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WHAT IS 4LEAF?

By J. Morris Hicks

4Leaf is an eating concept designed to make it easy for everyone to learn how to eat a near-optimal diet. Naturally, it all begins with the definition of the optimal diet for humans. In the interest of simplicity, I chose this statement by the Cornell professor who led the most comprehensive study of nutrition ever conducted. Here, he concisely summarizes his conclusions after a half-century career as a nutritional scientist:

“The closer we get to eating a diet of whole, plant-based foods, the better off we will be.”

T. Colin Campbell, PhD, Nutritional Biochemistry

How simple is that? For a host of reasons that will be covered later, I am certain that the eating plan Mother Nature had in mind for the human species was one comprised of mostly whole plants. And we can help you get there with the information in the chapters ahead.

In this chart, we define six levels of eating, beginning with the least healthy Typical Western Diet. Each level is

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defined ONLY by the percent of its calories derived from whole, plant-based foods.

<p>Unhealthy Diet Typical Western or SAD (Standard American Diet)</p>	<p>Less than 10% of total calories from whole plants. Containing some combination of meat, dairy, eggs, fish and/or highly-processed foods at almost every meal, this popular diet-style is associated with a plethora of serious health problems.</p>
<p>Better Than Most</p>	<p>10% to 19% of calories from whole plants. People at this level are actually trying to eat a healthier diet, but they need a better understanding of what promotes health.</p>
	<p>20% to 39% of calories from whole plants. Although eating significantly more whole plants than the majority of folks, people at this level are not consuming enough of them to provide much protection against disease.</p>
	<p>40 to 59% of calories from whole plants. Although eating 4-5 times more whole plants than most, people at this level are still falling short of ensuring long-term vibrant health.</p>
	<p>60 to 79% of calories from whole plants. This group is deriving well over half of their total calories from health-promoting, whole, plant-based foods and is likely experiencing many of the benefits of healthy eating.</p>
	<p>Over 80% of calories from whole plants. Currently representing a small minority of the population, these people tend to have trim bodies, vibrant health, lots of energy, take no medications, rarely have ANY disease and will likely live a long & healthy life.</p>

The 4Leaf rule about fat content. Consumers of the Typical Western Diet (TWD) derive about 40% of their total calories from fat. Dr. Campbell and Dr. Esselstyn will tell you that the optimal percentage of fat in the diet is

about 10%. Since achieving that number would be difficult for most people, we set the bar at 20%.

That means, to be a real 4Leaf-er, you not only need to derive over 80% of your total calories from whole plants, you also need to keep your percentage of fat below 20%. In order to do that, you may need to go easy on the following high fat content, whole plants: avocados, nuts, olives and seeds. Containing over 70% fat, these foods should be eaten in moderation only. The studies showing reversal of heart disease actually excluded these high-fat plant foods so, if you have heart disease, you may want to avoid them entirely.

The 4Leaf Survey. The 4Leaf approach to healthy eating was first introduced in my 2011 book, *Healthy Eating, Healthy World*. Later, in the spring of 2012, the 4Leaf Survey was introduced to help people estimate their own 4Leaf level of eating.

The survey (covered in Chapter 6) contains twelve simple multiple choice questions and can be completed in two or three minutes. The algorithm for scoring the survey and determining your estimated 4Leaf level was completed in 2014 after administering the survey over 40,000 times in the USA and abroad.

Daily Reporting Version of the survey. Unlike the standard 4Leaf Survey that is based on your recollection of your “average” eating habits, this version is based on what you actually ate on a particular day.

In Chapters 11 and 16, Dr. Graff explains the use of both of these surveys to one of her patients. Both versions of the 4Leaf Survey are included in the Appendix (A and B). Other 4Leaf materials can be found at 4leafprogram.com. They include the 4Leaf Chart and an extensive set of

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improvement tools. Additionally, there is a 4Leaf app in development.

In this book, we will do our best to help you achieve vibrant health by showing you how to eat at or near the 4Leaf level--getting over 80% of your calories from whole plants.

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4Leaf Global, LLC, was formed in 2015 with a mission of promoting the widespread adoption of whole food, plant-based eating throughout the world--for our own health and for the health of the ecosystem that sustains us.



*Promoting Vibrant Health.
For Ourselves. For Our Planet*