

What's the Connection Between Your Breathing and Your Diet?



Many people, including myself, would not have believed there was any significant connection between what we eat and the way we breathe. This would be understandable for the general public but not surely for someone like myself that has specialized in two important health promoting fields of education, namely breathing and nutrition.

A year ago I decided there could be some connection because I had noticed that patients who had a good diet, did seem to be better breathers. And so I began collecting data on all new clients; checking their breathing and diet at the first meeting.

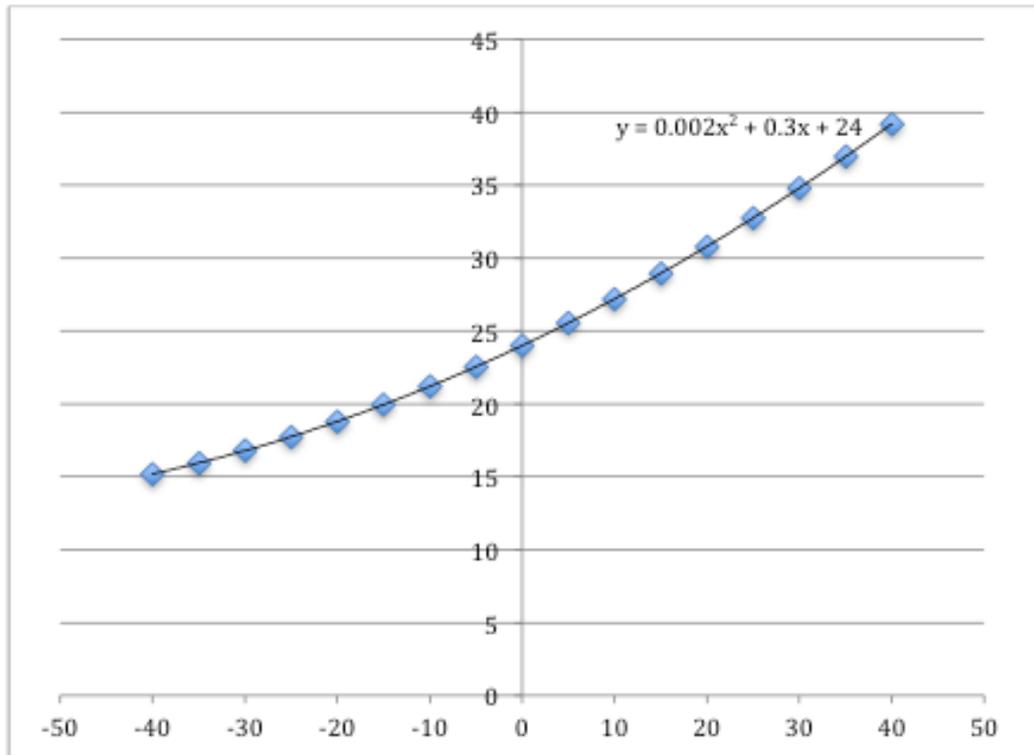
As the data volume grew, so did the evidence of a strong link between the two measures. To ensure that this was a cause and effect relationship and not just a chance connection there has to be a reasonable physiological/biological explanation.

When people eat a diet high in animal, dairy and processed foods with low intake of fruit, vegetables and whole grains, their body becomes acidic. There are two main ways the body then tries to return to normal: breathing rate is increased to “washout” CO₂, so reducing the acid load and also by drawing Calcium from the bones to further reduce acidity. This offered a reasonable explanation as to why diet can change breathing rate but how could breathing rate change the choice of foods we decide to eat?

There might be two possible explanations here; usually poor breathing, in particular chronic hidden hyperventilation or regular over-breathing, is triggered and maintained by stress associated with our primitive “Fight or Flight” automatic responses. It is common to see those under stress choosing “comfort” foods, unhealthy snacks and additional stimulants such as alcohol or coffee. Likewise the over-stressed individual has little time to spend on choosing quality foods or taking adequate time out relaxing while dining. Their diet suffers once again; quick easy convenience foods are the rule.

The chart below shows my current results based on over a hundred clients. Every additional group I add to this data has supported this same relationship.

Control Pause (seconds)



4LeafSurvey
Diet
Score

4LS Score	-40	-30	-20	-10	0	+10	+20	+30	+40
Control Pause	15	17	19	21	24	27	31	35	39

Conclusions:

It appears there is a synergic relationship between our breathing and our diet. Thus, if we choose to improve our diet by increasing alkaline promoting foods such as fruit, vegetables and whole grains and reduce our acid forming foods such as meat, fish, dairy and highly processed foods, our breathing will improve automatically shown by an increasing Control Pause and lowering pulse rate.

Likewise there is some evidence that if we improve our breathing through breath training, principally learning to only breathe through the nose and reducing our body tensions through relaxation 24/7, then our eating habits will probably also change, we will be more discriminating and mindful of our diet.

Together these two key health-promoting factors will reduce the risk of developing a disease and/or improve the symptoms of any established disease.

NB. The CP is the max. comfortable breath hold after exhaling at rest (in seconds). It gives a fair approximation to the rate of breathing and CO2 levels in exhaled air. As a general rule any person with a CP less than 20 will be suffering a variety of health problems, those with a CP of 45 to 60 seconds (normal range) will have optimal oxygenation and function, other things being equal.