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## WHY SHOULD WE EAT MOSTLY WHOLE PLANTS?

By J. Morris Hicks

Let's begin with a few nutrition basics. Humans fuel their bodies with three macronutrients: carbohydrates, fat and protein. We need some of all three to live, but we also need them in the right proportion to thrive.

In addition to macronutrients, we need vitamins, minerals, fiber and phytonutrients (naturally occurring chemical substances that help us fight off infection and cancer).

A varied, whole food, plant-based diet contains all of the above. In terms of calories, it contains roughly 80% carbohydrate, 10% fat, and 10% protein. It also contains tons of vitamins, minerals, fiber and phytonutrients. How do we know this way of eating is the healthiest diet for humans? Stay tuned.

The Typical Western Diet (TWD) or the Standard American Diet (SAD), with some combination of meat,

dairy, eggs, fish and/or processed foods at almost every meal--provides a ratio of approximately 40% carbohydrates, 40% fat, and 20% protein. It provides very little fiber, vitamins, minerals or phytonutrients. What it does contain is a lot of fat and cholesterol (which clogs arteries) and animal protein. While you probably think that animal protein is a good thing, it turns out that it is associated with a multitude of diseases. More on that later.

As stated earlier, nature has a special eating plan for every species, but we have drifted far away from the plan that she had in mind for us. I could fill a one thousand page book with all of the information supporting why we should be eating mostly whole plants. But, for the sake of brevity, I offer you instead:

### **My Top 10 Reasons For adopting a diet of mostly whole plants**

- 1. The animal in nature** whose DNA is nearly identical to humans (the gorilla) eats almost exclusively raw plants.
- 2. Observation of many healthy cultures** like the Tarahumara of Mexico. Subsisting on mostly corn, squash and beans, they enjoy vibrant health, live very long lives and almost never have any of our chronic diseases.
- 3. Migrant studies.** When members of those healthy cultures migrate to Chicago or Dallas and begin eating the toxic Standard American Diet (SAD), they begin to develop the same frequency of chronic diseases that we experience.
- 4. Disease reversal.** The five medical doctors, featured in *Healthy Eating, Healthy World*, have leveraged the power of whole plants to successfully reverse heart disease and type 2 diabetes in over 90% of their cases.

**5. Scientific Research.** Dr. T. Colin Campbell of Cornell, author of *The China Study* and director of the largest epidemiological study in history, has validated the work of those above mentioned doctors with research that suggests that our consumption of animal protein (along with insufficient whole plants) is the primary driver of most of our chronic diseases.

**6. Bill Clinton gave up his infamous burgers.** Two of those five MDs and Dr. Campbell influenced him to adopt a whole food, plant-based diet in 2010. Love him or hate him, it's pretty big news when a former president of the United States, in order to reverse his heart disease, chooses a diet-style that has not yet been embraced by mainstream medicine.

**7. Plants have plenty of protein.** The strongest animals in the world (elephants, hippos and horses) eat almost exclusively raw plants. And they get plenty of protein, because nature put it there as part of their eating plan.

**8. Kaiser Permanente.** After considering the mountain of evidence, our nation's largest healthcare provider concluded that a whole food, plant-based diet is best for human health. In their 2013 Spring Journal, they reported: "Physicians should consider recommending a plant-based diet to all their patients; discouraging meats, dairy products, and eggs as well as all refined/processed foods."

**9. Albert Einstein figured it out.** He concluded: "Nothing will benefit human health and increase chances of survival for life on Earth as much as the evolution to a vegetarian diet."

**10. The United Nations thinks it's vital.** As reported in June 2010: “A global shift to a vegan diet is vital to save the world from hunger, fuel poverty and the worst impacts of climate change.”

Notice in the last two reasons above that we start to widen our view, acknowledging that a whole food, plant-based diet also has a huge impact on the future of our society and our planet. Indeed, what we eat is the single most important topic in the history of humanity--because the future of humanity is riding on those food choices.

Without a doubt, the TWD/SAD style of eating is grossly unsustainable--not enough water or land, for starters. Our underground water reserves are being depleted at an astronomical rate in order to grow feed for livestock. And when there is no longer enough water to grow food for everyone, billions of people will die of starvation or from the violence that will ensue as people fight to survive.

**The Bottom Line.** A huge win-win awaits the Earth and all of her creatures when humankind begins a deliberate return to the natural diet for our species—one consisting of mostly whole, plant-based foods. You will learn more about that unprecedented *win-win* in the next chapter.