

The vegetarian lifestyle essay

[Environment](#), [Climate Change](#)



In recent decades, it has been getting harder and harder to find a healthy eating lifestyle. Doctors believe that eating meat is the way to go, because meat has immense amount of protein and iron. But some skeptics say that meat can lead to many chronic illnesses or diseases such as cancer, heart disease, obesity and etc. Other doctors believe that the vegetarian lifestyle is the way to live, because it gives you sufficient amounts of fiber, vitamins and minerals (Weston).

The downside to this argument is the lack of amount of protein and iron in these foods. So which lifestyle is the best way to live? Before everyone is a “grown-up” they would go to elementary and middle school where all they would see is the food pyramid which showed in order to live a healthy lifestyle they must eat a little bit of everything. The College of Agriculture of University of Kentucky found the nutritional values of meat, and found that meat has an abundant amount of 12 vitamins and minerals included.

Bestin expresses that meat includes an enormous amount of iron, protein, zinc, phosphorus, vitamin B6 and etc. University of Kentucky has come to the conclusion that people need a dietary balance and variety to attain healthy eating. Bestin is trying to express that people should have a little of everything, including meat, and this makes total sense considering the food pyramid tells us to have servings of each type of food.

If meat is not included in the diet, than people will have low amounts of the 12 vitamins and minerals previously mentioned (Bestin). Although meat is a great source of protein and iron, too much of meat can cause health problems. The pros of eating meat include the immense amount of vitamins

included. But Allison Van Dusen of MSNBC along with numerous doctors, believe that a vegetarian lifestyle can prevent heart disease and certain cancers. This is because of meats high amount of saturated fats, there is also a great amount of cholesterol included in the meal. Dr. Bob Lawrence says that “ we would all be better off if we dramatically reduced meat to the point of one meal a week” (Van Dusen 1).

Furthermore, doctors say that there are vegetarian ways to receive protein. Dr. Cathy Wong suggests that protein can be found in foods without faces as well. Dr. Wong says that nuts, beans, peas and soy products have substantial amounts of protein. Also for those vegetarians that also eat dairy and egg products, milk and eggs contain a great amount of protein as well. Dr. Wong advises to combine different vegetables such as beans and rice, this is because beans are low in lysine and rice is rich in lysine, thus making a complimentary protein (Wong 1).

Not only are there food products that are vegetarian that can supply one with vitamins and minerals that are contained in meat, but there are also vitamin supplements in pill form such as Centrum and the famous Flintstones vitamins for kids. Although there are many meat substitutes, Dr. Wong believes that the real deal would be healthier for the body. The vegetarian lifestyle has its up but it has some downsides as well. For example because vegetables and fruits do not include as much iron or B12 in their food compared to meat, some people may face malnutrition. Not only are vegetarians and vegans at risk to face malnutrition, but they are also at risk to face energy deficiency. This means that vegetarians are not taking in as

many calories as they should be to live a healthy lifestyle. Long term deficiencies can lead to bigger problems later in life.

Some of these problems can include osteoporosis, iron-deficiency anemia and even prevent you from growing as fast (Wong 1). With all the facts presented, which lifestyle is the healthier choice? If health was not the issue, which lifestyle would be the ethical choice? If health and ethics were not an issue, which lifestyle would God want us to live? If health, ethics and religion were not an issue, which lifestyle would help end world hunger? These questions lead to one answer; the vegetarian lifestyle is a key factor for great health; vegetarianism goes along with common religious beliefs, it is definitely more ethical, and finally the vegetarian lifestyle is the ecologically superior way to live. First of all, one of the main reasons that people choose to live a vegetarian lifestyle is because it is simply a healthier way to live. Scientists have found that our evolutionary ancestors were primates; they found that these primates were vegetarians. Scientists have also linked our anatomical make up to what humans should be eating. Human teeth and intestines are designed for eating and digesting plants, not animals.

Meat consumption causes so many health problems because the human body was not built to eat meat. The mere fat from the animals can clog arteries causing heart attacks and strokes. Not only can meat consumption cause heart problems, but they can also lead to Type 2 diabetes. The meat itself is very unhealthy, and the chemicals given to the animals cause even more health risks.

Meat foods contain up to 14 times more residues such as agriculture chemicals, industrial pollutants, antibiotics, and hormones, as do vegetarians. There are about 9, 000 deaths due to food-borne illnesses included in meat, and an estimated 80 million that become ill. The United States Department of Agriculture estimates a total of 40 percent of all chicken sold in America is infected with the bacteria salmonella (People for the ethical treatment of animals). Furthermore, even with all these health risks why do more than 96 percent of Americans eat meat? Some people say that the vegetarian diet does not include a sufficient amount of protein and iron in their foods. The truth is there is more than enough protein and iron in tofu, nuts, milk, and etc.

For those who feel the need to receive more iron or protein, they can always take supplements that are in pill or liquid form. The American Dietetic Association (AMA) promotes living a vegetarian lifestyle. The AMA says that you receive the same nutrients with a vegetarian diet and you get rid of the negative effects of a non-vegetarian diet. AMA also says that you have a better chance to achieve “ lower blood pressure, lower rates of type-2 diabetes, and a lower body mass index. Living a vegetarian lifestyle also gives people on average 6 – 10 more years to life (Vegetarian Diets, 2009).

