

THE BEST DIET for your HEALTH

Rising chronic diseases, linked to our Western diet, can be healed with different food choices



In September 2005, the *American Journal of Medicine* released a study of participants showing that a low-fat, plant-based diet is more effective at helping people lose weight and improve insulin-sensitivity than an omnivorous (both plant and meat) diet.

By Dorothy Merritt, MD

Experts disagree on the right diet for optimum health and vitality. Low carb? Low fat? High protein? Or, none of the above?

While diet advice is plentiful, Americans remain the most obese people in the world with 34 percent of our adult population classified as obese. In addition, chronic diseases like diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer are thriving. More than 133 million Americans, or 45 percent of the population, have at least one chronic condition, and 26 percent have multiple chronic conditions. Chronic disease is the leading cause of death and disability in the U.S.

By 2023, the picture is predicted to worsen, with more than a 50 percent increase projected in cases of cancer, mental disorders, and diabetes, and more than a 40 percent growth in heart disease.

Could it be that the typical Western diet is killing us? That is the conclusion of the China Study, a research project that culminated in a 20-year partnership between Cornell University, Oxford University, and the Chinese Academy of Preventive Medicine.

The Research

T. Colin Campbell, PhD, was one of the lead scientists on the China Study project. He grew up on a dairy farm and believed that the American diet was the best in the world. Then, his career as a biochemist and research scientist lead him to a project in the Philippines working with malnourished children. The primary goal of the project was to ensure that the children

were getting as much protein as possible. He discovered that many Filipino children were being diagnosed with liver cancer, predominately an adult disease.

“In this project, I uncovered a dark secret,” Dr. Campbell says. “Children who ate the highest protein diets were the ones most likely to get liver cancer.” He began to review other reports from around the world that reflected the findings of his research in the Philippines, and started an in-depth study into the role of nutrition, especially protein, in the cause of cancer. The research became the China Study, the most comprehensive study of nutrition ever conducted.

The China Study produced more than 8000 statistically significant associations between various dietary factors and disease.

The China Study book examines the relationship between the consumption of animal products and illnesses such as breast, prostate, colon and other cancers, diabetes, heart disease, obesity, autoimmune disease, osteoporosis, and degenerative brain disease. It has sold over 500,000 copies since January 2011, making it one of America’s best-selling books about nutrition.

The authors’ findings reveal that people who eat the most animal-based foods get the most chronic disease. People who eat the most plant-based foods are the healthiest and tend to avoid chronic disease. These findings, published in highly reputable scientific journals, show that:

- Dietary change can enable diabetic patients to go off their medication.
- Heart disease can be reversed with diet alone.

- Breast cancer is related to levels of female hormones in the blood, which are determined by the foods we eat.
- Antioxidants, found in fruits and vegetables, are linked to better mental performance in old age.
- Type 1 diabetes, one of the most devastating diseases for children, is convincingly linked to infant feeding practices.

The China Study also examines the source of nutritional confusion produced by powerful lobbies, government entities, and opportunistic scientists. Dr. Campbell says, “As a taxpayer who foots the bill for research and health policy in America, you deserve to know that many of the common notions you have been told about food, health and disease are wrong.”

The Western Diet

Our food is processed, refined, concentrated, sugared, salted, and chemically engineered to produce taste sensations high in calories and low in nutrients. Our cattle are fattened in feedlots without exercise and with antibiotics and growth enhancers, producing juicier steaks containing nearly twice as much fat as range-fed cattle.

Despite the fact that they are important for maintaining overall good health and preventing diseases, most Americans don't eat enough fruits and vegetables. Eating a diet that contains at least 5 to 9 servings of fruits and vegetables every day lowers the risk for chronic diseases.

And we eat too much. On average, the amount of food consumed per person has increased by nearly 20 percent between the mid 1960s and late 1990s. As overall food consumption is increasing, the fat content of our diet is changing. We are eating more unhealthy saturated fatty acids and hydrogenated oils.

Taking multivitamins doesn't solve our problems either—it is impossible to capture all of the vitamins, minerals, disease-fighting phytochemicals, and fiber found in fruits and vegetables, in a pill.

Villains of the Western diet, like low fiber, high fat, and cholesterol, take their toll by damaging the body's vital oxygen-carrying arteries and by upsetting important metabolic functions. Because of thickened, narrowed and hardened arteries, 4,000 Americans succumb to heart disease and have heart attacks every day. Because of disordered metabolisms from unbalanced lifestyles, obesity is an epidemic and a new diabetic is diagnosed every 50 seconds.

The Plant-Based Diet

Western ideas of nutrition are quickly changing as an abundance of scientific evidence proves that a lifestyle based on quality plant-based foods can prevent, treat and reverse many major diseases, and greatly improve overall health. Also, public awareness and concern is growing over the impact of modern factory-style animal farming methods on our health and the environment.

The antioxidants in plants protect the body from free radical damage, which leads to disease. Animal protein increases the acidity of blood and tissues and, to neutralize this acid, calcium is pulled from the bones. Higher concentrations of calcium

THE CHINA STUDY'S EIGHT PRINCIPLES OF FOOD AND HEALTH:

1. Nutrition represents the combined activities of countless food substances. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.
2. Vitamin supplements are not a panacea for good health.
3. There are virtually no nutrients in animal-based foods that are not better provided by plants.
4. Genes do not determine disease on their own. Genes function only by being activated, or expressed, and nutrition plays a critical role in determining which genes, good and bad, are expressed.
5. Nutrition can substantially control the adverse effects of noxious chemicals.
6. The same nutrition that prevents disease in its early stages can also halt or reverse it in its later stages.
7. Nutrition that is truly beneficial for one chronic disease will support health across the board.
8. Good nutrition creates health in all areas of our existence. All parts are interconnected.

in the blood inhibit the process by which the body activates vitamin D in the kidneys to calcitriol, a form that helps regulate the immune system.

Transitioning toward a plant-based diet is much easier than most people expect. As with changing any other lifetime habit, many people do it in small steps.

Start by eating more of the plant-based meals you already eat, like whole grain cereal, pasta, rice and salads. Add more plant foods to the mixed meals you are eating. Shift the balance of plant and animal foods toward more plants—the ones you already eat and enjoy. Eliminate the animal foods you don't eat often.

Today there is increased social acceptance and respect for people choosing plant-based diets. There are more restaurant options, an abundance of incredible recipes online, cookbooks, and ingredients available at most major supermarkets. Discover a new world of flavors and variety, as well as many options similar or nearly identical to “traditional” foods and desserts.

Within no time you will begin feeling and looking better. And the best news of all: you will avoid becoming another chronic disease statistic. ☘

Visit www.ChangeMediaOnline.com for our favorite vegan recipes and book recommendations!



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