



People Passionate about Starches Are Healthy and Beautiful

My wife, Mary, and I were enjoying steamed sweet corn (vegan) tamales with a side dish of black beans served to us at a bayside table at Guaymas Mexican/Seafood restaurant in Tiburon, a small town located a few miles north of the Golden Gate Bridge. At an inside table next to us sat three plump women, their short sleeves revealing upper arms almost as big as my thighs. They were elegantly dressed and from their speech I knew they were well educated. During the course of our meal I watched all three of them at various times hobble with painstaking efforts from their table to the restroom and back.

A light seaward breeze carried the smells from their clams, shrimp, and vegetables—all deep-fried in fat—over our table, spoiling our meal. I looked at Mary and thought, “these women are at least a decade younger than you are and all three are physically disabled.” For what pleasure? Food? It was all I could do to keep myself from asking them to try some of my tamale, or at least a bite of my black beans, and hand them a business card. I looked across our table and whispered to Mary, “Thank you.” She had no idea that I was telling her how happy she made me, and that some of my happiness came from enjoying the sight of a beautiful woman radiating health.

Where have all the pretty women and handsome men gone? Over to the dark-side of dining. Good-looking people who care enough about themselves to enhance their attractiveness by spending thousands of dollars on clothes, cars, makeup, perfumes, and plastic surgery have become unsightly—sacrificing themselves for yellow and brown food that tastes of grease and salt, and smells repugnant (in my opinion). Lives are ruined by food, to the same degree, as are the lives of a smoker, alcoholic, or narcotics addict destroyed by their misguided choices. Too few people know that for free, they can have all the health that money can't buy.

Health Is Attractive

I learned the facts of life from my father many years ago. We were close and discussed all matters frankly. Walking down a busy street one day he noticed my eyes drawn to many of the young women passing by. He said, “The reason you find some of these girls especially attractive is because they look healthy.” My hormone-fueled boyish response was, “That's not what I am looking at Dad.” It took me many years before I understood how right he was. Health is attractive, by natural design, for the preservation of the species. Sexually, we are drawn to healthy people, because those are the ones that we want to mate—to share our genetic material—with. This character of human nature enhances the chances that a loving relationship between man and woman will result in the highest quality offspring. Overweight, and even more so obesity, is a glaring sign of malnutrition and poor health.

In platonic relationships health is also a magnet that pulls people together. In times past, villages of people depended upon the strengths of their individual members in order to survive. Physically fit people could hunt, gather, and defend for the sake of all members in the community. The sick were a burden, and often banished. These same principles transfer to the business world of today. Appearing healthy means you are more likely to add to the common goals of the company. Hearty employees work harder, for longer hours, more cleverly, and more efficiently—they are valuable contributors. Good health radiates your worth to others, resulting in personal advancement.

The Truth Is Simple and Easy to Explain

Most people are completely backwards about the diet that results in health and an attractive appearance. They learn, “Don't eat starches, because rice turns to sugar, which turns to fat, making you gain weight.” If this mantra were true then there would be an epidemic of obesity among the 1.73 billion Asians living on rice-based diets. Confirming this truth, after moving west and replacing their starch with “high-protein” foods, then people from Japan and the Philippines would become trimmer and

healthier looking. Is that what you see? "Potatoes are fattening." If true, then why during the 2000 McDougall Adventure trip to Peru, a country where common potatoes are the staple food, were the residents so trim and strong looking? We did see a few overweight people on this trip. The "chubby ones" were the waiters and chefs serving tourists their favorite meat and cheese dishes, and obviously sampling the menu.

Let's look together at a globe of the Earth and identify the populations of people who look the youngest, healthiest, and trimmest. Those living in Japan, China, Korea, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines stand out. Their diet is mostly rice with some vegetables. In rural Mexico we will find beautiful people eating corn, beans, and squash. No one is overweight or on a diet there. The men, women and children of central New Guinea are nourished almost entirely by sweet potatoes. These people have no need for Weight Watchers or Jenny Craig. Worldwide, populations with the highest consumption of starch are the trimmest and fittest.¹ Learn about the health of these trim people and you will discover that they also have extremely low rates of diabetes, arthritis, gallbladder disease, constipation, indigestion, multiple sclerosis, heart disease, and cancers of the breast, prostate, and colon.

Starches Generate Fitness

The basic metabolism of the body is genetically encoded to run most efficiently on starches, and no amount of willpower, dieting, or wishful thinking will ever change the fundamentals of our internal workings. The one big simple solution to health and beauty is to eat the diet we were designed for—a starch-based diet.

Starches Are Appetite Satisfying.

The hunger drive keeps you and the whole human race alive. You will not fool your hunger drive by pushing yourself away from the table, putting your fork down between bites, eating from a small plate, or counting calories. It will always hurt to be hungry and you can never train yourself to not feel that pain, even if you practice until you are 90 years old. So give in and eat, you must satisfy this basic survival need. The control you do have is the composition of the foods that are on your plate. Choose wisely. Meat, dairy, and oils for meals will mean overweight and sickness. Starches, vegetables, and fruits will mean a trim fit body and lifetime of excellent health.

