Dynamic Chiropractic

THE NUTRITION PRACTICE

The Carnivore Diet: Dangerous Diet Trend or Health Essential?

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Paul Saladino, MD, is the author of *The Carnivore Code*. He only eats liver, heart, spleen, kidney, pancreas, testicle, heart, bone broth and bones almost every day. He cuts plants out of the diet and eats the "nose to tail" of the animal. He relates how our ancestors and currently living indigenous groups ate the whole animal. They didn't just eat the muscle meat, because they recognized the importance of including organ meats in our diet.

The Potential Benefits of "Nose-to-Tail" Eating

The nose-to-tail approach offers collagen, which is like animal fiber. The peptides (small proteins) in collagen appear to be able to be fermented by the gut bacteria into short-chain fatty acids. Dr. Saladino suggests we can use animal protein and specifically collagenous proteins from animals, the connective tissue; and that the bacteria in our gut can use that in the same way they might use plant fiber to make short-chain fatty acids, which serve as fuel for the colonic epithelial cells. He suggests human gut bacteria can turn collagen into butyric acid.

The carnivore diet is zero plant fiber and only animal fiber. Muscle meat is rich in methionine.

One of Dr. Saladino's messages is to have selective carbs and figure out which plants are non-allergic to you. Steven Gundry, MD, popularized lectins as being harmful to everyone. It turns out certain lectin-containing vegetables (e.g., cucumbers) really aren't that bad for many people, but for some people they are destructive. We are reminded to test each person's sensitivity for various food choices including common spices(e.g., black pepper, paprika, cayenne).

Three Central Ideas to the Diet

1. *Red meat and organs have been central to the human diet* for millions of years and were critical for human evolution. Animal meat and organs belong in every healthy human diet. Dr. Saladino feels there's pretty good evidence that fish was at least as important in our evolution. He suggests occasional fish because there were lots of people who lived inland, who maybe didn't get a whole lot of fish.

2. *Plants make self-defending chemicals that are toxins in nature* (this exists on a toxicity spectrum). Dr. Saladino notes that by eliminating these plant toxins, sensitive people could improve their health. He finds some people do really well with zero plant foods in their diet; other people can have some plant foods in their diet. He's not trying to tell everyone to eat zero plants.

As a health care practitioner, I want to help my patients learn about individual toxic plants and eliminate them. For example, mycotoxins are a plant toxin, too. Many patients make vegetable shakes every morning that they blend all together. There is little consideration as to how this influences the way they feel throughout the day because the assumption is they will "feel good" by eating a vegetable / fruit shake. Yet there could be a vegetable or fruit allergy making them tired later. Seeds (i.e., grains, legumes, beans, nuts), leaves, stems, roots (e.g., cassava) and even some

fruit have toxins in them.

Clearly, eating "nose to tail with organ meats, with well-raised red meat and organs, and you will thrive" is not a catch-all (as we will see in my patient's case in part 2 of this article).

3. *Processed vegetable oils create evolutionarily inconsistent levels of linoleic acid* in the human body, and contribute to metabolic dysfunction for humans.

What's Right for the Patient?

It's hard for me to just recommend, "Eat a rainbow of vegetable foods in your diet" or just eat Paleo, or just eat keto, because one of my primary longevity goals is to get patients to eat and exercise to lose excess abdominal fat, while increasing or at least conserving muscle and bone mass. Most of the time, this is accomplished by asking patients to make smaller dietary changes and proper exercise, rather than making one big recommendation like only eat "nose to tail." My approach and message to patients is that we look for underlying metabolic dysfunction and eat to improve that.

Editor's Note: Part 2 of this article is a case study of one of Dr. Tucker's patients who pursued the carnivore diet for 30 days. How do you think the patient fared in terms of his health after one month? Find out in the May issue!

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