



Health Fact Sheet

Stone Age Diet!

There is such a plethora of different diet plans available now, that it is easy to be confused about what a good diet really is. We get different messages from the media, from books, from gurus, and even from medical doctors untrained in nutrition. Each has a different agenda, or something to sell, so how can you decide what is right for you.

It really is quite simple – you look at the type of diet that our body evolved to be healthy with, and mirror that. This has been given various names – the Stone Age Diet, the Paleolithic Diet, the pH diet as examples.

This is based on research done by scientists into the foods our hunter-gatherer forbears ate, and it is a far cry from the standard western diet.

From an evolutionary point of view we evolved in harmony with our environment over several million years and lean meat, including organ meats, and fish in moderation, vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, and roots made up our diet. It is only in the last few thousand years that grains and dairy products were introduced into the human diet – a negligible amount of time in terms of evolution, and certainly not enough for our guts to evolve to thrive on this change. Yet now the majority of our diet – over 70% is made up of wheat, dairy, sugar, potato and highly processed foods.

This sets up a genetic discordance with our genes and leads to the development of various chronic diseases – the so called ‘diseases of civilization’. By moving towards a diet more in accordance with our genetic inheritance we can immediately start to make a difference to our health, whatever challenges we are facing.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating, as they say, and modern studies on tribes which still continue to eat a Stone Age diet show clearly that these people do not suffer from the various diseases endemic in the West – heart disease, cancer, diabetes, obesity, and other degenerative diseases are unknown. Millions of people worldwide have trouble digesting gluten grains and dairy – particularly pasteurized dairy products. Those with a full blown allergy to gluten have what is termed celiac disease which triggers an immune response and damages the gut and the ability to absorb nutrients, but it is estimated that large numbers of people, perhaps even the majority, have an adverse reaction to gluten at some level and suffer a wide variety of intolerance problems, often undiagnosed or misdiagnosed, which contributes to ever-increasing poor health. (see programme Living with Wheat and Gluten Intolerance).

Both grains and sugars are inherently pro-inflammatory – that is they set up or exacerbate inflammation in the body. Any condition that has inflammation at its root (and this encompasses the majority of

degenerative diseases) will be worsened by ingesting these foods, so it makes complete sense to limit or cut out these foods entirely.

Nutritional doctors and practitioners reckon that 70 -80 % of people will improve their health and energy by dropping gluten-containing grains from their diets, and limiting dairy – particularly pasteurised dairy. The modern diet is very high in processed grains and our bodies were not designed to deal with these high levels, and the pasteurization process has little to recommend it, and is often associated with worsening health problems. As Sally Fallon from the Weston Price Foundation states:

'Pasteurization destroys enzymes, reduces vitamin content, denatures fragile milk proteins, destroys Vitamin B12 and B6, kills beneficial bacteria, promotes pathogens, and is associated with allergies, increased dental decay, colic in infants, growth problems in children, osteoporosis, arthritis, heart disease and cancer.'

Raw milk offers some health benefits with its levels of enzymes, probiotics and beneficial fats, but finding it is extremely difficult.

Our ancestor's diet was incredibly diverse – they ate whatever they could find, and were exposed to a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds, all obviously eaten in season, which were rich in beneficial nutrients, fats, enzymes, and fibres. Nowadays, the standard diet is very monotonous and bland consisting mainly of wheat-based products, high sugars, processed dairy and fatty meats, relieved by alcohol, soda drinks and caffeine drinks. It's no wonder our health is under attack!

Modern humans have developed with a high diversity of biochemical and genetic individuality which means a one-size fits all diet is unrealistic. Some require more green vegetables than others to thrive, others higher proportions of animal proteins, but the basic principles of the Stone Age diet hold true for all of us – looking at our blood type can then help us to know what we need to increase or decrease.

