



HIGH PROTEIN IS BAD FOR HEALTH; HIGH FAT IS BAD FOR HEALTH; HIGH CARBOHYDRATE IS GOOD FOR HEALTH

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ABSTRACT

Carbohydrates are getting bad media attention due to this craze for fitness. Proteins are supposed to be great for muscle building. Fats are also being promoted for weight loss. This is popular press and beliefs of fitness industry. However if one goes by sound medical opinion and scientific analysis then it would be obvious that high fats are bad for various reasons and similarly high proteins are bad. And equally truly high carbohydrates are good, preferably with more fiber.

KEYWORDS :

INTRODUCTION

There is popular craze in western nations for low carbohydrate, high protein and high fat diet. It is pertinent to clarify here that medical opinion and scientific analysis does not particularly recommend low carbohydrate, high protein and high fat diet.

It is the fitness industry and fad weight management industry that is responsible for this craze for high protein, high fat and low carbohydrate diet. For a very strange reason medical opinion on this diet is not being sought after.

Craze is when sobriety and sensibility is over ridden by stupidity. That seems to be case in unscientific and unhealthy adoption of low carbohydrate, high protein and high fat diet.

High protein is being advocate on grounds of muscle building. It is little realized that body just needs adequate protein to build muscles and not excess of proteins.

High fat is being advocated on grounds of insulin control and hence weight control. But high fat diets in long run do not achieve as much weight loss.

Low Carbohydrate diets come in various categories:

- Very low carb diet (Ketogenic diet): 20-50 grams of carbs per day. This limit can also be the beginning phase for a diet such as the Atkins Diet.
- Low carb diet: ranges from 30 to 130 grams of carbs per day
- Reduced carb diet: more than 130 grams of carbs per day, with no more than 45 percent of total calorie consumption coming from carbs

And all along carbohydrates are getting bad press, whereas medical opinion is that carbohydrates are not bad, along with adequate protein and low fats.

The problem is high fat causes many health problems. High proteins also cause many health problems. This paper briefly explores health problems due to high protein and high fat diets.

High Proteins are bad for Health

Firstly let us get the notion that proteins are needed for muscles out of the way. Body needs just 0.8 gram of proteins per kg of body weight. Say a person is 70 kg. Such a person will require only 56 grams of proteins. And cereals contain around 10% protein and lentils contain 10% protein. So in a 2500 calorie/day diet, with 10% fats and remaining even if composed of only cereals and lentils, will have almost 500 grams of cereals and lentils and will easily give 56 grams of proteins. So it is almost impossible to be protein deficient even if one is on a vegan diet or a vegetarian diet.

Proteins forming 10% of calories is good and adequate for muscle building. But what is generally being promoted is proteins forming almost 30-50% of calories. This gives almost 150 to 250 grams of proteins in 2500 Calorie/day diet.

This kind of high protein diet has various health hazards according to informed medical opinion. The health problems due to high protein diets are

1. Kidney damage
2. Bad Breath
3. Constipation
4. Heart diseases
5. Calcium Loss
6. Cancer risk

Other studies find that high protein intake above RDA(Recommended Daily Allowance) of 0.8 gram per kg of body weight are associated with several health problems.

The adverse effects associated with long-term high protein/high meat intake in humans were

- (a) Disorders of bone and calcium homeostasis
- (b) Disorders of renal function
- (c) Increased cancer risk
- (d) Disorders of liver function
- (e) Precipitated progression of coronary artery disease.

In view of this it is best that protein consumption is restricted to just 0.8 grams per kg of body weight daily and this means that just 10% of Calories must come from proteins.

High Fats are bad for Health

High fat diets are being promoted for insulin control. However this is rather unwise because high fat diets cause insulin resistance in long run.

According to World Health Organisation Excessive dietary fat intake has been linked to increased risk of obesity, coronary heart disease and certain types of cancer. High consumption of saturated-fatty acids is widely considered a risk factor for cardiovascular disease. In 2002, the joint WHO/FAO expert consultation recommended that for the prevention of diseases, Saturated Fatty Acid consumption should be less than 10% of a person's total energy consumption. More recently, WHO recommended that Saturated Fatty Acid consumption should be less than 10% of a person's total energy consumption for the reduction of cardiovascular disease.

Hence it is best to restrict fats in diets.

Medical doctors opine that high fat diets can cause various health problems such as

1. Weight Gain
2. Heart Diseases

3. High Cholesterol
4. Metabolic Syndrome
5. Type II diabetes
6. Prediabetes
7. Insulin Resistance
8. Fatty Liver Diseases
9. Stroke
10. Neurological Problems
11. Cancers
12. Gastrointestinal Problems
13. Immune System Problems
14. Age related vision loss

Hence it is best to reduce fat content in diet.

High Carbohydrates are Good

Sports nutritionists recommend a diet pattern of 60% carbohydrates, 20% proteins and 20% fats. Dr Ornish diet for reversal of heart disease and weight loss recommends 70% carbohydrates, 20% proteins and 10% fats. Actually since body requires only 0.8 gram protein per kg of body weight a diet with 80% carbohydrates, 10% proteins and 10% fats is adequate. High Carbohydrates are good for

1. Providing energy
2. Controlling diseases
3. Controlling weight

CONCLUSION

It is hence recommended that Carbohydrates should form 60-80 % of calories, Proteins should form 10-20% of Calories and Fats should form 10-20% of Calories.

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