

# Inquiring Minds topic – 13 September 2019

Jim Goodale, Moderator

## What IS Healthy Eating

Everywhere we look, we see fellow Shell Point residents engaging in activities to maintain and even improve their physical and mental health –walking, jogging, cycling, and participating in SPRC classes in fitness, water aerobics, yoga, agility, balance, palates, in addition to card and board games plus intellectually stimulating discussion groups and classes on so many topics.

Recently, we have seen new “healthy eating” menus available in our three main restaurants as well as the three ALF buildings. In addition, the Green Team is now offering monthly “plant-based” meals at the three restaurants here at Shell Point. And Dr. Michael Klaper and Dr. Malissa Wood made presentations here this Spring and gave strong endorsements for avoiding major chronic illnesses with a plant-based diet.

Hippocrates said, “Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food.” over 23 centuries ago. But what exactly is healthy food and in what ways is it healthy?

### Consider the following:

Before reading this paper, how familiar were you with the impact of diet on health? How convincing is the included research?

1. How actively should Shell Point continue to promote healthy eating as presented in this paper?
  - a) Drop all these initiatives and let us eat in peace as we always have.
  - b) Keep doing what they are doing and provide both standard American and plant-based entrées.
  - c) Gradually increase the number of plant-based options and reduce standard American entrées.
  - d) Aggressively pursue the designation of a Blue Zone by ensuring that the majority of food served at Shell Point is derived from plants.
  - e) Other options you care to discuss.
2. How common is the medical practice of recommending significant dietary changes as a first step in the treatment of chronic diseases, such as heart disease and cancer? Has a physician ever recommended a plant-based diet to you or a loved one for the treatment of a major medical problem?
3. Why do medical schools continue to place so little emphasis on the relationship between nutrition and health?
4. T. Colin Campbell, a nutritional biochemist at Cornell University, began conferring with a colleague in China in 1981 to conduct an extensive study of the relationship between nutrition and health. The results were reported in The China Study, published in 2005.

### THE ULTIMATE SUMMARY OF THE CHINA STUDY: HERE’S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

#### GOOD FOOD

EMILY LAURENCE, AUGUST 9, 2019

<https://www.wellandgood.com/good-food/china-study-cheat-sheet-10-things-you-need-to-know/>

The China Study is one of those weighty, important books that is perhaps more talked about than actually read. It's easy to see why: At 417 pages packed with nutrition facts and research stats, it's a lot to digest—not exactly a beach read.

But it's worth knowing about since the book is based on one of the largest comprehensive studies of human nutrition ever conducted, launched via a partnership between Cornell University, Oxford University, and the Chinese Academy of Preventative Medicine, with data collected over a span of 20 years. In *The China Study*, T. Colin Campbell, PhD, and his son, Thomas M. Campbell II, MD, discuss and analyze the results from the study (and other influential nutrition research) and recommend their protocol for the best diet for long-term health.

In the 13 years since it was published, it inspired influential figures like Bill Clinton to go vegan, a plant-based nutrition certificate program at Cornell that's popular among chefs, nutritionists, and health coaches, and the documentary *Forks Over Knives*.

Of course, like all nutrition advice, there are many criticisms of the research and conclusions, especially among Paleo Diet advocates. We read it cover-to-cover for you, taking notes along the way, so you'd be in-the-know about the authors' claims—whether you choose to forgo beef for broccoli or not.

Here's your 10-step cheat sheet to *The China Study's* conclusions

1. American health statistics are scary. You may feel pretty fit, but the country as a whole is, well, not so great. The researchers spend a lot of time citing frightening stats on obesity, diabetes, and heart disease that point to the need for an American diet shake-up. Americans also pay more for health care than any other country—and don't have better health to show for it. It's probably the one section of the book no nutrition expert would argue with.
2. The conclusions are based on a lot of data. They're not talking about one small study on mice. After years of controversial lab results on animals, the researchers had to see how they played out in humans. The study they created included 367 variables, 65 counties in China, and 6,500 adults (who completed questionnaires, blood tests, etc.). "When we were done, we had more than 8,000 statistically significant associations between lifestyle, diet, and disease variables." They also incorporate a wealth of additional research data from other sources.
3. Animal protein promotes the growth of cancer. The book's author T. Colin Campbell, PhD, grew up on a dairy farm, so he regularly enjoyed a wholesome glass of milk. Not anymore. Dr. Campbell says that in multiple, peer-reviewed animal studies, researchers discovered that they could actually turn the growth of cancer cells on and off by raising and lowering doses of casein, the main protein found in cow's milk.
4. You should be worried about poor nutrition more than pesticides. The food you eat affects the way your cells interact with carcinogens, making them more or less dangerous, the authors explain. "The results of these, and many other studies, showed nutrition to be far more important in controlling cancer promotion than the dose of the initiating carcinogen," they state.

5. Heart disease can be reversed through nutrition. The authors share the work of other respected physicians that they say supports their own data's conclusions, and some of the most interesting are on heart disease. Caldwell B. Esselstyn, Jr., MD, a physician and researcher at the best cardiac center in the country, The Cleveland Clinic, treated 18 patients with established coronary disease using a whole food, plant-based diet. Not only did the intervention stop the progression of the disease, but 70 percent of the patients saw an opening of their clogged arteries. Dr. Dean Ornish, a graduate of Harvard Medical School, completed a similar study with consistent results. But hey, this is actually encouraging—heart disease can legit be reversed.

