

Individualized Nutrition Diets based on genetics, epigenetics, and nutritional requirements help prevent and mitigate chronic disease. - From *The Hamden Journal*, December 3, 2010

What should I really eat?? People often ask me “what should I eat?” In my opinion, the simple answer is ‘real’ food – food that your grandparents would recognize. This includes daily consumption of fresh or frozen fruits, leafy green vegetables, whole grains and organic, free-range poultry and meats. Then the goal would be to rotate foods. Have a serving of rice one day, quinoa the next, oats the day after that. Then we get a wide variety of nutrients in our diet, and not eating the same thing every day minimizes our risk of developing sensitivities to foods.

The more complicated answer to the “what do I eat?” question considers a person’s individuality: blood type, family history, nutritional status, and food sensitivities. Determining blood type is fairly easy. Next time you have physical, have your doctor check off the box to request your blood type or take the at-home finger stick test. For me, a person’s blood group is the starting point in designing a diet. It has been proven that a person of blood group A feels best when eating a mostly vegetarian and fish diet and not much dairy. This is not a processed diet. What you’re striving for are real foods such as legumes and lentils, along with fermented soy. A person of blood group O tends to have greatest energy and well-being when regularly consuming red meat (from organic, humanely-raised animals, of course) and minimizing wheat and dairy. Blood group O people often have higher stomach acid and intestinal enzymes that allow them to digest animal protein and process cholesterol efficiently. Blood groups B and AB fall in between the two extremes, A and O, and are the most omnivorous blood groups -- feeling best when eating across the broad range of food groups.

Family history, nutritional status, and food sensitivities are then used to ‘tweak’ the menu. For example, if someone tends towards glucose imbalance, then the glycemic index of foods - or how carbohydrates affect blood sugar levels in the body - would be considered. If someone has a family history of cardiovascular disease, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant foods would be emphasized. If a person is found to have nutritional deficiencies or food sensitivities, then their suggested menu items would be altered with that information in order to enhance nutritional status and decrease irritation from offending foods.

If you're interested in learning more about how and what to eat, you might consider the following: *Feeding the Whole Family*, by Cynthia Lair; *Live Right 4 Your Type*, by Dr. Peter D’Adamo; *How to Cook Everything*, by Mark Bittman; and *The Anti-Inflammation Diet and Recipe Book*, by Dr. Jessica K. Black. For help in designing a diet, talk to a practitioner who is trained to discern your food priorities. Once you have dietary guidelines, do you need to follow it 100% at all times? Absolutely not! Where’s the living in your life if that were the case? How ill someone is or how strong their family history is drives the seriousness of the recommendations. I do believe, however, that if you feed your body what it is designed to eat, your energy and well-being will increase and your aches and pains will lessen. I have seen these results, not only in naturopathic reports, but also with patients in my own practice.