

## **The Right “Type” of Diet for You**

By Eric D’Agati

The past 100 years have been regarded as a period of the most rapid development in human history, with the invention of air and space travel, modern medicine, and our advanced electronic technologies. Yet today, we stand at the crossroads of a very interesting paradox. Obesity has become nothing less than a raging epidemic in the Western world, however, our bookshelves are overloaded with diet books, televisions filled with miracle cure-alls, and everywhere you turn there is another diet or fitness “expert” who has the cure for our collective weight problem. So how is it that we know so much, yet still have no answer to why we are so unhealthy?

The plethora of varying opinions on diet have left many people throwing their hands up in confusion. Their confusion makes them feel desperate and frustrated, which eventually leads them to giving up altogether and ordering their meals out of their car windows. This only leads to a further decline in the health of our society.

The popular process today with nutrition is to pick an “enemy” and get as many people and “research studies” on your side to back your claims. Carbohydrates are bad...saturated fat raises cholesterol...too much protein damages your liver...and the list goes on. The truth is that all of these popular beliefs are wrong in essence because they are applied in blanket fashion to the entire human race.

The program that works for everyone works for no one.

A great place to start making sense of all of this mess would be the works of Weston A. Price. Price was a dentist in the mid-western United States in the 1920’s and 1930’s. He was also a researcher, and was fascinated how the people with the greatest health problems also had the most dental abnormalities. National Geographic magazine was gaining popularity at that time and Dr. Price could not help but notice how the natives shown in photos had perfect facial structure and teeth. This inspired him to go on an extensive journey around the world to study healthy cultures and find out what it was that they did to create such vitality.

What he found was nothing less than astounding. He ventured into communities that were untouched by Western commerce. The people ate a diet that was indigenous to their surroundings and complementary to their lifestyle. Cultures in the North Atlantic lived on a diet of primarily fats, oils, and proteins, mainly due to the lack of vegetation, but also because they needed fuels that would burn slowly over the long winters. In contrast, cultures in Africa and South America thrived on mainly carbohydrate sources, such as fruits, grains, and vegetables. As with the Eskimo communities and their limited supply of carbohydrate, the people who lived around the equator ate these foods because there simply wasn’t a significant animal population to feed on. They also labored all day in a very hot climate and needed fuel that had a rapid turnover to energy.

The remarkable findings were not what they ate however, but rather the effects these foods had on their health. All of these cultures had an extraordinary *lack of disease*.

This seemed quite illogical to the Western world, where we have a prevalence of medical knowledge and an abundance of resources, and yet we are challenged by numerous disease epidemics. In these “primitive” cultures, it was only when they were exposed to Western influences, as in instances when a member of the community left to take up schooling in the city or a trading post came in, that disease began to occur.

So now let’s fast forward to present day society. Thousands of people are dying everyday from heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and other diseases of lifestyle. If we were to learn anything from Dr. Price’s work we would return back to a simpler way of eating as our ancestors did. Unfortunately, that would be nearly impossible. In a melting pot like the United States, very few “pure breed” people are still in existence, so there really is no indigenous foods to our culture. This leaves subject for much debate as to what is *good* or *bad* for us to eat, with experts taking vigilant stands on their *opinion* of the current research. What many people don’t realize is like I stated earlier, *they are all wrong!*

Someone like Dr. Robert Atkins will cite research done on Eskimos or Nordic cultures and tout how they had no disease and yet ate 90% fat and protein. Dr. Dean Ornish will then try to refute that by showing how healthy the Quetches Indians were have very little protein and mostly carbohydrate. But what happens is my mother is a Quetches Indian and my father is an Eskimo???

Pioneer researchers like Roger Williams, Francis Pottenger, and William Donald Kelley, realized the inadequacies of this “shotgun” approach to nutrition and began to formulate a way of objectively testing an individual to discover their biochemical individuality. Over the last 100 years their testing developed into what is now “Metabolic Typing”.

The first step of Metabolic Typing is to find out how an individual responds to various stresses and how the body makes adaptations to that stress. These regulatory systems, also known as the *homeostatic control mechanisms*, are what allow all of our cells to function on a daily basis. *Homeostasis* is what enables every living organism to maintain a normal, healthy equilibrium. Achieving this balance is the essence of what many of today’s pharmaceutical drugs attempt to do. If you lack insulin, you are prescribed an injection or pills of insulin. However, many of these treatments are meant to alleviate the symptoms of disease, whereas the goal Metabolic Typing is to address the disease process at their point of origin. All chronic diseases have one thing in common: They involve an imbalance in one or more of the fundamental homeostatic control mechanisms.

There are four progressive levels to Metabolic Typing, with each upper level taking into account more of the nine fundamental homeostatic control mechanisms. The Basic testing starts with the foundation of Metabolic Typing, which the Oxidative System. Our Oxidative System is what controls intracellular energy conversion, or more simply, how our bodies convert food into energy we can use. There are three categories of oxidative types: the Protein type, The Carbohydrate type, and the Mixed type. These three labels bring about many misconceptions, especially in today’s mindset that is so misguided by diet gurus. The first and most important point to note is that very few “pure” types exist, just as discussed earlier,

very few “pure breeds” exist. Rather than envisioning three black and white categories, picture the classifications along a paradigm, with shading between each grouping. For example, someone can be a Mixed type, yet have more tendencies towards being a Protein type. This person would then follow a diet that is a mix of the foods recommended for each category.

These categories also should not give the connotation that a Carbohydrate type eats exclusively carbohydrates, or that a Protein type eats only protein. It simply means that they have a higher requirement for those nutrients in order for their cells to function optimally. It also does not mean that a Protein type should eat protein in any shape or form. A Protein or Carbohydrate type also has to consider the chemical makeup of the macronutrients that they consume, with special attention to factors like purines (an amino acid found in proteins), oxalic acid, fatty acids, phytates, and enzyme inhibitors.

A simple analogy to metabolism can be created by thinking of a campfire. Think of carbohydrates being like paper, protein being twigs, and fats like logs. A Protein type or Fast Oxidizer would then have a more volatile, high flame, the Carbohydrate type, or Slow Oxidizer a smaller, steady flame, and the Mixed type somewhere between, with possible tendencies towards both. If you were to take a bunch of paper and throw it onto a strong, high fire, it would rise up burn quickly and soon afterward drop back down, possibly lower than before. If you then take a log and throw on a small fire that is burning slowly already, you’ll slow it down to a mere flicker. This is similar to what happens when someone’s diet is not synergistic with their Metabolic Type. Their energy levels are up and down, the homeostatic control mechanisms are sent haywire, and so begins the process of weight gain, dysfunction and disease.

*Eric D’Agati is the founder of **One Human Performance Center**, a private Fitness and Wellness Center based in Montville, NJ. He specializes in exercise programming for performance enhancement and corrective strengthening and conditioning. He can be reached at 973-882-3366 or at [www.onehumanperformance.com](http://www.onehumanperformance.com)*