

Nutritional Fact Sheet

*The foods you eat can affect your energy,
your concentration and your athletic performance.*

Learn how eating excessive amounts of animal-based food can be harmful to your health.

Cholesterol

All human cells contain cholesterol. We need it to live. However, our body makes all the cholesterol it needs. We never need to actually have cholesterol in our diets. Animals make their own cholesterol too. That's why when we eat meat, fish, poultry and dairy products, we are eating the cholesterol made by those animals and adding it to the cholesterol our own bodies manufacture. This is the main cause of too much cholesterol. Even lean meat contains cholesterol.

Why is cholesterol harmful? Consider this: In the countries of North America and Europe where people consume large quantities of cholesterol, heart disease is the number one cause of death, killing more people than all other diseases. One of the main causes of heart disease is excess cholesterol.

What Foods Contain Cholesterol?

Cholesterol is found only in animal foods such as beef, chicken, pork, turkey, fish, eggs, butter, cheese, yogurt, milk and ice cream. No plant foods contain cholesterol. If these are the foods you are eating and you have been eating them for some time, medical studies show that you may have plaque buildup in your arteries right now, no matter what your age.¹

This is how you go about reducing the cholesterol in your diet: Eat more foods made from plants, like spaghetti, breads, cereals, fruits, vegetables, grains, beans, nuts or seeds. You can enjoy these foods and be free from the worry of consuming excess cholesterol.

If that sounds easy, it is.

Saturated Fat

Foods that have cholesterol also tend to be high in thick, heavy fats called saturated fats. Saturated fats, like cholesterol, contribute to heart disease and cancer. Most plant foods are very low in saturated fat except for some tropical plant oils like palm and coconut oil that are naturally saturated.

Many vegetable oils have been artificially saturated, or "hydrogenated," as the process is often called. They are commonly used in processed junk foods like candy bars, donuts, and french fries. They should be avoided. Read labels to learn how many products contain "partially hydrogenated" fats.

By reducing or eliminating your consumption of animal foods, you will automatically reduce your consumption of cholesterol and saturated fat. This will help your body stay leaner and your arteries cleaner. You will dramatically reduce your risk of developing heart disease and many other diet-related diseases² such as stroke, breast cancer, colon cancer, diabetes and obesity.

What About Protein?

If you eat spaghetti instead of steak, or leave the cheese off the burrito, will you get enough protein?

Protein is what your body uses to make muscle, bone, skin and almost every other kind of cell. However, your body needs less than you think. Enough protein just about equals the amount that 10 pennies weigh. However, most Americans eat 3 to 4 times that much. There is concern that all this excess protein may overwork the kidneys and weaken the bones.³

The Protein Myth

Over the years many people have come to believe that animal protein is of higher quality than plant protein. Our biological needs for protein are easily met by eating a wide variety of mostly plant foods. The once popular belief that one must carefully combine plant proteins in order for them to be as useful to the body as animal proteins has since been found to be untrue.⁴ The good news is that most people can live healthy lives on a vegetarian diet.⁵ Gorillas eat plant foods only. Do they appear to lack protein?

Where Can You Get Your Protein?

The same place strong, fast race-

horses get theirs. From eating plant foods solely. Any varied diet that provides enough calories automatically meets a healthy person's protein needs. Many people, including some world-class athletes and bodybuilding champions, choose to eat no animal protein whatsoever and they enjoy excellent health as well as top performance.

Milk

Milk and dairy products are perfect for rapidly growing baby calves but not for human beings. Many people mistakenly believe that if they don't drink milk they will suffer from calcium deficiency. However, most people around the world grow up healthy without ever drinking cow's milk. They have strong bones because they get all the calcium they need from the calcium-rich plant foods in their diet such as broccoli, sweet potatoes, baked beans, figs, seeds, nuts and nut butters such as almond and cashew. Calcium-fortified orange juice is as rich in calcium as cow's milk without all the cholesterol and saturated fat. Soy, rice and almond milk are also great replacements for cow's milk. Other products made from these sources include delicious desserts resembling many flavors of ice cream.

There is also some sound scientific evidence showing that the protein and fat in milk and dairy products may also be one of the causes of many common illnesses such as asthma⁶ and anemia⁷ (iron deficiency). Allergies can be caused or made worse by dairy products. Symptoms from these and other common childhood ailments often disappear completely when nonessential foods such as milk, butter, cheese and ice cream are eliminated from the diet. Remember too, that even low-fat milk still contains cholesterol and animal proteins.

Are You Worried About Iron?

No hamburgers? Are we going to become anemic? As with calcium, iron is abundant in plant foods, especially dried fruits and dark leafy greens. Until

recently, most people in China consumed almost no meat and their iron content was higher than most Americans.⁸ When there is sufficient vitamin C in your diet, as when you eat lots of fresh fruits and vegetables, the iron you eat is more easily absorbed by the body.

What Can You Eat?

Rather than a major overhaul of your entire diet, realize that you are probably already eating most of the right foods. You get more than adequate protein, energy, vitamins and minerals from whole grains, breads, potatoes, pastas, legumes (beans and lentils) and fresh fruits and vegetables. These foods can be enjoyed in soups, stews, salads and sandwiches and tasty ethnic dishes like spaghetti, veggie pizza, curried veggies, and Asian foods.

To Concerned Parents

In 1988, the U.S. Surgeon General reported that 68% of all deaths in this country resulted from diet-related diseases.⁹ Many of these diseases have their origin in childhood.¹⁰ Diets high in saturated fat, protein and cholesterol, substances found primarily in meat, poultry and dairy products, play a major causative role in diseases like heart attack, stroke, other cardiovascular diseases, adult-onset diabetes, osteoporosis, kidney disease and cancers of the breast, prostate and colon.¹¹

Less life-threatening disorders like food allergies,¹² psoriasis,¹³ rheumatoid arthritis,¹⁴ obesity,¹⁵ constipation,¹⁶ kidney stones,¹⁷ hemorrhoids,¹⁸ hiatus hernia,¹⁹ diverticulitis²⁰ and irritable bowel syndrome²¹ are also linked to a high-fat, low-fiber diet based on meat, poultry and dairy products. These diseases create needless widespread suffering and drive up national health care expenditures.

The good news is that more physicians and nutritionists²² are beginning to understand that high-fat meat, poultry and dairy products are main culprits in these diseases and fortunately not essential for healthy human nutrition. They are also discovering that there are great benefits to a diet rich in plant foods.

Consider for a moment that three-

fourths of the world eat a predominately plant-based diet, and medical studies show that people who consume such a diet have lower cholesterol,²³ lower blood pressure²⁴ and lower rates of osteoporosis²⁵ and of cancers.²⁶ In countries like China where rice and vegetables is the norm, far fewer heart attacks occur and children live a healthy lifestyle free of many of the diseases American children suffer. So when your children say they'd rather have pasta or rice and vegetables instead of a greasy cheeseburger or fatty milk shake and fries, don't be alarmed. Commend them and acknowledge their wisdom in wanting to have clean arteries, low blood pressure and healthy adult lives.

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