6. Carbs are not (always) the enemy. Highly-processed, refined carbohydrates are bad for you, but plant foods are full of healthy carbs, the authors say. Research shows that diets like Atkins or South Beach can have dangerous side effects. While they may result in short-term weight loss, you'll be sacrificing long-term health.

7. Cancer isn't the only disease plants can ward off. It's not just cancer and heart disease that respond to a whole food, plant-based diet, the authors say. Their research showed it may also help protect you from diabetes, obesity, autoimmune diseases, bone, kidney, eye, and brain diseases. Are you getting that plants are pretty miraculous by now?

8. You don't have to tailor your diet for specific health benefits. Eating healthy can seem segmented—broccoli will prevent breast cancer, carrots are good for eyes, and by the way, did you get enough vitamin C today? "Nutrition that is truly beneficial for one chronic disease will support health across the board," the authors explain.

9. You don't need to eat meat. "There are virtually no nutrients in animal-based foods that are not better provided by plants," the authors say. Protein, fiber, vitamins, minerals—you name it, they've got it, along with major health benefits.

10. The takeaway is simple: Eat plants for health. "People who ate the most animal-based foods got the most chronic disease. People who ate the most plant-based foods were the healthiest," the authors state. Whether you're going vegan or not, they suggest putting as many plants on your plate as possible at every meal.

This story was originally published on September 23, 2011; it was updated on August 9, 2018.

## **EAT MORE PLANT AND LESS MEAT TO LIVE LONGER AND IMPROVE HEART HEALTH, STUDY SUGGESTS**

By [Jacqueline Howard](#), CNN - Updated 0650 GMT (1450 HKT) August 9, 2019

<https://edition.cnn.com/2019/08/09/health/plant-based-diet-heart-disease-study/index.html>

Sticking to an overall plant-based diet or a diet that includes more plant foods than animal foods could be associated with a 16% lower risk of cardiovascular disease and up to 25% lower risk of early death, according to the study [published in the Journal of the American Heart Association](#) this week.

The new study adds to "the substantial body of literature" suggesting that consuming a plant-based diet is associated with better heart health and lower risk of death, said Casey Rebholz, an assistant professor at the [Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health](#) in Baltimore and senior author of the study.

## [Eating a plant-based diet might help prevent type 2 diabetes, study suggests](#)

"Plant-based diets emphasize higher intakes of plant foods and lower intakes of animal foods. Foods derived from plants include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and legumes," Rebholz said.

"Animal foods include meat, eggs, dairy, and fish or seafood," she said. "In this study, we did not define plant-based diets on the basis of complete exclusion of animal foods from the diet ... but rather ranked individuals according to their relative frequency of intake of these foods."

The study involved data on 12,168 middle-aged adults in the United States, which came from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute's [Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities](#) study.

The adults, who were followed up from 1987 through 2016, did not have cardiovascular disease at the start of the study.

The researchers took a close look at each adult's usual diet and their heart health later in life, including whether they were diagnosed with stroke, heart failure or [other events related to cardiovascular disease](#).

After analyzing the data, the researchers found that the adults who adhered to diets with mostly plant-based foods, compared with those who had the lowest adherence, had a 16% lower risk of cardiovascular disease; about 32% lower risk of dying from a cardiovascular disease; and 18% to 25% lower risk of early death from any cause.

## [Changing your meat-eating habits could mean a longer life, study suggests](#)

The study had some limitations, including that the data on dietary intakes were based on people self-reporting their eating habits, which poses a risk of measurement error.

More research is needed to determine if a causal relationship exists, and to determine how the modern food supply might influence outcomes, as the data in the study came from years' past.

Cardiovascular diseases, disorders of the heart and blood vessels such as heart disease, are the No. 1 cause of death globally, according to the [World Health Organization](#).

The new study's findings are "important," said Dr. Michelle McMacken, director of the [plant-based lifestyle medicine program](#) at NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue and an assistant professor of medicine at [NYU School of Medicine](#) in New York, who was not involved in the study.

"They strongly suggest that in a general US population who don't necessarily identify as vegetarian, the higher the proportion of plant foods in the diet, the lower the risk of cardiovascular events and death from any cause," McMacken said, adding that plant-based diets can promote heart health by multiple mechanisms.

"First, they are higher in beneficial nutrients such as fiber, plant fats, potassium, and antioxidants, and lower in potentially harmful nutrients such as animal-based iron, animal fats and nitrite preservatives," she said.

"Second, plant-based diets are also linked to healthier body weights, lower inflammation, lower risk of type 2 diabetes, better blood pressure and blood vessel function, and beneficial gut bacterial metabolites," she said. "All of these factors translate into a lower cardiovascular risk."

(For more information about the impact of plant-based eating on type 2 diabetes, a rapidly growing chronic disease in both old AND YOUNG Americans, see [J Geriatr Cardiol](#). 2017 May; 14(5): 342–354.)

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5466941/>