



THE BEST DIET IN AMERICA

by Kaitlin Enneking

As obesity rates in America continue to climb, so do the number of trendy diets and nutrition plans. With all the diet books, infomercials, and social media sales pitches, it can be difficult to separate fact from fiction. Lucky for us, scientists have compared the most popular diets and discovered the best plan of action.

Dr. David Katz of Yale University's Prevention Research Center compared the best known diets: low carb, low fat, low glycemic-index, Mediterranean, DASH, Paleo, and vegan. He determined that while none of these diets can be scientifically proven as best, there is a common theme between all of them: they all encourage followers to limit refined sugars, added sugars, processed foods, and saturated fats, and have an emphasis on plant foods.

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All of the most popular diets of the day encourage people to eat minimally-processed foods close to nature, predominantly plants. In other words we should be eating more whole foods and more plants.

It really is that easy. Keep your grocery shopping to the perimeter of the store where produce and unprocessed foods are found. Fill up on foods found in nature and stick to a plan that is reasonable for your lifestyle.

Sources: The Atlantic <http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/03/science-compared-every-diet-and-the-winner-is-real-food/284595/>. Accessed 17 June 2015.

SMART FACTS

90%

of Americans eat more sodium than is recommended for a healthy diet.

200%

There are twice as many fast food restaurants today as there were in the 1970's.

40%

of the average 2-18 year-old's daily calorie intake is made from added sugars & solid fats.



THE EVOLUTION OF PREVENTIVE HEALTH CARE

by Laura Lubus, MPH

In 1854, Dr. John Snow conducted a study in London around cholera, a severe gastrointestinal disorder. The reason for the inquiry was due to the deaths of 500 people over a short span of 10 days in a small area of London. Snow began to plot where these individuals lived in an attempt to find a pattern.

While the cure for cholera was not discovered, the pathway to exposure was. He was able to trace the exposure to cholera to a specific water pump in the city. People stopped using the water pump and cholera was nearly eliminated in the town.

This simple discovery forever changed how we viewed diseases and human health. If we are able to find causes and sources of disease, we could be proactive and eliminate illness and people would live long, healthy lives, right?

Well it is not that easy. Let's take a look at the table on the right for the most common causes of death in 2010 in comparison to the causes in 1900.

At a quick glance we can see that some of the most common causes of death are quite different. Why? With advances in medicines, we are able to prevent disease and infection through vaccinations and sanitary environments. This is why some diseases that we do not currently suffer from in America may be common in other areas of the world.

However, we do have very serious health concerns in America like heart disease, cancer, and diabetes. Why do these health issues still exist with all of the advancements we have made? While some things are unpreventable and can be passed from person to person, the most common causes of death are created by lifestyle behaviors. In America we have gone from unpredictable, chance instances of spreading diseases to creating illness with how we choose to live our lives.

While that sounds bad, we can look at it as good news. It actually means we can control much of our health through the decisions we make. By taking care of our bodies through proper nutrition, exercise, healthy relationships, and low stress, we significantly decrease our chances dying from the above causes. There will always be medicine, but health starts with our daily choices.

What will you choose?

1900	2010
Diphtheria	Heart disease
Senility	Cancer
Cancer	Respiratory disease
Accidents	Accidents
Nephropathies	Strokes
Heart disease	Alzheimer's Disease
Infections	Diabetes
Tuberculosis	
Pneumonia	

IMPROVING OUR HEART HEALTH

by Kelly Thomson, MSHP

We know heart disease is the leading cause of death in America, but what can you do (or stop doing) to aide in prevention? There are many changes and extra steps you can take to improve your overall health and lower your risk for heart disease:

Know your numbers.

It is important to know where you stand with your body mass index, blood pressure, and cholesterol. Having baseline numbers will help you know your risk and track improvement.

Add omega-3 fatty acids to your diet.

You can find these certain types of fish (including anchovies, salmon, and tuna), vegetable oils, nuts (especially walnuts), flaxseeds, and leafy vegetables.

Get active.

