

Ask Leyla: Will the paleo diet serve all of my nutritional needs?



Q: I've heard a lot about the paleo diet, and am thinking of trying it, but I have some concerns about how nutritious it is.

Without dairy, how will I get enough calcium? And won't eating cholesterol-laden foods raise my cholesterol?

A: Dairy is not a great source of calcium because it competes with phosphorus for absorption. Some of the best calcium sources are paleo-friendly. They include:



- Bone broths (homemade stock/soup)
- Salmon
- Collard greens
- Okra
- Mustard greens
- Turnip greens
- Broccoli
- Spinach

Kale
Bok choy
Peas
Almonds
Sesame seeds
Other nuts and seeds
Oranges
Figs

The cholesterol in foods such as eggs, meat and butter does not necessarily increase cholesterol in our bodies. For this reason, we no longer need to avoid cholesterol-rich foods. The liver makes most of the cholesterol we need (about 80%), but makes even more in response to increased consumption of refined carbohydrates. When it comes to cholesterol levels, don't be afraid of fats (except factory-made trans fats, of course), but avoid sugars and starches. That includes 100% fruit juice. Sugars and starches increase LDL, oxidize the LDL and significantly increase triglycerides—all contributing to plaque build-up in coronary arteries.

As we now know, cholesterol is not the demon it's made out to be. Here's the lowdown on cholesterol.

When eating a Paleolithic-type diet, which is naturally low in carbohydrates, cholesterol levels eventually normalize. This generally takes about 8-12 weeks.

You can read more about the Paleo diet and Dr. Loren Cordain's work at www.ThePaleoDiet.com.

To your health!