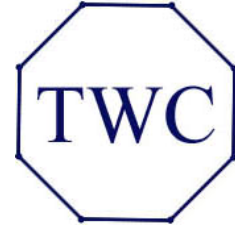


Total Wellness Concepts

June 2010 Newsletter
By Steve Seater, MA, CN, CNC, CPT



Everything we know about diets, fat and cholesterol is wrong.



Millions of Americans are on some kind of fad diet in the hopes of losing weight and improving their health. It is probably safe to say that America is obsessed with dieting and yet we are getting more and more obese as a nation. Being overweight is related to eating the wrong kinds of foods as well as inactivity and it takes a very definite change in life style to lose weight and keep it off. Unfortunately few overweight Americans achieve this goal.

Many of today's popular fad diets are actually harmful. Currently, ultra low-carbohydrate, and high protein diets are in vogue such as the Atkins Diet, the South Beach Diet and the Zone Diet. These diets stress little or no carbohydrate consumption from sweets, white bread, pasta, starchy vegetables like French fries (America's most popular vegetable), and in some cases even fruits and green vegetables. However, you can eat plenty of meat, eggs, cheese, and other high protein, high fat foods.

On the other extreme are ultra low fat, high carbohydrate diets, such as the Pritikin Diet and Ornish Diet, also not healthy because your body needs many kinds of fat to function properly. Fats are essential in the formation of cell membranes and bile, vitamin D, and hormones such as testosterone and estrogen, as well as for the production of energy. The consumption of too much long chain saturated fat found in meat, is not that good for many people because it is the kind of fat the body stores and it may contribute to obesity. However, I don't believe that saturated fat is nearly as bad as the low fat proponents claim as we shall see later on. Fats in general are essential to life and our bodies must have an adequate supply as well as the right balance of saturated, monosaturated and unsaturated fatty acids. Some authorities believe that a consequence of ingesting too little fat increases the risk of cancer. However, high fat diets appear correlated with higher rates of cancer at least in some people. Robert M. Kradjian, MD, believes that populations that are largely vegetarian have lower incidences of breast cancer and in countries where women consume lots of meat and have high intakes of saturated and trans fats, such as margarine and shortening, the risk of breast cancer is high. There may, however, be several other factors involved where cancer is concerned such as vitamin D deficiency. Furthermore, recent research demonstrates that it is not meat itself which causes cancer but what is in the meat and how the meat is cooked. A diet that includes moderate fat intake and which includes plenty of essential fats may be best for most people. Trans fats such as are found in margarine and shortening should be avoided since they interfere with the integrity of cell membranes which may be a cause of cancer.

Furthermore, people on a very low fat, high carbohydrate diet also don't lose as much body fat as you might expect because the burning of fat is actually inhibited by the high carbohydrate intake.

In reviewing the results of dietary studies, the most reliable studies are those with lots of participants and that last for many years, known as longitudinal studies, such as the Framingham study which has lasted for 30 plus years and originally had more than 5,000 participants. The current director of the Framingham Study is William Castelli, MD. He is quoted as saying that "At Framingham, we found that people who ate the most saturated fat, the most cholesterol and the most calories weighed the least, were more physically active and had the lowest serum cholesterol levels." You might respond by saying "but we all know that fat is higher in calories than carbs or protein so how can this be true." Well in the Schwarzbein Principle, by Diana Schwarzbein, MD, she explains that when scientists evaluated foods in the laboratory for calorie content they were broken down to their basic elements such as carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, hydrogen, etc. The human body does not do this. Instead protein is broken down to amino acids, carbohydrates are broken down to simple sugars and fats are broken down to fatty acids. So counting calories is not very accurate and should be abandoned. Walter Willet, MD, DPH, chairman of the department of nutrition at Harvard School of Public Health, who is also the spokesman for longest-running, most comprehensive diet and health study ever performed that involves almost 300,000 individuals says that the data from this study contradict the belief that low fat diets are good for most people. In fact, Dr. Willet says that "the idea that all fat is bad for you; the exclusive focus on adverse effects of fat may have contributed to the obesity epidemic."