You may have heard that "all calories are the same when it comes to body weight." This is incorrect, especially in terms of efficiency of appetite satisfaction and ease of fat accumulation. Three substances—protein, fat, and carbohydrate—can provide fuel for the body, measured as calories. Starches, like corn, beans, potatoes, and rice, are abundant in carbohydrates, dietary fiber, and are very low in fat. Appetite satisfaction begins with physically filling the stomach. Compared to cheese (4 calories per gram), meat (4 calories per gram), and oils (9 calories per gram), starches, at only one calorie per gram, are very calorie dilute. In the simplest terms, starches physically will fill you up with a fraction—one-fourth—of the calories as will cheese, meat, and oil.² Furthermore, research comparing the impact of eating carbohydrates and fats on the appeasement of our appetite shows carbohydrates lead to long-term satiety, enduring for hours between meals; whereas the fats in a meal have little impact on satiety—people are left wanting more food when they eat fats and oils.^{3,4}

My early eating experiences taught me this lesson well. Before I understood the importance of starch-centered meals my diet consisted of red meat (no carbohydrates), chicken (no carbohydrates), fish (no carbohydrates), cheese (2% carbohydrates), and animal fats and vegetable oils (no carbohydrates). After finishing my first full plate of these foods I was still starving. My second plate left me with a sense of physical fullness in my abdomen, but still very hungry. After my third plate of carbohydrate-deficient foods I received two signals that the time had come to stop eating—I felt overstuffed and in pain. But I remember thinking, because I was still not satisfied, that "if I had room, I would like to stuff into my stomach one more pork chop." At times I wondered if I had emotional issues with food because I was never content. Maybe I was a compulsive overeater? Fortunately, my "mental illness," my compulsiveness, was completely cured once I began eating sufficient amounts of appetite-satisfying carbohydrates, plentiful in starches.

Excess Starch Does Not Turn to Body Fat

A widely held belief is that the sugars in starches are readily converted into fat and then stored unattractively in the abdomen, hips, and buttock. Incorrect! And there is no disagreement about the truth among scientists or their published scientific research.⁵⁻¹³ After eating, the complex carbohydrates found in starches, such as rice, are digested into simple sugars in the intestine and then absorbed into the bloodstream where they are transported to trillions of cells in the body in order to provide for energy. Carbohydrates (sugars) consumed in excess of the body's daily needs can be stored (invisibly) as glycogen in the muscles and liver. The total storage capacity for glycogen is about two pounds. Carbohydrates consumed in excess of our need and beyond our limited storage capacity are not readily stored as body fat. Instead, these excess carbohydrate calories are burned off as heat (a process known as facultative dietary thermogenesis) or used in physical movements not associated with exercise.^{9,13}

The process of turning sugars into fats is known as de novo lipogenesis. Some animals, such as pigs and cows, can efficiently convert the low-energy, inexpensive carbohydrates found in grains and grasses into calorie-dense fats.⁵ This metabolic efficiency makes pigs and cows ideal "food animals." Bees also perform de novo lipogenesis; converting honey (simple carbohydrates) into wax (fats). However, human beings are very inefficient at this process and as a result de novo lipogenesis does not occur under usual living conditions in people.⁵⁻¹³ When, during extreme conditions, de novo lipogenesis does occur the metabolic cost is about 30% of the calories consumed—a very wasteful process.¹¹

Under experimental laboratory conditions overfeeding of large amounts of simple sugars to subjects will result in a little bit of de novo lipogenesis. For example, trim and obese women were overfed 50% more total calories than they usually ate in a day, along with an extra 3.5 ounces (135 grams) of refined sugar. From this overfeeding the women produced less than 4 grams (36 calories) of fat daily, which means a person would have to be overfed by this amount of extra calories and sugar every day for nearly 4 months in order to gain one extra pound of body fat.¹⁰ Obviously, even overeating substantial quantities of refined and processed carbohydrates is a relatively unimportant source of body fat. So where does all that belly fat come from? The fat you eat is the fat you wear.

Fat Is the Metabolic Dollar Saved for the Next Famine

After eating, dietary fat (from lard, butter, meat, cheese, nuts, olive oil, etc.) is absorbed from the intestine into the bloodstream and transported to the millions of cells designed for storage—the body fat (adipose) cells. The metabolic cost for this transfer is relatively inexpensive (3% of the calories consumed).¹¹ No pricey chemical conversion is required, so this is a routine metabolic movement after every typical meal. When samples of a person's body fat tissue are chemically analyzed the results reveal the kinds of fats which that person commonly eats.¹⁴⁻¹⁷ For example, the consumption of margarine and shortening results in high proportions of "trans" fats in a person's fatty tissues. A diet with large amounts of cold-water marine fish means omega-3 fats are deposited and stored in the body fat. The saying "from my lips to my hips" expresses the real life effects of the fat-laden Western diet. Fortunately, starches contain very little fat for us to wear.

