

Joel Fuhrman

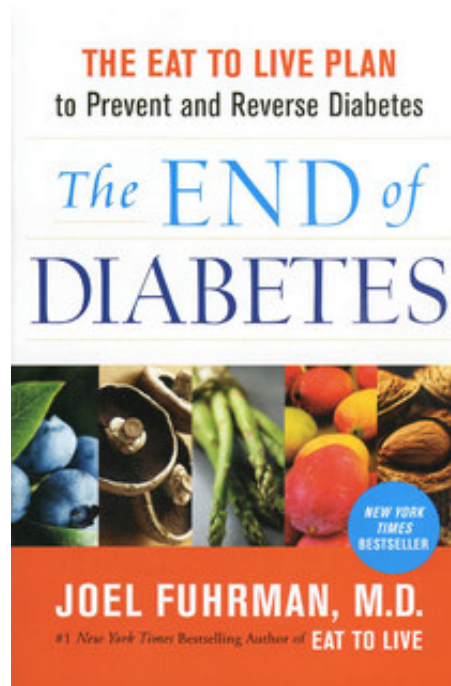
The End of Diabetes

Reading excerpt

[The End of Diabetes](#)

of [Joel Fuhrman](#)

Publisher: Harper One



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demonstrated that a high intake of animal products creates an excess of branched-chain amino acids, which further inhibit insulin function and worsen diabetes control.⁴

This worsening of diabetes from increased animal product consumption was borne out in a recent study in which researchers analyzed the diets of 38,094 participants from the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition study. Researchers found that for every 5 percent of calories consumed from animal protein, the risk of diabetes increased 30 percent.⁵ Increased animal protein intake also coincided with increased body mass index, waist circumference, and blood pressure. Vegetable protein was not associated with increased diabetes risk. Quite a few other studies corroborate that diets that contain meat enable or worsen diabetes. Of note is the most recent Adventist Health Study-2, involving more than sixty thousand men and women, which is revealing because when those eating only a small amount of animal products were compared with those eating none, those following the vegan diet were found to have a diabetes prevalence that was approximately one-third that of the nonvegetarians (2.9 percent versus 7.7 percent). The lacto-ovo vegetarians, pesco-vegetarians, and semi-vegetarians had intermediate diabetes prevalence rates of 3.2 percent, 4.7 percent, and 6.1 percent, respectively.⁶ Obviously, the best way to reverse diabetes is to avoid diets centered on processed and high-glycemic carbohydrates and animal protein.

Tip: Eat more foods rich in vegetable protein and less or no foods with animal protein.

I have seen many diabetic patients on physician-recommended high-protein diets develop kidney or heart problems. Numerous people have suffered and died needlessly because of misinformation. I consider this advice malpractice. This issue still exists. Many doctors are still advocating this diet style for diabetics. Advocates for high-animal-protein

diets flood bookstores and the Internet because people want to hear they can eat all these rich foods that they desire. People buy into the hype and often don't understand the dangers until it is too late. Some enthusiastically jump on a bandwagon of pseudoscientific claims that support the continuation of their preferred food habits and food addictions.

These enthusiasts would have you brainwashed with saturated fat. To undo the damage, let's review some more of the evidence. A May 2004 *Annals of Internal Medicine* study showed that a third of Atkins dieters suffered a significant increase in LDL cholesterol and virtually none of them achieved a favorable LDL below 100. My nutritarian diet invariably drops cholesterol radically and is the only diet style tested in the medical literature to drop LDL cholesterol as much or more than cholesterol-lowering drugs, as reported in the medical journal *Metabolism*.⁷ The goal is to have nonmedicated LDL cholesterol below 100, and that will almost never occur with a meat-based diet.

A landmark study published in 2000 actually measured what was happening to the arteries of people on low-carb, high-protein diets. Utilizing SPECT scans to directly measure blood flow within coronary arteries, the development of heart disease was examined in sixteen people on a vegetarian diet that was high in fruits and vegetables and in ten people on a low-carb, high-animal-protein diet. The results were shocking. Those sticking to the whole foods vegetarian diet showed a reversal in expected heart disease. Their partially clogged arteries literally got cleaned out, and blood flow to their heart through their coronary arteries increased by 40 percent. Those on the high-protein diet exhibited rapid advancement of their heart disease with a 40 percent decrease in blood flow in the heart's blood vessels.⁸ Thus, the only study on the high-protein diet to actually measure arterial blood flow showed that this style of eating is exceedingly dangerous.

