High-fat diets always show a direct response relationship not only to obesity but also to heart attacks and cancer.

Recommended books

Robert J. Warren, M.D., Fellow, American College of Surgery and Orthopedic Surgery

* *Eat to live* by Dr. Joel Fuhrman (medical doctor), published by Little, Brown and Company

The Hallelujah Health Tip

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