

The Healthiest Diet Proven By Science

It's actually happened.

After decades of research filled with millions of meals eaten by hundreds of thousands of subjects, the verdict is in. Science is now ready to proclaim the healthiest way to eat: one diet to rule them all.

So which is it? Atkin's, perhaps? Or Paleo? Low-Carb? Low-Fat? South Beach? Raw? Fruitarian? Veganism?

The answer, my friends, is none of the above. But it could also be all of the above. That's because healthiest diet isn't a specific diet at all. It's the absence of a diet.

This is not a sudden, world-changing, mind-altering finding. It is not well suited to a blaring news headline. It is not share fodder on social media. What it is, however, is a realization that surfaced gradually and methodically: Science will never conclusively prove that a single diet is the best diet.

Author Matt Fitzgerald summarized the finding, or rather, the lack thereof, in his new book *Diet Cults*:

"Science has not identified the healthiest way to eat. In fact, it has come as close as possible (because you can't prove a negative) to confirming that there is no such thing as the healthiest diet. To the contrary, science has established quite definitively that humans are able to thrive equally well on a variety of diets. Adaptability is the hallmark of man as eater. For us, many diets are good while none is perfect."

Further support for this notion comes from a simple glance back at the history of our species. Mankind has populated almost every corner of the earth, and in every diverse situation, humans were able to survive, even thrive, on whatever food their homes had to offer.

Even more convincing evidence has been found by observing those who have lived the longest. The University of California-Irvine's 90+ Study has tracked thousands of Americans who've made it to age 90 and beyond, yielding an unprecedented wealth of information about their lifestyle habits. For lead investigators Claudia Kawas and Maria Corrada, the most surprising finding they made is that most participants didn't seem to be too concerned with their health. Generally, the 90-year-olds said they didn't really keep to a restrictive diet. Nor did they abstain from alcohol, quite the opposite actually! The researchers found that up to two drinks a day -- no matter the type -- was associated with a 10-15% reduced risk of death. They also discovered other things that might disturb ardent dieters. Vitamin supplements did not affect lifespan in any way, and being a little overweight starting in middle age positively affected longevity.

But what if you're already overweight and want to shed some pounds? In that case, pick whatever diet works for you, because they all can work. What matters the most for weight loss is finding a solution that you can adhere to. That much was elucidated in a review recently published to the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Scientists reviewed a multitude of randomized trials on popular diets

and, lo and behold, found that all the diets helped subjects shed pounds, with minimal differences in weight loss between each diet.

Just like there is no one true religion, there is no one true diet. So why do so many dieters believe that there is?

"The short answer is that people believe what they want to believe," Fitzgerald wrote in *Diet Cults*. "The complete answer is that people want to believe that a certain way of eating is the best way because it gives them a sense of identity and a feeling of belonging. It's the work of that old, no-saying human impulse to eat according to the rules of a special group, which is often much stronger than the reasoning faculties."

"It feels good to believe in something."



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