Starches Cause Us to Radiate Vitality

Weight loss is accomplished every year by thousands of people by methods that don't necessarily promote health and commonly cause illness. The best example of this is the low-carbohydrate, Atkins-type approaches that have been so popular in the recent past. These diets work by severe carbohydrate deprivation, which causes a state of illness (with the hallmark of ketosis). When people become sick they lose their appetite and thereby lose weight. This method for losing extra pounds is analogous to the weight loss seen in people taking cancer chemotherapy drugs.¹⁸ To the careful observer, people following low-carbohydrate diets look and act sick.

A starch-based diet results in loss of excess body fat, and as desirable, radiant health. Winning endur-

ance athletes know well the benefits of “carbohydrate loading.” In addition to achieving peak performance, following a starch-based diet improves blood flow to all tissues. The skin glows from improved circulation. A clear complexion is also a welcome byproduct from the low-fat nature of starches—no more oily skin, blackheads, whiteheads, and acne. From the weight loss and the relief of arthritis, people become more active and agile, like when they were much younger. The key to gaining all these benefits is accomplished solely by changing the composition of the foods on your plate—but that’s easier said, than done.

Moderation Is Impossible for Passionate People

My great grandmother, Laura Bristow lived to be 106 years old eating a “well-balanced diet.” I recall her telling me, when I was a child, “Johnny, you eat too much meat; it’s going to make you sick.” Years later—I was 30 and she was 102—I had become, in all practical terms, a strict vegetarian. One afternoon at her home in the suburbs of Detroit she asked me to drive to the neighborhood McDonald’s and buy her a hamburger—a 30 cent burger, made with paper thin ground beef, two pickle slices and a blob of mustard and ketchup, all hidden within two halves of an airy white bread bun. Upon my return she proceeded to cut the hamburger into quarters and she shook one quarter in my face and advised me, “If you ate a little more meat you would be healthier.” She then ate two quarters and put the rest away for later. My great-grandmother was by nature a very moderate person who picked at tiny platefuls of traditional American foods, drank ¼ cup of diluted coffee each morning, and had one small glass of red wine on holidays. I am not like her.

I am not a restrained person and neither are most of my patients. In my youth I started the day with several mugs of strong coffee, I frequented all-you-can eat buffets and fast food restaurants, I smoked two packages of Marlboros daily, and too often unwound at the end of my stress-filled day with a whiskey or two. (I also paid a big price for this excessive behavior with a cholesterol level of 335 mg/dl, 50 pounds of excess body fat, major abdominal surgery, and a debilitating stroke, all before the age of 25 years.) I realize most people are not as wicked as I was, but on the other hand most people I know allow at least one of these overindulgences in their lives—and that one extravagance is usually unending forkfuls of rich foods. For people like us, attempts at moderation result in continued dependence and recurring failures.

“Everything in moderation” has been preached to every generation throughout human history. It didn’t work way back then and it doesn’t work for most folks today. Have you ever met a smoker who quit by cutting down? I haven’t. Have you ever heard of an alcoholic who sobered up by switching to beer? Neither have I. Westerners are completely addicted to their steaks, cheeses, and pies. Don’t tease them with a little bit. Cutting down on the portion size of fried chicken, gravy, biscuits, and ice cream is slow torture and is one of the primary reasons diets fail.

William Lloyd Garrison (1805 – 1879), known for his anti-slavery activities, clearly understood the shortcomings of moderation, “Tell a man whose house is on fire to give a moderate alarm; tell him to moderately rescue his wife from the hands of the ravisher; tell the mother to gradually extricate her babe from the fire into which it has fallen; but urge me not to use moderation.” The startling observation that almost all people living in Western societies are fat and/or sick with diseases which will wreck and shorten their lives, should have health professionals up in arms, demanding an immediate and complete end to this senseless suffering—regardless of the expense and effort. But, for some unexplainable reason, the loss of a father or a husband to a heart attack, the disfigurement of a mother by breast cancer surgery, and the blinding of a friend from diabetes are accepted consequences for our birthright to eat like aristocrats. To mitigate these food-induced tragedies we are told to eat a little less of the same.

Throughout my entire life I have been enthusiastic about everything—my schoolwork, my hobbies, my sports, the whole lot of life. I was born this way, and scientific research establishes the fact that like the color of our eyes and hair, our personality traits are determined in part by complex genetics.^{19,20} Early life experiences fostered my exuberant nature. So now, even if I wanted to, I could not become a “moderate person.” Still, I love life and do not want my high-spirited personality to kill me,

as it almost did in my youth. So I have found the solution.

I now direct my energies towards supportive, not destructive, behaviors. I have learned to love healthy foods—I eat them without reservation. Windsurfing is my passion. I eagerly look forward to long walks with my youngest grandson carried in a backpack. I spend a little extra money to indulge myself with bottled pure water. My favorite drink is herbal tea—and I do drink a lot of it. I fill my lungs with fresh air cleaned by an air purifier. I passionately pursue every “good thing” in my life. Irish poet and dramatist, Oscar Wilde said: “Moderation is a fatal thing. Nothing succeeds like excess.” I encourage you to take these words to heart and live life enthusiastically and focused on health-supporting behaviors.

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