



# Hands of Health Newsletter

May/June 2006

Hello, again:

It's already MAY! I've had another birthday but I still feel like I'll be eternally 25!!! And there really is no secret; I've given the keys to good health numerous times in my newsletters: diet - don't put poisons in or for that matter, on, your body; regular exercise - 4 to 5 times per week for at least 45 minutes; and regular massage. Not too hard. I can't force anyone to follow these ideas; you have to make a conscious decision to follow through and it does take some discipline. But it's ALL worth it. Better than spending time in a hospital or laid up in bed. Doesn't make for a good life. My research unveiled so much information I had a hard time deciding what to put in this issue of my newsletter. Someone sent me an e-mail for an article and there were a few links which lead to other links and so on, and so on. They were on GoVeg.com. So after you read this you can navigate the site yourself and learn more. I can only fit so much in my newsletter.

## HUMAN PHYSIOLOGY

Although many modern humans eat a wide variety of plant and animal foods, earning us the honorary title of "omnivore," we are automatically herbivorous. Biologists have established that animals who share physical characteristics also share a common diet. Comparing the anatomy of carnivores with our own clearly illustrates that we were not designed to eat meat.

**Teeth and Nails** - To contrast human physiology with that of carnivores, start at the beginning of the digestive tract. Teeth, nails, and jaw structure indicate that nature intended for people to eat a plant-based diet. They have much shorter and softer fingernails than animals and pathetically small "canine" teeth (they're canine in name only). In contrast, carnivores all have sharp claws and large canine teeth capable of tearing flesh.

The jaws of carnivores move only up and down, requiring them to tear chunks of flesh from their prey and swallow it whole. Humans and other herbivores can move their jaws up and down and from side to side, a movement that allows them to grind up fruit and vegetables with their back teeth. Like other herbivores, humans back molars are flat and allow the grinding of fibrous plant foods. Carnivores lack these flat molars. If humans had been meant to eat meat, they would have the sharp teeth and claws of carnivores. Instead, their jaw structure, flat molars, and lack of claws indicate that they are best suited for a plant-based diet.

Dr. Richard Leakey, a renowned anthropologist, summarizes, "You can't tear flesh by hand, you can't tear hide by hand. Our anterior teeth are not suited for tearing flesh or hide. We don't have large canine teeth, and we wouldn't have been able to deal with food sources that require those large canines."

"Although we think we are one, and we act as if we are one, human beings are not natural carnivores. When we kill animals to eat them, they end up killing us because their flesh, which contains cholesterol and saturated fat, was never intended for human beings, who are natural herbivores." *William C. Roberts, M.D., editor, American Journal of Cardiology.*

## THE NATURAL HUMAN DIET

According to biologists and anthropologists who study our anatomy and our evolutionary history, humans are herbivores who are not well suited to eating meat.

Unlike natural carnivores, we are physically and psychologically unable to rip animals limb from limb and eat and digest their raw flesh. Even cooked meat is likely to cause human beings, but not natural carnivores, to suffer from *food poisoning, heart disease, and other ailments.*

People who pride themselves on being part of the human hunter tradition should take a second look at the story of human evolution. Prehistoric evidence indicates that humans developed hunting skills relatively recently and that most of

**Stomach Acidity** - After using their sharp claws and teeth to capture and kill their prey, carnivores swallow their food whole, relying on their extremely acidic stomach juices to do most of the digestive work. The stomach acid of carnivores actually plays a dual role - besides breaking down flesh, the acid also kills the dangerous bacteria that would otherwise sicken or kill the meat-eater.

Our stomach acids are much weaker in comparison because strong acids aren't needed to digest pre-chewed fruits and vegetables. In comparing the stomach acidity of carnivores and herbivores, it is obvious that humans fall into the latter category. We can cook meat to kill some of the bacteria and make it easier to chew, but it's clear that humans, unlike all natural carnivores, are not designed to easily digest meat.

**Intestinal Length** - Evidence of our herbivorous nature is also found in the length of our intestines. Carnivores have short intestinal tracts and colons that allow meat to pass through it relatively quickly, before it has a chance to rot and cause illness. Humans, on the other hand, have intestinal tracts that are much longer than carnivores of comparable size. Like other herbivores, longer intestines allow the body more time to break down fiber and absorb the nutrients from a plant-based diet.

The long human intestinal tract actually makes it dangerous for people to eat meat. The bacteria in meat have extra time to multiply during the long trip through the digestive system and meat actually begins to rot while it makes its way through the intestines. Many studies have also shown that meat can cause colon cancer in humans.