This does not mean you have to start running marathons. Small bouts of activity add up. Start walking with co-workers during your lunch break or take a bike ride on the weekend with friends.

Quit smoking.

Your heart health improves immediately after quitting.

FINANCIAL CORNER WITH PETE THE PLANNER

The rising cost of healthcare is something you are quite familiar with. While spending money on healthcare isn't always in your control, you do get to control what you spend on your overall health. From gym memberships to fresh produce and vitamins, what you spend on your physical fitness and nutrition is on you. The Pete the Planner® Ideal Budget recommends you spend 5 percent of your take-home budget on medical expenses.

Depending on your healthcare plan this may or may not be reasonable for your situation. If it's not enough to cover you, you'll have to "steal" from other budget categories. I recommend stealing from the 12 percent dedicated to groceries and dining out. Why? Because what you eat directly influences your health. It's a logical category meld. Even though healthcare is expensive, money spent on preventive care is always money well spent. Leverage your money for a better future you.

Get enough sleep.

Not only does sleep help with stress, but research shows that people who do not get enough sleep are more than twice as likely as others to have heart disease. Aim for seven hours a night.

These lifestyle improvements may take time, but small and steady changes can make a stronger, more efficient heart.

WebMD. webmd.com/heart/features/12-tips-for-better-heart-health. Accessed 12 June 2015.



JULY 4TH

The July 4th holiday is a celebration of food, fun, and family. Be sure to also incorporate fireworks safety into your celebration. Obey local laws regarding fireworks. Keep a bucket of water handy and have plenty of space around your fireworks. For more safety tips visit the National Council of Fireworks Safety website at fireworkssafety.org/safety-tips/.

HARVEST OF THE MONTH: PEPPERS

by Mechelle Meadows

Looking for a great summer vegetable that can satisfy a craving for crunchy, sweet, or spicy? Try a new variety of pepper this season!

Green, red, yellow, and orange bell peppers are very common and also easy for beginning gardeners to grow, as they can thrive well in the summer heat.

However, there are many other lesser-known varieties that can easily be found in grocery stores or farmers' markets this time of year. Banana and cubanelle peppers offer a sweeter taste that can be added to wraps, salads, or pizza, while chili peppers and jalapenos can spice up a Mexican dish or soup.

As far as health benefits go, red bell peppers in particular are chock-full of Vitamin C, and beta-carotene found in peppers has anti-inflammatory properties. Capsaicin, the substance in peppers dictating how hot they are, gives the body a slight metabolic boost.

How to select

No matter the variety of pepper, look for ones that are shiny, wrinkle-free, and firm to the touch.



How to store

Store peppers in the vegetable drawer of the refrigerator. Do not wash or cut into peppers prior to using them, as the moisture will make them start to go bad.

How to prepare

To eat raw, wash the peppers well, then slice or chop them and go! Peppers can be cooked by grilling, baking, sautéing, or roasting. Look for peppers to become tender but still maintain basic structure. Most of the nutritional value is maintained by avoiding high-heat cooking.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH: *3 Pepper Pasta Salad*

Ingredients

- 1 16-oz. package tri-color pasta
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup olive oil
- 3 Tbsp. white wine vinegar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fresh basil leaves
- 2 Tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. black pepper
- 1 each: red, yellow, and orange bell pepper; julienned
- 1 medium tomato; chopped
- 1 (2.25 oz.) can black olives, drained
- 8 oz. mozzarella cheese

Directions

1. Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Place pasta in the pot, cook for 8 to 10 minutes, until al dente, and drain.
2. In a blender or food processor, blend the olive oil, white wine vinegar, basil, Parmesan cheese, salt, and pepper until smooth.
3. In a large bowl, toss together the cooked pasta, dressing mixture, red bell pepper, yellow bell pepper, orange bell pepper, tomato, and olives. Top with mozzarella cheese to serve.

Nutritional Info

PER SERVING: 483 calories, 19mg cholesterol, 25.2g fat, 48g carbohydrates, 16.2g protein, 631mg sodium, 3.6g fiber

Source: allrecipes.com/recipe/three-pepper-pasta-salad/. Accessed 12 June 2015