Remember that when discussing the popular fad diets, each diet is, whether high in protein/fat like the Atkins Diet, or low in protein and fat like the Ornish or Pritikin Diets, is promoted as the ideal diet for everyone. In other words: one size fits all. But this is absurd since they are diametrically opposed. So if high protein/very low-carbohydrate diets are not the answer for most people and neither are very low fat high carbohydrate diets, how should we eat? The answer is that we should strive to pattern our diets after what our stone-age ancestors ate, i.e., foods found in the environments they lived in and to which they had become adapted after many generations. The problem is that there are many such environments and many traditional diets.

Scientists are pretty much in agreement that humans evolved in their modern form by the Paleolithic or Old Stone Age in East Africa. They were hunter gatherers eating a mostly vegetarian diet with some animal products in the form of insects, small reptiles, amphibians, and bird's eggs. As weapons came into existence fish and large game were also included in the diet as has been documented by archaeological discoveries. These game animals were free ranging with far less body fat than our domesticated cattle and pigs. Furthermore, these animals were free of hormones, antibiotics and pesticides. Also there is no evidence that any populations were truly vegan. This seems to be a more modern choice based on religious or ethical considerations.

Some humans have evolved and become adapted to diets very high in protein and fat. Eskimos are the best example. Their traditional diet consists of 90 or more percent of animal foods and contains enormous quantities of fat from seal and whale blubber, as well as from fatty cold water fish and almost nothing in the way of carbohydrates. And yet these people who eat their traditional diet do not suffer from heart disease the way most Americans do today or the way Eskimos do who have switched to the standard American diet.

Why is this so? It's because of something called biochemical individuality which was first discovered by the brilliant biochemist, Dr. Roger Williams. If you have read numerous books on nutrition and dieting, all have a kernel of truth but only for people who fall into a certain class of biochemical individuality or metabolic type. This is why no one diet book or diet is good for everyone. Instead, as the leading holistic physician on the Internet, Dr. Joseph Mercola says, "you should eat according to your metabolic type." A company called Healthexcel has developed a system of metabolic typing which helps pinpoint an individual's metabolic type. This idea of metabolic typing goes back to ancient India and China which recognized different constitutional types. The ancient Egyptians and Greeks were also familiar with the idea of different human constitutions requiring different foods to thrive. Today, modern medicine and conventional dietetics assume that there is one diet which is right for everyone. This is exemplified by the USDA's food pyramid, but nothing could be further from the truth as Walter Willets, MD has pointed out in several articles. The fad diets mentioned above and the food pyramid actually work for certain segments of the population but not for all segments. These approaches ignore biochemical individuality and this is why 90% fail.

Let's go back to our Eskimos and their traditional diet. An Eskimo eating the traditional diet will consume up to ten pounds a day of meat, fish, and lots of fat but almost no vegetables or fruit. Studies have revealed no traces of cancer, heart disease or Type II Diabetes in their population. This is explained by the fact that Eskimos have adapted to their environment for hundreds of generations through evolutionary forces and became perfectly suited to eating the foods that were plentiful in their environment. They developed a need for a high protein, high fat diet. Similarly, other people adapted to different environments and became dependent on a more vegetarian diet such as is eaten by East Indians who actually require much less animal protein in their diet than do most other people. Feeding the Eskimo an East Indian diet or vice versa will lead to metabolic dysfunction and degenerative disease. Failure to consider metabolic type when prescribing a diet for any individual is a major reason why fad diets most often don't succeed. In fact their failure rate is about 90%.

In the past, most humans stayed put in their ancestral lands. They were adapted to their environment what ever it was and some developed genetic requirements for high protein/fat diets and others for diets high in carbohydrates. However, during the last few thousand years large numbers of humans began migrating throughout our world in search of new lands to relieve population pressure, to discover riches, or for religious and political freedom so that today the western world and, especially America, has become a melting pot with a very mixed genetic population. However, each of us no matter how mixed our genome may be must still acquire the nutrients for which we have a genetic requirement or suffer the

consequences. Therefore, to be in tune with your genetic make up you need to eat according to your metabolic type.

