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**a20. Diets, High Protein, High Fats**

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All diets work, no diets work. Why is this statement correct? Any diet will take weight off if you drop the total calories enough. However, no diet will keep your weight off long term. To keep weight off long term you need to learn new behaviours, a new eating lifestyle and a new exercise lifestyle. And, even if you learn new behaviours you will only be successful to a moderate degree that your inherited genetic makeup will allow. Only 5% of people keep weight off long term. Better to 'LEARN TO BE FIT' and worry less about the weight loss.

The Zone diet is popular now in the late 1990's and early 2000's. Probably the authors have overstated how much fat you should eat. Most professionals including me, would suggest a fat percentage in the 20 - 25 % range not the 30% that they suggest with the Zone Diet.

It is interesting that this diet says always eat protein with your carbohydrates. The Fit for life diet, by the Harvey and Marilyn Diamond, taught never to eat protein with your carbohydrates. It can be confusing. Just keep in mind that all these people in the nutrition field want to carve out a name for themselves and they do that by being different than the others.

Well balanced meal plans are the smart way to go. Do you remember the research that shows that the less you eat the longer you will live, provided you are properly nourished? Leaving the table before you feel stuffed is the smart way to eat.

**Protein**

Building blocks! Proteins are large complex foods built of chains of amino acids. Amino acids are molecules with nitrogen in them built into a specific pattern that is stable. There are 21 different amino acids and about 8 of them are ESSENTIAL and have to be eaten every day to be healthy. They are used in almost all tissues of the body. Hormones and enzymes are proteins or partially proteins.

We need about 60 grams (2 ounces) of protein a day. Most of us in North America eat more than twice that every day. Athletes on a training schedule who are trying to gain muscle mass should be very careful because too much protein will hinder performance. Positive nitrogen balance is important when building muscle but you should refer to the charts for calculating the amount of protein needed for your particular training schedule and goals. Athletes will know about these charts.

Some newer research on the caveman diet is suggesting that traditional estimates of protein needs may be low. Caveman apparently ate around a 40 to 60 percent protein diet at least at

certain times of the year. Our genes, inherited from the cave man, are programmed to produce enzymes that digest meat. Elastin is found only in animal tissues and humans have a gene that produces enzymes to digest it. Humans are intended to eat meat. The question is how much? Higher protein diets may not be all that harmful to humans. We will have to wait for more research to shed light on this topic.

Eating a high protein diet, (often this is also a high fat diet), will take weight off. Remember, lowering calories will also take weight off. Even eating a 100% fat diet at 1000 calories a day will take weight off in most people. But, is this healthy?

Eating the high protein (low calorie) diet makes the body burn the protein for fuel. Protein is very dirty to burn. The waste product urea, is toxic and has to be eliminated from the body. So the urine is increased to flush it away. But, this also flushes away minerals including calcium. This extra load on the kidneys may not be good for some people and may lead to osteoporosis. The toxicity to the liver may also not be good for you. Diabetics may be susceptible. The best diet for diabetics is probably the high complex carbohydrate, high fibre, low glycemic (low insulin producing foods like sugar and starches), and low energy dense foods.

When trying to lose weight initial weight loss is mostly water. The water weight loss will return when you begin to eat your regular foods again.

### **Fats**

The high fat diet????? Not high in calories, but high in the ratio of fats to the other food types. This is the Atkins diet. Heart disease and cancers have been linked to fat consumption so why would you want to eat this way? Well, weight comes off. Yes, but, any diet low in calories will take weight off. The problem is hunger and willpower to stay hungry. Most people cannot do that. Most people are conditioned by our society for comfort.

The high fat consumption would be a 'thrombogenic' diet according to some people 'in the know'. Thrombogenic means plugging of blood vessels leading to heart attacks and strokes.

The high fat diet forces the body to burn fat for fuel so yes weight does come down. But, first the glycogen stores will be burned for quick energy and along with that, the water will be expelled. Early weight loss is mostly water. Because all the glycogen stores are depleted on a high fat diet then there is no source of ready quick energy. This can lead to tiredness and fatigue. And, another thing, this kind of a diet is not well balanced so you may likely be lacking in food enzymes and minerals that you only get from vegetables and fruits, Flavonoids for instance.

Don't expect a multi vitamin and mineral to supply all that is missing. Vitamin supplements only supply what we know about. There are many food factors that we do not know about that benefit us and are contained in a variety of foods. In my opinion this high fat diet is probably the worst diet of all.