The Principles of the Stone Age Diet

Amongst the major problems with the modern diet are:

- High Carbohydrate intake – these tend to cause tiredness in even the most healthy of people. Ideally carbohydrate intake should be limited to later in the day, as they help us sleep, with protein and fats being eaten earlier in the day. The majority of us eat our carbohydrates for breakfast and lunch, with our protein in the evening, when stomach acid, needed to digest animal proteins, is at its lowest! No wonder 'tired all the time' is the most common complaint.
- Food intolerance – a full blown allergy will cause anaphalactic shock, which has the potential to kill you. Intolerances will just make your life a misery – irritable bowel, mood swings, joint aches and pains, respiratory problems, headaches, tiredness and so on. The most common causes are wheat, dairy, yeasts, and chemical toxins, but any foodstuff can potentially cause problems.
- Toxins – these come in many forms, but the one we are exposed to most is chemicals. They inhibit essential enzyme systems and can wreak havoc with the metabolism. Food additives and preservatives, pesticides, insecticides, drugs, hormones residues etc all cause major problems. Buy organic wherever possible and avoid processed foods containing these.
- Poor digestion and gut imbalance – poor gut flora, high stress levels, drugs and enzyme inhibitors sprayed on foods all contribute to problems with efficiently digesting foods, resulting in food fermentation rather than digestion.

- **Acid-forming foods** – all foods break down to either an acid-forming ash in the body or an alkaline-forming ash. A high acid diet is detrimental to health and encompasses grains, dairy, sugars, animal proteins, alcohol, caffeine and soda drinks. Ideally the diet should be made up of 80% alkaline forming foods – see Acid & Alkaline Foods fact sheet.

The Stone Age diet ticks the above boxes by majoring on alkaline forming foods, low to moderate GI carbohydrates, avoiding processed and chemical laden foods wherever possible as well as foods which ferment easily.

Allowed Foods

During the day:

Meat - Afford the best quality meat you can – ideally from organic, grass-fed cattle. As lean as possible. Chicken, beef, lamb, pork, turkey, duck, game. Organ meats – liver, kidney etc is fine. Limit ham and bacon and processed meats such as salami etc. Ensure any sausages you eat are high in meat and low in fillers – beware the fact they will probably contain wheat-based rusk.

Fish - Wild caught fish, shellfish, shrimps

Vegetables - Any green vegetables.

All salad vegetables – lettuce, tomato, avocado, cucumber, celery, peppers, onions, cress, shoots etc

Eggs - Eat both white and yolks. Free-range eggs. Columbus eggs are high in omega 3 fats which are excellent. Eggs provide lecithin.

Fish - Any fish. Ideally non-farmed as these can have chemicals and dyes added, as can smoked fish. So take care with these. Fish tinned in brine or olive oil is fine as is tinned seafood.

Seeds -Sunflower, poppy, sesame

Nuts -Brazil nuts, cashew nuts, hazel nuts, pistachio nuts, walnuts, almonds, chestnuts, pine kernels etc, preferably unsalted or roasted. Nut butter spreads are fine as is tahini (sesame seed spread).

Oils -Cold pressed nut and seed oils should be used liberally (the cold pressing ensures the oils have not been damaged). Other oils include olive oil and coconut oil.

French Dressing -Make your own using a good quality olive oil, lemon juice, garlic, and mustard.

Fruit - Only low GI fruits. Berries are excellent. Also ok are apples, pears, orange, grapefruit, plum, apricots.

Spices and Herbs – all these are allowable.

Salt - Use best quality salt you can – sea salt, Himalayan pink salt, Celtic sea salt.

Sweeteners -If you must use these use xylitol, maple syrup, raw honey, agave nectar in moderation.

Drinks

Bottled or filtered water – you need to avoid the chemicals etc in tap water

Herbal teas, including rooibosch (red bush)

If you want milk, try coconut, or almond milk. Soya is not allowed.

In the Evening:

In the evening you can add in modest amounts of the following:

Root vegetables - Carrots, parsnips, turnip, celeriac. These tend to be quite high in sugar so moderate amounts only.

Grains - Quinoa, millet, buckwheat, sago, brown rice

Fruit - The following are high GI, so only a moderate amount should be eaten: banana, grapes, melon, pineapple, mango.

Pulses - Lentils, chickpeas, butter beans etc. Good source of protein.

Nuts, seeds and dried fruit mixes

Drinks - Diluted fruit juice ie. Grape, pineapple, apple, tomato

NO processed foods. Check any tins or packets carefully – most will have a lot of added sugar, or hidden additives, so avoid wherever possible.

If it's not on the list, don't have it – ie no tap water, no alcohol, coffee, tea, soda drinks, cakes, biscuits, dairy, legumes, chocolate etc.

