



Stop Reading Online Diet Advice First and Do this Instead

by Bill Bradley, Registered Dietitian and Cookbook Author

If you want to spend some time getting super frustrated and losing your mind, try going online and looking up something like “should I eat a high fat or low fat diet?” or “how much protein should I be eating in a day?”. As you delve into each question you will get every answer under the sun, each one completely contradicting the last answer you looked up. The authors will be saying with confidence that their way of eating is scientifically proven and that the only way for you to get healthy and/or lose weight is to follow their diet. After just a few minutes you should be thoroughly confused and if you persevere you will likely need to go find some Oreo cookies dipped in Cheez Whiz to calm yourself down.

Who do I trust?

Well, that is a really tough one. Everyone has their own bias; they all think they are giving the right information; but for the most part, each is likely at least a little bit wrong because 1) Nutrition science is still in its infancy and is far from perfect and 2) Every body has different needs. There is no one perfect diet for anyone. Some people do better with more carbs and less protein, some people do better with more protein and less carbs.

What do I do if my goal is to eat a healthy overall diet?

My suggestion is to begin by not going down the online maze of nutrition information.

1) Focus on what everyone agrees on.

Here are a few things that most all food experts agree on:

- a) Don't eat processed foods.
- b) Stay away from refined sugar.
- c) Eat an abundance of fruits and vegetables (people disagree on which ones, but most agree that fruits and vegetables are good for you).
- d) Eat as clean as possible (organic, grass fed).

2) There are areas of the world where people live long, healthy lives with low rates of disease. Look at these healthy places and model what and how they eat. The diets vary so you can choose which one seems to suit you depending on the type of food you like and what makes you feel good. Experiment, have fun, try recipes. Here are a few of the more popular ways of eating from healthy parts of the world:

- a) The Mediterranean Diet specifically of Spain, Italy and Greece

The Mediterranean Diet has been around for centuries, is very well studied and is easy to follow. It is also quite delicious! There are so many food choices because the cuisines are from multiple countries. Basic Foods: Extra virgin olive oil, fruits and vegetables, beans, nuts and seeds and whole grains. Meat is used sparingly. The Mediterranean Diet is a high fat (healthier fat), plant-based diet.

Some suggested Mediterranean websites:

themediterraneandish.com

oldwayspt.org

mediterraneanliving.com



b) The Asian Diet specifically of Japan

The Diet of Japan has also been around for centuries and is very well studied. People in Okinawa, Japan especially live long and well. Basic foods: Vegetables, tofu rice, Okinawan sweet potato, small amounts of fish. Meat is used sparingly. The Japanese diet is a low fat, plant-based diet.

Some suggested healthy Asian recipe sites:

thelemonbowl.com

norecipes.com

c) The Vegetarian Diet of the 7th Day Adventists

The 7th Day Adventists are a religious denomination that eat only vegetarian and/or vegan. They also are known to have high longevity rates and are generally very healthy. Basic foods: Fruits and vegetables, beans, nuts, seeds and grains.

Some suggested vegetarian recipe sites:

naturallyella.com

greenkitchenstories.com

3) Eat what feels good for your body and your mind. In the end, what you eat is up to you. The most important measure is how you feel after eating different foods. Do you get indigestion from certain meals, feel bloated and have a foggy mind? Stop doing that. Do you feel great after certain meals, full of energy and thinking clearly? Do more of that. Your body knows what is good for it. You can experiment with new foods and new ways of eating, but make sure you are really enjoying the food you are eating and that the food is treating your body well. Celebrate, eat well, live long and prosper.