There are three major metabolic types: the protein/fat type, the carbohydrate type, and the mixed type. The protein type requires lots of animal protein and fat in the diet and little carbohydrate, Eskimos being the most extreme example. According to Dr. Mary Enig and Sally Fallon in their book *Eat Fat Lose Fat*, the Masai of East Africa are another such people whose diet consists almost entirely of meat, milk and blood and whose consumption of butterfat averages about three quarters of a pound a day but whose risk of heart disease is very low. People in this category would do well on the Atkins diet which emphasizes very low carbohydrate intake and high protein and fat consumption. The carbohydrate type is exemplified by the vegetarian East Indians who are adapted to a largely plant based diet, but who may occasionally eat some animal foods such as yogurt, milk and eggs. They would do best on a low fat, low meat diet like the Ornish or Pritikin diet. The mixed types are the most numerous in the Western world and are true omnivores that should eat most whole foods available. However, there is great variability within this group and there are many foods which are unsuitable for many of its members. Some examples are foods to which many people are allergic. Nuts, some shellfish, unfermented soy, grains containing gluten, foods containing sulfites, or foods in the nightshade family are good examples. Food allergies are more common than once thought and if you suspect that you may be allergic to a food you can get tested. There are many gradations within the mixed group. In my case, I am a mixed type but tending toward being a protein type. Therefore a diet reasonably high in animal foods but also incorporating lots of complex carbohydrates is best for me. Other predominantly mixed types tend toward the carbohydrate type.

Refined carbohydrates are bad for all three types, but worse for protein/ fat types who can't tolerate much sugar or white flour in their diets or foods made from these ingredients. Protein types that have become addicted to sweets quickly become overweight and develop degenerative diseases such as heart disease, hypertension and diabetes. Much the same is true for mixed types, but small amounts of pasta, white rice, an occasional cookie or dough nut can be eaten with few ill effects. The Carbohydrate type may eat a bit more of this kind of food than the other types, but even here care must be taken because foods made from refined sugar and grains cause insulin resistance, obesity and ultimately diabetes. I recommend that all metabolic types avoid refined and prepared foods as much as possible because none of our ancestors evolved eating this kind of food. Consumption of foods high in sugar is a relatively recent thing within our evolutionary history and is the major cause of obesity and degenerative disease.

A genetic approach to diet has recently been developed by Massachusetts-based Interleukin which looks for mutations in three genes known as FABP2, PPARG, and ADRB2. The company says that 39 percent of white Americans have a low fat genotype, 45 percent have a genotype that responds to a diet low in processed carbohydrates, and an unlucky 16 percent have a genotype that means they must watch their intake of both fats and processed carbohydrates. The test which costs only \$149 isn't perfected for use by people of other races yet. Since I have not done this kind of testing, I can't recommend it, but it does sound

promising. To find out more about the test and to order it go to Interleuken Genetics at www.ilgenetics.com.

For more information on this topic come to my talk scheduled for Tuesday, July 13 at the Village of Friendship Heights at 6:15pm. Registration is \$30. Food and refreshments will be served.

If you have any questions about your diet or how to adopt a therapeutic lifestyle, which is without question the most powerful tool there is to positively impact your health for the rest of your life call me at 240-888-5453 or 240-345-7328. You can also visit my web site at www.totalwellnessconcepts.com. Please also note that my email address has changed to steve_seater@yahoo.com. Be Well.

Steve Seater, CPT, CNC, CN, is a life long fitness enthusiast with a strong interest in holistic nutrition and wellness. He is a certified nutritionist (CN), and a certified nutrition consultant (CNC). Additionally, he is a certified personal trainer (CPT) and a certified spinning instructor.