

# The 30 Pound Club

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## Paleolithic Diet

Many of you ask me about the Paleolithic diet, which is very popular right now. The concept is to recreate with modern foods the diet of our prehistoric ancestors who were hunter-gatherers. The idea is that without the processed and refined foods found today, it's easier to lose weight; a side benefit's more easily maintaining bloodsugar levels. I'm going to review a couple of studies that looked at the Paleolithic diet.

In a study reported in *Nutrition and Metabolism*, researchers compared a modern approach to the Paleolithic diet with the traditional Mediterranean diet (2). The Paleolithic diet (PD) was based on lean meat, fish, fruits, vegetables, root vegetables, eggs, and nuts. The Mediterranean diet (MD) was based on whole grains, low-fat dairy products, fish, fruit and vegetables. Researchers reported that the group following the PD improved more variables related to heart disease and diabetes than the MD group, even though the latter lost more weight and reduced waist circumference more. They attributed the difference to a trend toward more vegetable intake in the PD group. They also found that those on the PD were less hungry throughout the day than the MD group.

The problem is in their definition of a trend toward more vegetable intake—the difference was about 4.5 ounces, equivalent to a small potato. That's hardly a dent in vegetable intake and contributed only six grams of fiber per day, which still left the PD group short; the MD group had a fiber intake of 26 grams per day, the PD only 22 grams. Is that reflective of how much fiber Paleolithic men and women really ate?

Not in desert areas (2). Examining village sites, coprolites, cooking techniques, and the indigent plant populations, researchers estimated that Paleolithic people ate 135 grams of soluble fiber every day from agave and onions—135 grams! They clearly did more gathering than hunting. The modern approach to the PD is to eliminate refined foods, and that's good, but it's not more meat or fish that's the key. It's more vegetables and fruit with meat occasionally available.

A PD approach is great for those who are fat trimmers and carb reducers. But in both cases, you have to start with how many servings of vegetables you're going to eat every day. Then you can some of the other unprocessed foods such as fruit, nuts, meat, and fish.

By the way, coprolites are preserved human feces. That's how they measured the fiber intake. And you think you've got a shi\*\*y job!

One and Done.

What are you prepared to do today?

**Dr. Chet**

### References:

1. <http://www.nutritionandmetabolism.com/content/7/1/85>
2. Br J Nutr. 2010 Jun;103(11):1558-61

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