Try to avoid drugs and medicines if at all possible, and check your supplements for fillers such as corn, lactose and colourings.

Handling the Diet

Getting worse before you start to feel better is almost to be expected for the following reasons:

- ❖ Detoxing – as soon as it's able to your body is going to start to clear out some of the stored toxicity
- ❖ Hypoglycaemia – so many people have this and don't realise it. Characterised by low energy and sugar/caffeine cravings it can take weeks to rebalance. There is a nutritional regime to follow to help this.
- ❖ Clearing food intolerances – this usually takes only a few days to clear through, and often produces flu-like symptoms, but in some cases can take several weeks to clear.
- ❖ Caffeine withdrawal – very common if caffeine is your drug! Will take about 4 – 6 days to clear through the headaches etc.
- ❖ If it seems to be taking a long time before you start to see improvements don't be discouraged. Your body is having to adjust to the new regime, and will be clearing out what hasn't been working for it to date. So stick with it!
- ❖ Other problems that might be highlighted are gut dysbiosis, parasites, yeast/fungal overgrowth or leaky gut, as well as problems with food digestion. All these will need to be addressed.

When all is said and done this is a diet for life, and by following these dietary principles you will avoid the long term health problems so commonly seen.

Quick Guide to Paleo Food

The following is designed to give you an idea of the range of foods that are available. If it does not appear here, it does not mean it is disallowed. You need to ask the questions 'Is it refined, processed, stressful to the body?' If the answer is no, then it probably fits the Paleo criteria.

Meat	Beef, bison, boar, buffalo, chicken, duck, game meats, goat, goose, lamb, mutton, ostrich, pork, quail, rabbit, turkey, veal, venison Snails
Eggs	Chicken, duck, quail etc
Fish and seafood	Catfish, carp, grouper, halibut, herring, mackerel, salmon, sardines, snapper, swordfish, trout, tuna Clams, lobster, mussels, oysters, scallops, shrimp, prawns,
Vegetables	Artichokes, asparagus, arugula, aubergine, bamboo shoots, beets, bok choy, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cassava, cauliflower, celery, chard, collard greens, courgette, cucumbers, daikon, dandelion greens, endive, fennel, French beans, garlic, green beans, kale, kohlrabi, leeks, lettuce, mushrooms, mustard greens, okra, onions, parsley, parsnips, peppers, purslane, radicchio, radishes, runner beans, salsify, samphire, seaweed, shallots, snap peas, spinach, squash, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, turnips, watercress, yam, yuccas
Fruits	Apple, apricot, avocado, banana, blackberry, blueberry, cherry, cranberry, fig, grapefruit, grape, guava, kiwi, lemon, lime, lychee, mango, melon, nectarine, orange, papaya, passionfruit, peach, pear, persimmon, pineapple, plantain, plum, pomegranate, raspberry, rhubarb, star fruit, strawberry, tangerine, watermelon
Nuts and Seeds	Almonds, Brazil nuts, chestnuts, hazelnuts, macadamia, peanuts, pecan, pine nuts, pistachios, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, walnuts
Fats and Oils	Avocado oil, lard, butter, coconut milk, coconut oil, duck or goose fat, ghee, macadamia oil, olive oil, palm oil, sesame oil, suet, tallow, walnut oil
Liquids	Almond milk, coconut milk, coconut water, herbal tea, mineral water, water
Herbs and spices	Anise, annatto, basil, bay leaf, caraway, cardamom, carob, cayenne pepper, celery seed, chervil, chicory, chili pepper, chives, coriander, cinnamon, clove, cumin, curry, dill, fennel, fenugreek, garlic, ginger, horseradish, juniper berry, kaffir lime leaves, lavender, lemongrass, lemon verbena, liquorice, mace, marjoram, mint, mustard, oregano, paprika, parsley, pepper, peppermint, rosemary, saffron, sage, spearmint, star anise, tarragon, thyme, turmeric, vanilla, wasabi
Superfoods	Butter and ghee from grass-fed organic dairy Organ meats – liver, kidneys, heart Sea vegetables – dulse, kelp, seaweed, nori Fermented foods – kefir, sauerkraut, carrots, beets, organic yoghurt (live), kombucha