

[IMAGE]

The S.A.D. Truth About Weight Gain

It's Time to Break Free of the Disease Diet

By Dr. Donald L. Hayes

Are you familiar with the *Standard American Diet*? You may not know the term, but chances are you or someone you know has experience with it and may be suffering the consequences. If you were to list the factors that increase the risk of weight gain, cancer, heart disease, stroke, intestinal disorders - just about any illness, in fact - the Standard American Diet (SAD) has them all: high in animal fats including dairy products; high in unhealthy fats (saturated, hydrogenated); low in fiber; high in processed foods; low in complex carbohydrates; and low in fruits, vegetables and other plant-based foods.

The SAD fact is that cultures that eat the *reverse* of the Standard American Diet - low fat, high in complex carbohydrates, fruits, vegetables and fiber, etc. - have a lower incidence of obesity, cancer and coronary artery disease. What's even more SAD is that countries whose populations can afford to eat the healthiest disease-preventing foods *don't*. America spends more money on weight loss than any country in the world, yet the American diet contributes to the very conditions we spend so much money to prevent.

The Science of Weight Gain

hamburger meal - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark Research conducted at the University of San Francisco Department of Medicine by Drs. Lynda Frassetto and Anthony Sebastian, and subsequently published in the prestigious *Journal of Gerontology*, clearly demonstrates that as we get older our bodies accumulate acid wastes. The scientists reported they found a significant increase in blood acidity and a correspondingly significant loss of alkaline reserves (which help balance out the acid in our body) with increasing age from 20 to 90 years, indicative of a progressively worsening low-level metabolic acidosis. In looking at the research, one can clearly see that the alkaline reserves of humans remain fairly constant until the age of 40, at which time they abruptly begin a linear downward spiral.

The researchers also noted that, not so coincidentally, adult degenerative diseases such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, osteoporosis, high blood pressure and others start to appear at the age of 40 and gradually worsen as we get older. They attribute the accumulation of acid and the reduction of the alkaline state as we

age to eating the Standard American Diet (SAD), and conclude that the role of age-related metabolic acidosis in the cause of adult degenerative disease warrants consideration.

An Easy Way to Lose Weight

The basic premise regarding the overproduction of acids in the body is that as countries become more "advanced and automated," eating fast foods and saturated fatty meat and dairy proteins becomes the norm. These foods are converted into strong acids that must be eliminated from the blood and or removed from the body through various organs including the kidneys. Acids tend to accumulate in the body's weakest and most devitalized joints and organs because the blood supply to these areas is usually compromised and the immune cells typically incapacitated.

Every acid molecule that passes out of the body via the kidneys must take an important "alkaline" mineral with it, which contributes to the loss of the body's alkaline reserve. So, no matter what health challenge we suffer from, or if we simply desire to lose weight or maximize our wellness potential, it all begins with re-establishing the body's depleted "alkaline reserve." The only way we can replace these vital alkalizing nutrients is by consuming a sizable portion of our daily diet in alkalizing fruits, vegetables and other plant foods.

The Power of Alkalizing Foods

Most of us have heard that diets high in fruits and vegetables can help us lose weight and reduce our risk of heart disease, cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, cataracts, macular degeneration, osteoporosis, arthritis and even wrinkles. As a matter of fact, according to the National Cancer Institute, 8 to 10 servings a day can cut our risk of some cancers in half! In 1998, the University of Naples in Italy studied an elderly population and found that those who lived the longest and were the healthiest ate a lot more fruits and vegetables than those who died before their time. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the USDA Food Guide Pyramid advocates eating 5 to 9 servings of fruits and vegetables per day for optimum health!

Food science has just recently come to realize that there is much more to micronutrient nutrition than just vitamins and minerals. Indeed, there may be well over 1,000 different plant chemicals, known as *phytochemicals*, that may have metabolic activity in humans. Further study has shown that the fruits and vegetables that come in rich vibrant colors, like tomatoes, carrots, spinach, broccoli, blueberries and raspberries, are much more potent and beneficial than the pastel-colored produce like iceberg lettuce,

bananas, celery, corn and potatoes.

Turn That SAD Frown Upside Down

As we have become more aware of the amazing and broad spectrum of health, weight-loss, and disease-preventing benefits of foods especially high in this "new" array of such micronutrients, a new name for them has arisen: superfoods. The "SAD" fact remains that in spite of all the support from mainstream medical organizations like the American Heart Association and American Diabetes Association, and governmental health organizations like the National Institutes of Health, the National Institute on Aging, the USDA, and even the U.S. Surgeon General, few of us manage to eat the recommended *minimum* of two fruits and three vegetables daily. Even counting the "pale" plant foods like French fries, green-gassed bananas and iceberg lettuce, few achieve the daily minimum. Only a small percentage of the population enjoy the optimal nine servings that emphasize fresh and organic phytochemical-dense deep-green and brightly colored fruits and vegetables!

The reasons for this lack of adequate consumption are deeply ingrained in our American culture and lifestyle, though it can no longer be attributed to ignorance. What is obviously needed is an educational initiative, along with ways for people to enjoy the benefits of fruits and vegetables. This article is an introduction for some and for others, a review of the power and importance of eating more "alkaline" fruits, vegetables and plant foods. Our SAD choices in food must change. Education and the new advances in food technologies are the keys. Talk to your doctor for more information on how you can break free of the SAD cycle of weight gain and disease to achieve your health goals.

Promoting Weight Gain and Disease:

soda - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark *The Standard American Diet*

- High in animal fats including dairy products
- High in unhealthy fats: saturated, hydrogenated
- Low in fiber
- High in processed foods
- Low in complex carbohydrates
- Low in fruits, vegetables and other plant based foods

Replacing SAD With Glad:

vegetables - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark *Sample Superfoods for Health and Wellness*

- Tomatoes
 - Carrots
 - Spinach
 - Broccoli
 - Blueberries
 - Raspberries
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Donald L. Hayes, DC, graduated from Western States Chiropractic College in 1977 and is the author of five health and wellness books including his latest, *Weight Loss to Wellness*. To learn more, visit www.greensfirst.com.

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