The main problem with low-carbohydrate, high-protein diets is that the intake of the high-nutrient plant foods that contain protective fiber, antioxidants, and phytochemicals, is lowered while calorie-

dense and nutritionally poor animal products is raised. Both of these factors are known to diminish cardiovascular health and increase the risk of stroke and heart attack. This was further documented in a large study published in the British Medical Journal. To conduct the study, researchers examined nearly forty-four thousand Swedish women aged thirty to forty-nine years and followed up an average of fifteen years later. During the fifteen-year study period, 1,270 cardiovascular events took place in the 43,396 women (55 percent ischemic heart disease, 23 percent ischemic stroke, 6 percent hemorrhagic stroke, 10 percent subarachnoid hemorrhage, and 6 percent peripheral arterial disease). Researchers found that cardiovascular disease incidence more than doubled in the low-carb, high-protein followers.⁹

Fortunately, the Atkins diet has lost its luster as a result of studies like these, and more doctors are informing their patients about its dangers. Unfortunately, other diets with similar strategies but different names, such as the paleo or Dukan diets, keep popping up and luring individuals into the same disproven and dangerous eating patterns. Many people are lured into these dangerous diets because they cling to any argument that condones their food preferences. Diabetics can't afford to make such mistakes, because these mistakes of judgment could result in dramatically increased suffering and a curtailed life span. The paleo diet uses a distorted view of ancient history to argue that a diet of 50 to 80 percent animal products is the most life span enhancing. (This recommendation is double to triple the average animal product consumption in America today.) Early humans ate many different types of diets in various parts of the world, but what they ate here or there is not even the relevant question. It is how long they lived, and how long present humans will live (in good health) with various diet styles that is more relevant. The answer to this question is clear as the preponderance of evidence is overwhelming today.

If the increased risks of heart attack and cancer aren't enough of an argument, a large study tracking kidney damage showed that a high-

protein diet accelerates kidney damage in people with even very mild compromise to their kidneys.¹⁰ Almost 25 percent of people over forty-five, especially those with diabetes or high blood pressure, have some degree of kidney impairment. Although the study did not proceed long enough to detect kidney damage in those with perfectly healthy kidneys, it's important to note that kidney damage is often not detectable at lower levels of damage. Higher levels of damage make it easy to diagnose, but by then it could be too late to reverse, especially in diabetics. In fact, Dr. Knight, the lead researcher in this study concluded, "The potential impact of protein consumption on renal function has important public health implications given the prevalence of high-protein diets and use of protein supplements/" It is also well established that lots of meat equals lots of gout and kidney stones.¹¹

In a press release titled "American Kidney Fund Warns About Impact of High-Protein Diets on Kidney Health/" AKF Chair of Medical Affairs Paul W. Crawford, M.D., said, "We have long suspected that high-protein weight loss diets could have a negative impact on the kidneys, and now we have research to support our suspicions." Dr. Crawford is worried that the strain put on the kidneys could result in irreversible "scarring in the kidneys." Dr. Crawford also discussed the risk that bodybuilders take in eating high-protein diets while building muscle. He noted, "Bodybuilders could be predisposing themselves to chronic kidney disease because hyperfiltration (the strain on the kidneys) can produce scarring in the kidneys, reducing kidney function."

Dr. Crawford concluded, "Chronic kidney disease is not to be taken lightly, and there is no cure for kidney failure. The only treatments are kidney dialysis and kidney transplantation. This research shows that even in healthy athletes, kidney function was impacted and that ought to send a message to anyone who is on a high-protein weight loss diet."¹²

There is a vast amount of scientific literature supporting what constitutes excellent nutrition. I have reviewed over twenty thousand studies that indicate that what we put in our mouth does matter and

that we can prevent disease with a high-nutrient diet. It is important that we all know that we can no longer deny the dangers from a diet style rich in meat and other animal products.

Humans are primates, and all primates eat a diet of predominantly natural vegetation. If they eat animal products, it is a very small percentage of their total caloric intake. Luckily, we have modern science that shows that most common ailments in today's world are the result of wrong nutritional choices arising from misguided nutritional information. Now our knowledge base has taken a giant leap forward and we can eat a diet rich in phytochemicals from a variety of natural plant foods that can afford us the ability to live a long, healthy life, which was not easily obtained by our ancestors.