Comparing our anatomies clearly illustrates the fact that the human body is built to run on a vegetarian diet. Humans have absolutely none of the distinguishing anatomical characteristics that either carnivores or even natural omnivores have. Read author John Robbins' discussion of the anatomical differences between humans and carnivores.

our short, meat-eating past was spent scavenging and eating almost anything in order to survive; even then, meat was a tiny part of our caloric intake.

Humans lack both the physical characteristics of carnivores and the instinct that drives them to kill animals and devour their raw carcasses. Ask yourself: When you see dead animals on the side of the road, are you tempted to stop for a snack? Does the sight of a dead bird make you salivate? Do you daydream about killing cows with your bare hands and eating them raw? If you answered "no" to all of these questions, congratulations - you're a normal human herbivore - like it or not. Humans were simply not designed to eat meat.

*With proper care the human body will last a lifetime.*

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## CANCER: Killing Animals Is Killing Us

Since President Richard Nixon declared a "war on cancer" in 1972, that "war" has become a losing battle. Every year, billions of dollars are spent on cancer research, detection, and treatment in the United States, yet cancer remains one of our nation's top killers.

Fortunately, there's something we can do about it. According to the World Health Organization, up to 40 percent of all cancers are preventable, and one-third of all cancer deaths in the U.S. can be attributed to nutritional factors, according to the American Cancer Society (ACS).

Vegan diets maximize the foods that help us fight cancer - fiber-packed grains and beans and phytochemical-packed fruits and vegetables - and minimize the foods that cause cancer. Combine these two factors, according to the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, and the scientific evidence is clear: "Vegetarians are about 40 percent less likely to get cancer than nonvegetarians, regardless of other risks such as smoking, body size, and socioeconomic status."

One study compared cancer rates of vegetarians and meat-eaters in 34,000 Americans. The results showed that those who avoided meat, fish, and poultry had dramatically lower rates of prostate, ovarian, and colon cancer compared to meat-eaters.

## CARCINOGENS IN MEAT

Modern methods of raising animals for food have made matters even worse for meat-eaters. Antibiotics, hormones, heavy metals, dioxins, and various other compounds are raising the risk of cancer.

Because chickens are raised in such crowded and unhealthy conditions, they are very susceptible to disease, so in an attempt to keep them alive through conditions that would otherwise kill them, farmers feed them an array of antibiotics, including one that contains the most toxic form of arsenic. A report from the U.S. Department of Agriculture - published in *Environmental Health Perspectives* in January 2004 - revealed that chicken contains three to four times more potentially poisonous arsenic than other poultry and meats. Eating a typical 2 ounces of chicken a day means ingesting 3.6 to 5.2 micrograms of cancer-causing arsenic.

And arsenic isn't the only thing you need to worry about the next time someone offers you a chicken leg. More than 95 percent of our exposure to dioxin, a well-known carcinogen, comes from eating animal products (the rest is environmental; none comes from vegan foods). Researchers with the Institute of Medicine have even recommended that school cafeterias offer more foods that are low in animal fat so that children aren't exposed to unhealthy levels of dioxins, dangerous by-

products of industrial and natural combustion that can accumulate in body fat. According to Michael Taylor of Resources for the Future, "The most direct way to reduce dietary exposure to dioxins is to reduce consumption of animal fat." Remember, more than half the calories of even the leanest chicken comes from fat.

Fish, in addition to containing concentrated (and carcinogenic) animal protein, is often very high in environmental contaminants. Fish commonly contains mercury, dioxins, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and other organochlorine pesticides. These contaminants, which have been linked to cancer and other health problems, tend to accumulate in body fat and remain in the body for decades.

In fact, 80 to 90 percent of dietary pesticide exposure, as well as 100 percent of dietary hormone and dioxin exposure, comes from eating animal products, and many of these chemicals are known to cause cancer in human beings.

Finally, additional carcinogens form when meat is cooked. These cancer-causing chemicals, specifically called *heterocyclic amines*, are found in cooked red and white meats, including fish and poultry. In fact, the amount found in grilled chicken is 15 times higher than in hamburger or steak.

Good stuff. And a good site to return to periodically. The next two months have some of the most important holidays of the year: Mother's Day and Father's Day. And a gift certificate for massage makes a great statement of appreciation for both. Mothers and Fathers of all ages will benefit from massage and don't rule out Mothers and Fathers to be! And there you have it. Keep up with your health and don't let the warmer temperatures, especially here in Arizona, discourage you from getting outside. We DO need some sunshine for our health. Just don't overdo it. And always remember the importance of massage!

Until next time,

Stay healthy, stay well,

