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Atkins: A diet revolution

Driving through the fast food restaurants of many small cities such as Coffeyville or Independence, a paradigm shift can be seen. Banners wave "We have Atkins-friendly food" which is in a sharp contrast to the junk foods served within. But, is the fatty Atkins-type diet really healthy? How about the American Heart Association which says one should greatly limit their fats and the Pritikin/Ornish that recommend mostly carbs? What about the diet of 15 years ago where high protein (Optifast) reigned? It's true, we should eat to be healthy, but most of us eat to lose or maintain our weight if we have some self control.

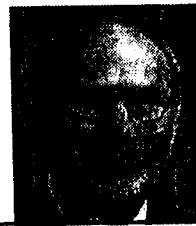
We are what we eat! The micronutrients may be more important than the macronutrients (carbs, proteins and fats). It is these substances that govern our chromosomes to shape us after we are conceived and enhance our longevity by preventing chronic diseases and cancer. It would be fare better to consume food that your grandmother suggested rather than the Standard American Diet (SAD). It's not the carbs, the proteins or the fats that are good or bad, but the specifics of these macronutrients. There are both good and bad of these categories.

Simple carbs include the sugars (glucose and fructose) and the starches which are insulin producing and that can make us fat. On the other hand, the highly complex carbs coming from the leaves and stems of plants rather than the roots or some fruits

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that do not contain phytonutrients which stimulate our genes to perform better.

In general, products from plant sources are healthier than that from animals. Almost 50 years ago, it was discovered that the plant protein contains more arginine than meat protein which contains instead, lysine. Arginine not only lowers LDL cholesterol, but improves the lining of the blood vessels and prevents atherosclerosis.

Regarding foods that are high in fats, if one consumes Omega 3's (fish oils) compared to other fats, there is much benefit. That is, if one consumes a pound of Omega 3's, there is a quarter pound of weight loss. The Omega 6's (vegetable oils) are weight neutral. With the Omega 9's (olive and peanut oil), there is a quarter pound weight gain. With saturated fats such as butter, there is half a pound weight gain. With a pound of trans-saturated fats, there is a two-pound weight gain in that the body uses other fats to dilute these toxic fats. To be forewarned is to be forearmed and much healthier.