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Putting Meat Into Perspective



Take a closer look at our modern diet before blaming meat for our health woes.

By David Seaman, DC, MS, DABCN

Blaming meat for cancer and heart disease has been a popular theme for many years. It started with **Ancel Keys**, who became known as the father of the lipid hypothesis of heart disease. The anti-meat and anti-fat propaganda was strongly supported in 1977 when the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs recommended *Dietary Goals for the United States*.

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The recommendation was to consume 55-60 percent of calories from carbohydrates; the official recommendation in the report was to increase consumption of fruit, vegetables and whole grains. Apparently, most people heard only whole grains and instead ate mostly refined grains. Bless our hearts.

The Logic Breakdown

The caloric breakdown of the average American's diet currently stands at approximately 20 percent from refined grains, 20 percent from refined sugars and 20 percent from refined oils. Another 10 percent comes from dairy.¹ You just have to wonder how they blame meat for our

problems when almost 60 percent of our calories come from refined carbohydrates and oils. How is it that these totally unnatural foods escape criticism, but meat gets the blame?

Granted, our modern meat is not healthy; it is grain-fed, sedentary, inflamed, filled with medications, and obese. In comparison, normal meat is lean, healthy, and should live on grass and other vegetation. Why is it that inflamed, obese meat is not differentiated from lean, healthy, normal meat?

Conditioning Us to Blame Meat

In a recent study, the authors concluded that animal protein increases risk of cancer expression in those 65 years and younger.² Importantly, they did not differentiate sources of animal protein or sources of carbohydrate and fat. Furthermore, I searched the article and the words *dairy, eggs, meat, fish, vegetable, fruit, grain, sugar, flour, trans, and omega-6/omega-3* are not mentioned in the paper.

The conditioning I have experienced in my lifetime (born in 1960) is that meat causes heart disease and now cancer. I am not alone in this conditioning. Consider the news headlines generated by this new study. In *Science Daily*: "Meat and Cheese May Be as Bad for You as Smoking." In *The Guardian*: "Diets High in Meat, Eggs, and Dairy Could Be as Harmful to Health as Smoking." So now we have, once again, a broadcast public scare about eating all animal products. What are people to do? Perhaps more carbohydrate from grains – is this what we need?

There is no mention in the news articles or the original research article about eating more vegetables. Maybe more vegetables would be a good idea? Maybe eating less sugar, flour, refined oils might also be a good idea? Maybe eating disease-free animal products might also be a good idea? None of these issues is remotely addressed.

Meat vs. Dairy Protein: Getting to the Heart of the Matter

There is also no mention of the differences between meat and dairy protein, which is an



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important issue. This is very important, as **IGF-1** was highlighted in the title of the new "animal protein is bad" study.² IGF-1 stands for insulin-like growth factor-1. In the body of the paper, the authors state:

"Our study indicates that high levels of animal proteins, promoting increases in IGF-1 and possibly insulin, is one of the major promoters of mortality for people age 50–65 in the 18 years following the survey assessing protein intake."

In my opinion, it is extremely irresponsible not to consider how different protein sources influence IGF-1 and insulin. For example, multiple articles have implicated dairy as being the primary IGF-stimulating culprit, not meat, fish or chicken. How could the authors of the new "animal protein is bad" paper overlook titles such as the following:

- "Milk – The Promoter of Chronic Western Diseases"³
- "Role of Insulin, Insulin-Like Growth Factor-1, Hyperglycaemic Food and Milk Consumption in the Pathogenesis of Acne Vulgaris"⁴
- "Milk Signalling in the Pathogenesis of Type 2 Diabetes"⁵
- "Evidence for Acne-Promoting Effects of Milk and Other Insulinotropic Dairy Products"⁶
- "The Impact of Cow's Milk-Mediated mTORC1-Signaling in the Initiation and Progression of Prostate Cancer"⁷
- "Milk Is Not Just Food, But Most Likely a Genetic Transfection System Activating mTORC1 Signaling for Postnatal Growth"⁸

The last title sounds a little creepy to a non-PhD guy like me. It means cow's milk is supposed to be eaten by calves for the purpose of massive growth during their first year of life. Cow's milk is not supposed to be consumed for the lifetime of humans. We are supposed to drink human milk and then eat normal whole food for humans.

The impact of dairy consumption has been identified in humans in the context of insulin signaling. Milk, but not meat, was shown to increase IGF-1, insulin and insulin resistance when administered to 8-year-old boys for just seven days.⁹⁻¹⁰ So, it turns out animal proteins have a differential effect on IGF-1, a little detail that might be important for us to know.

Remember, our modern diet consists of almost 40 percent of calories from sugar and flour, and 10 percent from dairy. Maybe we should be focusing on the IGF-1- and insulin-stimulating effect of this combination, rather than blaming meat; and particularly avoid the condemnation of normal, healthy, lean meat.

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Dr. David Seaman is the author of *Clinical Nutrition for Pain, Inflammation and Tissue Healing* and a longtime columnist, writing on clinical nutrition (his current column focus) and the subluxation. For additional information including an extended bio, a printable version of this article and a link to previous articles, visit his [columnist page](#).



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