With millions of high-protein, low-carb enthusiasts around the world grasping at straws to justify eating a diet rich in animal products, I hope this information serves to counter health claims by these people and perhaps saves a few lives or reduces suffering. Keep in mind that there is a similarity here between my recommendations and those of the high-protein, low-carb advocates: the low-nutrient, high-glycemic junk that most Americans consume is dangerous. However, with the nutritarian diet, the low-GI benefit that a high-protein diet offers is still achieved but with an emphasis on very high-fiber vegetables, beans, and nuts, which avoid the disadvantages that come from eating too many animal products. Because the nutritional quality of the entire diet is so high, with so much fiber and so many micronutrients per calorie, the GI of the whole diet is favorable overall, and triglycerides and blood sugar fall dramatically.

The main point here that I cannot overemphasize is the benefit of nutritional excellence. In describing the bad science utilized to promote low-carb diets, let's always frame it with what a healthy diet should look like. When you eat a truly health-supporting diet, you can expect not only a drop in blood pressure, a decrease in cholesterol, and a reversal of heart disease, but also a resolution of headaches, constipation, indigestion, and bad breath. Dietary excellence enables people to

reverse diabetes and gradually lose dependence on drugs. You should not only achieve a normal weight without counting calories and dieting, but you can also gain robust health and live a long life free of the fear of heart attacks and strokes.

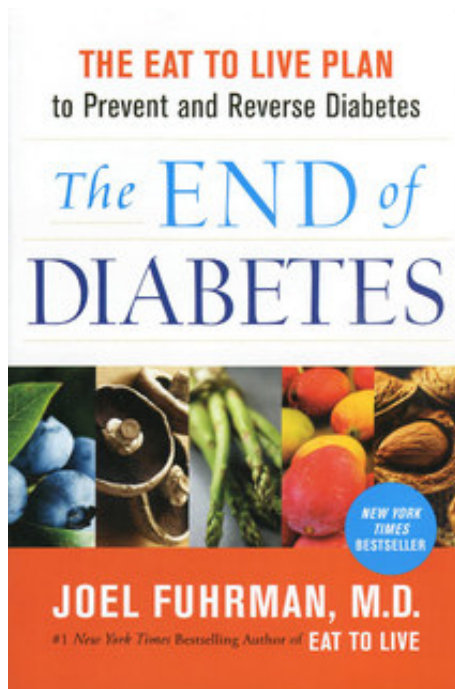
Understanding the differences in various dietary choices is critical for the health seeker. Longevity and disease prevention are the ultimate goals of dietary changes. Obviously, weight loss is not the only goal. You can lose weight by smoking cigarettes or snorting cocaine. When you settle for second-class nutritional advice, you doom yourself not only to a shorter life but also to a poor quality of life, suffering from medical problems that could have been avoided.

Not a month goes by that I do not see at least one diabetic patient whose health has been damaged by following a high-protein fad diet. It's sad to tell people like this that the diet they chose has caused permanent damage, such as a heart attack or kidney disease.

But I am able to offer them good news too. Because I am a specialist in nutritional medicine and see many overweight diabetic patients every day, I have the experience to assure patients that they can quickly get off their insulin and other drugs and, in most cases, become completely nondiabetic with this program of dietary excellence. They do this without incurring the risk of a diet burdened with a dangerously high amount of animal products. Not only is dietary excellence safe and overall health promoting, but the amount of weight loss achieved and the reversal of diabetes are dramatic—results that could not be achieved with a high-protein diet.

How Much and What Type of Animal Products Are Permitted?

Nutritional excellence does not have to exclude all animal products. But it has to be very rich in high-nutrient plant foods composing well over 85 percent of caloric intake. The minimal amount of animal products



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The Eat to Live Plan to Prevent and Reverse Diabetes

320 pages, pb
publication 2014



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Diabetes and prediabetes will account for the largest percent of health care spending by the end of the decade at an annual cost of almost \$500 billion—up from an estimated \$194 billion in 2010 according to the report titled *The United States of Diabetes: Challenges and Opportunities in the Decade Ahead*.³ In order to prevent this, we have to change the way we approach diabetes—and we must emphasize prevention. Earlier this year, the editors of the *Lancet* medical journal called it a “public health humiliation” that diabetes, a largely preventable disease, has reached such epidemic proportions.