

## Nutritional Confusion

Are you thoroughly confused about nutrition? I am, and if you're over 40 years old you most likely are as confused as I am. Trying to figure out what is the most optimal diet for oneself can be confusing, frustrating and very polarizing, I say this because once you jump down that rabbit hole you enter the world of modern nutrition and all the baggage that goes with it.

Lets take a brief moment back in time. Remember the 80's? Aside from New Wave Music and Reaganomics the 80's were known for science based research in nutrition and health. This was the first era when nutritionists and doctors completely steered the ship in a different direction. For the first time we were told that meat, especially red meat could be potentially bad for our health. The solution coming from the medical and nutritional industry was to move away from fat and animal protein and eat more carbohydrates (energy substrate like bread, pasta, etc.) We were also told to no longer eat butter and move to margarine. Then in the late 90's it was proven that margarine was 4 times worse than butter. Then in the early 2000's butter was back and hydrogenated oils were banned! Why because those "Super Fats" that where designed by scientist in a lab prove to raise your LDL which is your bad cholesterol, that puts you at a substantial risk for heart disease and strokes.

So then the next craze was to cut back carbohydrates because they raise insulin levels and that causes weight gain which puts you at risk for all of the above plus cancer and lifelong inflammation which leads to arthritis and immunity related issues. What were the people in the nutritional field recommending? Eat more meat, vegetables and less sugar, carbs, and even less fruit. Good Lord! Complete reversal in a matter of a decade and a half and this brings us up to where we are today.

If you have Netflix or even if you don't you might have heard of the documentary called Game Changers. This documentary was directed by James Cameron and narrated James Wilks and MMA fighter who trains US Special forces in hand to hand combat. This documentary has created resurgence in vegan diets. James Wilks refers to diets that don't contain animal products as "plant based diets."

Wilks contends that plant based diets are better for athletic performance and are the way our ancestors actually ate. His shinning example is the diet of a gladiator. It's pretty common knowledge that gladiators ate lots of whole grains, vegetables and fruits with a minimal amount of animal products. Without getting to deep into this documentary Wilks does a really good job of pointing out the dangers of industrial farming. For example the EPA sites that 15% of the worlds carbon emissions are the result of farm animals emitting methane gas. To give you some comparison, cars are responsible for 15% of the world's carbon emissions pretty astonishing! Beyond what Wilks claims there are a multitude of problems with modern industrial farming including soybean farmers who pick their beans and bring them to market. Once the harvest has been picked they never let anything on the soil die. Instead they churn it up and fertilize the soil. Many environmental experts claim this is destroying the quality of the soil and eliminating many of the biomes that create a healthy environment in our gut.

Well after watching Game Changers and reading extensive articles about nutritional studies I have learned there are no easy answers to what is ideal nutrition. There is a fierce fight between omnivores and plant based advocates. Both sides say they are right and neither are doing a good job of agreeing on what the facts are so we the public can make good decisions based on knowledge. What this contentious debate has done is create

confusion to the consumer. So the question is what can we do to ensure we are getting adequate nutrition? Number one, eat real food! Stay away from the prepackaged process foods both sides agree these products are unhealthy. Two, eat organic or grass fed beef or bison, and stay away from animals that were raised on hormones and animal feed. The same goes for chicken and turkey, only eat free-range birds that were not raised on hormones. Eat fish as well but make sure it's wild fish and not farm raised. Three, eat plenty of fruits and vegetables I recommend at least 3 to 5 fruit and vegetable per day. Everyone in the medical and nutritional field can agree on the importance of fruits and vegetables. Four, get plenty of exercise that includes strength training and cardiovascular training as well. I would recommend strength training 2 times per week and cardiovascular training 4 days per week. Last but not least, engage in activities that are fulfilling and reduce stress! Until next time, happy holidays!