

Healthy Thoughts

I am sitting here at work thinking about surviving the recession. One thing for certain is that I won't be going out to eat all the time. And to reduce getting destroyed by the stress of cash flow problems I want to eat healthy and avoid adding to problems with high cholesterol and high blood pressure. While both of these have hereditary tendencies, they also are of course affected by what we put in our mouths and a reasonable aerobic exercise plan. We can't control our genes, but we can do a great deal to allow our bodies to fight the odds and stay healthy in this high stress at times frustrating world.

We are not herbivores and I am not an advocate by any means of vegetarian diets. We digest vegetables horribly. However we as a species are omnivores, which means we by our structure and digestive system from our teeth to our anus so to speak are made to eat a balanced variety of food types. We do not have a four chamber stomach like ruminants (cows, sheep, goats); nor do we have a 7 foot long cecum like the horse and other related animals with hooves animals. Our stomach and upper intestine is perfect for digesting meats and not too efficient in breaking down fiber. Our cecum is inches long not 7 feet and our stomach relies on stomach acid and then upper intestinal pancreatic enzymes process the breaking down nutrients. A ruminant animal regurgitates the fibrous products multiple times and re chews and swallows the food again and again to help in a fermentation process which breaks down the fiber into useable nutrients. Most of our fiber comes out our anus intact. We need fibrous foods and vegetables to balance our vitamins and carbohydrate needs to round out our balanced diet.

The only foods containing all or most of our essential amino acids needed to build body proteins are meats (beef, pork, chicken, fish, lamb etc. Yes all of these are meats from the animal kingdom). Egg is the most complete of them all. To balance the amino acids with vegetable only diets are difficult and cumbersome. Beans, like soy, pinto and black beans have many but not all of the essential amino acids. We need a good balance of salads, vegetables, some starches, and good quality lean meats. We should cook low fat with waterless cookware, reduced fat cooking, broiling either on a grill or in oven, roasting if on a rack etc and always trim the fat before cooking. We don't need 24 oz cuts of meat to satisfy our needs but more like 6-10 oz, balanced with lots of salads, veggies and fruits. Cook with quality multi-element stainless steel cookware the best being waterless steam control, and use good quality stainless steel cutlery and life will be easier. So get out your silverware, set the table and enjoy a great, Home cooked meal.

Have fun.

James Mawhinney

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About the Author

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