



March 13, 2010 – Dallas, TX

Vegetarian

If you've been following the 30 Pound Club Group on Facebook, you've read about Damian who's eating a completely raw and vegan diet. On top of that, he's limiting himself to 1,250 calories per day. That approach might not work for everyone, but he's been a vegetarian for as long as I've known him, he's done this dietary approach before, and he's wise enough to know that if it isn't working, he'll modify his intake.

But it got me to thinking—I haven't talked about eating vegetarian for a while, and it might be appropriate for those of you thinking about it. We think of a vegetarian as someone who doesn't eat meat, but it's not that simple. As most of you know, there are different types of vegetarians:

- A vegan is someone who doesn't eat animal products of any type. That would include meat, fish, eggs, milk, cheese, and any derivatives from them; an example would be protein powder made from whey or eggs. People who use this approach are vegans.
- Some people become vegetarians because they don't like the idea of another living creature being sacrificed for their use, but they accept using eggs and dairy products because the animals aren't killed to provide those products. Those people are called lacto-ovo-vegetarians.
- Some people add fish to the mix, because let's face it—it's hard to feel any kind of emotional closeness with a salmon. Those people are pesco-vegetarians.

That's as far as I'm willing to go, because if you add chicken to it, you're not a vegetarian.

I think the primary question is this: is it healthy to eat a vegetarian diet? There's no question that it's healthy—if you do it right. If you want a book that really presents the science about a vegetarian diet, read *The China Study: Startling Implications for Diet, Weight Loss, and Long-Term Health* by T. Colin Campbell, PhD. I think Dr. Campbell makes a pretty strong case until he digresses into the politics of nutrition. Data are data and that's what he presents in the first part of the book. It would have been nice if he'd ended there, so my advice is that if you choose to read the book, stop short.

So what do I mean, "It's healthy if you do it right"? There are many dumb vegetarians out there. The problem is that some people who claim to be vegetarian just fill up on refined carbohydrates of all types as long as they don't contain any animal products. There's no advantage to eating that way because you can stay just as fat and just as prone to insulin resistance and heart disease, as well as opening yourself up to other health issues.

One of the primary purposes of eating vegetarian is to be healthier. That means you begin your diet with vegetables, root vegetables for starches, beans, lentils, fruits, and whole-grain wheat, oats, and rice. It's not as easy as just skipping the burger and eating the fries—you have to really think about what you eat in order to get all the nutrition your body requires, especially enough protein. An uneducated vegetarian can have big, gaping holes in his or her diet. If you're going to eat vegetarian, do it smart and base your diet on fruits, vegetables, beans, legumes, and grains. And if your kids have decided to be vegetarians, listen up: this isn't necessarily just another fad that you can ignore for a couple months until it goes away. Their health is too important. It's up to you, the parents, to be sure you and they know how to eat a healthy, balanced vegetarian diet that meets the needs of their growing bodies and brains. There are many books on the subject, so get started and have a learning experience together.

Webinar: Effective Exercise for Weight Loss and Fitness

As the title says, this is going to provide you with the information that you need to design the most effective exercise program to make your particular body lean and fit. As an exercise physiologist who taught Exercise 101 for many years, I can't wait. Here are some of the topics we'll be discussing:

- Where do you begin? Can you assess yourself?
- How do you monitor yourself—heart rate? Time? Intensity?
- How do you progress? When do you increase the intensity?
- What's a metabolic equivalent (MET)?
- What's the best exercise?
- How accurate are those calculators on equipment that estimate calories burned?
- What are the proven facts about exercise and what is simply myth?

This webinar will be geared toward how to exercise based on the results of the genetic test to determine which type of diet will benefit your body the most. If you didn't do the test, that's fine. You'll know what to do when you have the test done, and if you choose never to do the test, you'll still learn how to exercise effectively.

The webinar will held on Sunday, March 21, at 3 p.m. Eastern Time, which is noon Pacific Time. This will be the best \$19.95 you'll spend on exercise this or any year. Don't delay because space is limited—sign up at drchet.com.

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Dr. Chet

Straight Talk on Health

Hear Dr. Chet's take on the latest health news and research—listen to *Straight Talk on Health* at 7 p.m. Sunday in the Eastern Time Zone on WGUV-FM 88.5 or 95.3, or listen live via the Internet by going to www.wgvu.org and clicking on "Listen Live" in the gray bar at the top.

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