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The Anti-Ageing Diet

If the Palaeolithic diet, with its emphasis on consuming high amounts of animal based protein, is going to increase our risk of developing cancer and diabetes which would unquestionably shorten our life span, what sort of diet would allow us to live longer and healthier? According to the lead article in the February 23rd 2015 edition of Time magazine, which has devoted a double issue to the latest longevity research, as well as the work of a number of esteemed scientists, we need to be consuming less protein and carbohydrates. This means that for someone weighing 80kg, consuming 60grms of protein and 80-100grms of carbohydrates daily would be the optimum. For those who want to seriously limit their daily intake, the technical terms for this is caloric restriction (CR) and that's a whole different undertaking. When I attended a recent conference dealing with current trends in rejuvenation technology held in Silicon Valley just outside of San Francisco, I met a conference attendee who is doing this every day of his life. Wan and pencil thin with the constant need to get up and walk around the lecture theatre during the course of the daily presentations, possibly to provide some heat to a frame that appeared to be almost entirely skin and bone with maybe a slither of muscle somewhere in there, he is committed to eating a meagre 1200 calories every day of his life. If this prospect is daunting and decidedly unappealing, let me inform those who balk at this proposition that this CR convert reported a huge surge in energy with this programme and far greater mental clarity.

For those of us who find it difficult to commit to regularly eating less intermittent bouts of near starvation might serve to switch on the genes that can help us to live longer albeit with less sensory gratification, at least occasionally. Experts are also agreed that we need to be substituting more plant for animal protein. The Mediterranean diet with its emphasis on eating nuts, olive oil, green vegetables and seafood, which has been shown to significantly reduce the risk of stroke and heart attack, is probably a good entry point for those who've had a strong meat based preference.

Personally I'm a vegetarian and I commence my day with a combination of protein powders, combined with cacao and cinnamon. I avoid dairy and when I consume eggs, I always ensure I take antioxidants like green tea concurrently to offset any oxidising or harmful effects that the eggs might have on my cholesterol levels. As for eating less, for the time being I'll have to simply tip my hat to those who somehow manage to maintain a CR regimen.

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