Although, the carnivorous lifestyle is not a healthy way to live life is the vegetarian lifestyle any better? The answer to this question is a definite YES, which has been proven by many doctors and dietetic societies. The American Dietetic Association states that “ well-planned vegetarian diets are healthful and nutritionally adequate. ” The key to a healthy vegetarian diet is that,

those vitamins and minerals that are not as sufficient in vegetarian products should be consumed more. Vegetarians can receive the same vitamins and minerals without the unhealthy saturated fat and cholesterol included in meat. Not only is a vegetarian lifestyle healthy, but it can also prevent a lot of diseases and cancers that meat eaters may face (Iverson 49). Besides preventing diseases, vegetarianism can eliminate world hunger. In Michael Allen Fox's *Deep Vegetarianism*, he says that nearly 40 percent of the world's grains and nearly 70 percent of America's grains are fed to livestock. Nearly 14 million children die due to hunger and hunger related causes.

It has been estimated that if there were a 10 percent reduction in meat consumption, the millions of starving humans would not be starving. This is especially important in the harsh economical times of today. The production of meat is extremely inefficient because the input value does not compare the output value. For every 16 pounds of grain there is only 1 pound of edible flesh that humans can eat (Fox 76-77).

Secondly, religious views of many interfere with the consumption of meat and yet 96 percent of America still eats meat. In America the citizens come from a wide range of religions. The religious demographics of America range from Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and etc. There are approximately 75.2 percent of Christians in America itself. And because there are about 306 million people in America, there are about 230.

1 million Christians in America. There is also about 1.7 percent of Americans with a Jewish background and about .6 percent of Muslims in America. These numbers mean that there are a total of 7 million 38 thousand Americans that

follow the Jewish or Islamic way of living (Young). Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are considered people of the book, meaning they all believe in the same God, but their theory differs when it comes to the prophets. They all agree on the Lord and how the Earth was made, but they do not agree on who the last prophet was. In the case of Judaism the last prophet was Moses, with Christianity the last prophet was Jesus, and with Islam the last prophet was Muhammad.

In the Bible it says “ God also said ‘ Throughout the earth I give you all plants that bear seed, and every tree that bears fruit with seed: they shall be yours for food. ” Genesis 1: 29. God made all the vegetables and fruit for humans to eat; he has not said to kill animals for food. In Genesis, the story of Adam and Eve is the story of how the world and man came to be. In Genesis 2: 18 – 2: 29 it says “ It is not good for this man to be alone; I shall make a partner suited to him.

So from the Earth he formed all the wild animals and all the birds of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; whatever the man called the living creature that should be its name. ” According to the Holy bible God intended on man and animals to be companions. God did not want humans to be the predators and the “ companions” the prey.

Companion is defined as “ a person who accompanies or associates with another; a comrade”; meaning animals are not meant to be food. Not only is vegetarianism shown through the Genesis, but also through one of the commandments “ Thou shall not kill”.

There are a total of 237. 1 million “ People of the Book” in America, and nevertheless only 4 percent of Americans are vegetarians. The health factor obviously is not very important, and I guess religion does not mean much either (Young). Finally, there are those religions that straight forwardly say: human beings should be vegetarian.

Hinduism and Buddhism are two of Asia’s biggest religions, and they both believe in the term ‘ Ahimsa’. In layman’s terms ahimsa means non-violence. The foundations of Hinduism and Buddhism come from the Vedas, and so both religions are very similar. Ahimsa means that all forms of life are sacred and urging the avoidance of violence. Similar to the health and religion, ethics promotes the vegetarian lifestyle as well.

The word unethical is defined as dishonorable by dictionary. com. The question is, is it dishonorable to kill a defenseless animal? In the United States alone 100, 000 cattle are slaughtered every day. Dr. Andrew Linzey a theologian at Oxford University says that “ animals have the same needs, desires, natural behaviors, and inclinations as human beings; they also have the capacity for pain and suffering. “ Prejudice is prejudice, whether it is based on race or gender or religion – or on species (Friedrich). ” So Friedrich is saying that people should not slaughter animals because they feel the same pain the Jews felt during the Holocaust or the same pain Africans felt in South Africa during apartheid. It is as if genocide against animals has taken place for hundreds of years.

Finally the last reason to have a vegetarian diet is because it has an ecological benefit. Lately there has been a lot of Global Warming talk, and

how dangerous it will be if no actions are taken. Many people blame global warming on major factories, trucks, cars, and etc.

But it turns out that the biggest factor of global warming is the production of meat. Lord Stern of Brentford (also known as the Climate Chief) is the Chair of the Grantham Institute for Climate Change and the environment at the London School of Economics. He believes that in order to stop the climate change people need to turn vegetarian. He says that “ meat is a wasteful use of water and creates a lot of greenhouse gases.

It puts enormous pressure on the world’s resources. A vegetarian diet is better. When Lord Stern said it was a waste of water, he said this because it takes 5000 gallons to produce 1 pound of meat, where as it only takes 25 gallons to produce one pound of wheat.

Not only does producing meat use up a lot of water, but the production uses land as well. So forest would be cut down, just for the land for the animals. Animals produce more greenhouse gases because they have direct emissions of methane which is 23 times more powerful than carbon dioxide.

So those that eat meat are not only eating their ways to diseases, but they are also speeding up Global Warming, putting the whole world at risk (Pagnamenta). All things considered, the vegetarian lifestyle is the better way to live. Numerous studies have shown that eating meat will shorten the length of life. There has also been a lot of evidence showing that God wanted humans to be vegetarians instead of meat eaters. The ethical issue itself should have prevented the eating of meat in the first place.

And finally the fact that the production of meat is destroying the world as we know it is a great factor. Yes, flesh in between your teeth is very tasty, but is it worth it?