

Such acid, which are  
not available in plant



Such phrases such as “ we are what we eat” has gained prominence today as people engage in debate on the best eating habits that we need to embrace.

Everything that we eat has consequences in as far as our overall health is concerned. It is therefore our responsibility to make informed choices when it comes to choosing dietary alternatives. Dieting is a means of maintaining a good healthy body.

A well balanced diet includes both vegetarian foods and carnivorous or meat based food. Vegetarian diet totally excludes meat or any animal products. While nutritionists propose a well balanced diet, substituting meat and other animal products with vegetable equivalent reduces chances of lifestyle diseases, which are a major concern today.

The purpose of this paper is to highlight how a vegetarian diet is more beneficial for better health. Smith (para. 2) argues that meat is a very healthy source of high quality proteins, which builds our bodies. Essential amino acids necessary for our bodies growth are contained in diet rich with red meat. Phosphorous found in meat is easily absorbed in our bodies than phosphorous found in vegetables. Meat is a source of important micronutrients such as iron, selenium, vitamins A, B12 and folic acid, which are not available in plant based foods. Further, Anderson, Konz and Jenkins (1243) state that meat-based products are helpful in short term weight loss. Therefore, meat and animal products play an essential diet supplementary role.

Meat contains essential amino acids and micronutrients. In addition, it also plays a vital role in the regulation of energy metabolism processes (Koebnick et al 3215). However, a diet rich in meat and animal products has been found to have severe detrimental effects to people's health.

Smith (para. 3) argues that people retain the hormones fed to dairy animal to accelerate growth. When they eat meat and animal products these hormones lead to an increased weight gain. Uncontrolled intake of roast meat is also a major cause of gout and arthritis. He continues to argue that fish and other edible marine foods are preserved using boric acid. A sustained intake of this chemical may cause brain and liver damage Biesalski (1243) argues that continued intake of meat exposes one to risk of contracting cancer, obesity and metabolic syndrome.

Anderson and colleagues (1243) report that increased intake of meat increases serum cholesterol levels, which put people at the risk of contracting cardiovascular and coronary diseases. Therefore, meat should be consumed in controlled portions to avoid such negative implications.

Vegetarian diet too has its own disadvantages. Smith (para. 5) report that important vitamins responsible for formation of red blood cells (for example, vitamin B2 and B12), are absent in vegetarian diets.

A fiber rich vegetarian diet may also lead to malnutrition as victims lack other food supplements available only in meat-based foods. If a vegetarian diet is not properly planned, a person may miss several nutritional intakes such as proteins iron zinc calcium vitamin B (12) and essential amino acids. This can however be overcome if a well balanced vegetarian diet is

observed. Despite these shortcomings, Lietzmann (148) argues that a wholesome vegetarians diet offers more advantages compared to meat based diet. Well balanced vegetarian diets are essential in all stages of human development form childhood, adolescent, pregnancy stage, adult hood to old age. Anderson et al (1244) states that low fat vegetarian diets are responsible for improving cardiovascular status.

Smith Biesalski (510) says that vegetarian diets reduce the level of cholesterol intake to the bare minimum. Vegetarian diets have been found to play an important role in the prevention and treatment of life threatening diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, hypertension, diabetes, cancer osteoporosis among others. Low fat vegetarian diet is responsible for altering serum cholesterol intake for improved health in pre menopausal women. Lietzmann (149) reports that research in England have found that vegetarian diet is responsible for reducing diabetes and heart disease.

All these benefits explain why vegetarian diet is gaining a worldwide popularity for its health benefits. Vegetarian diet goes beyond health concerns (Lietzmann, 2005). Vegetarian diet has more benefits to a human being than meat based diet. Some religious denominations such as the Adventist strictly follow a vegetarian diet as a religious culture (Levin and Vanderpool 70).

Despite all the advantages of a herbivorous diet a carnivorous diet is still essential to humans as it contains essentials nutrients absent in plant food. A well balanced diet that incorporates both meat and vegetables is essential. To achieve proper health and reduce chances of contracting life threatening

diseases, intake of meat and animal products should be reduced to a minimum. A balanced diet that contains both the animal sources of nutrition on the one hand and those from the plant sources is more ideal. This is because some of the nutrients in the plant sources are in a bound form and for maximum absorption they need to be supplemented with their equivalent from animal sources, and vice versa.

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