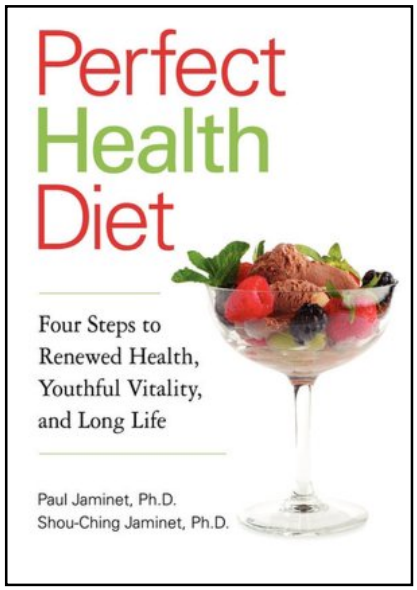

Perfect Health Diet: Four Steps to Renewed health, Youthful Vitality, and Long Life

By Paul & Shou-Ching Jaminet,
YinYang Press, 2010

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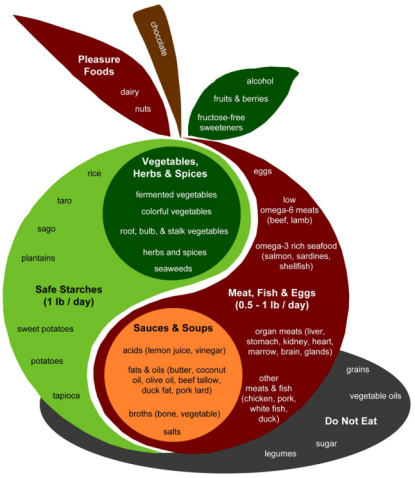
If you're interested in the so-called "paleo diet" or if you're interested in knowing why we might benefit from eating as our distant ancestors did, those ancestors who evolved before the development of agriculture, then this book will interest you. Even if you feel perfectly healthy on another regime, you might well be interested in reading in these pages about ways to combat disease through diet.

Although somewhat repetitive, ***Perfect Health Diet*** is chock full of interesting research in human nutrition – with over 600 footnotes for those who want the research sources.

The four steps of the title are (1) to arrange your dietary ratios (by calories) to 20% carbohydrate, 15% protein, and 65% fat; (2) to avoid what's toxic, which includes most grains and legumes; (3) to ensure necessary micronutrients, especially vitamin D and iodine; and (4) to deal with disease or chronic inflammation through diet.



Step one looks astonishing after recent decades of "low fat" this and "low fat" that and "low fat" the other thing. It also seems to run counter to Michael Pollen's "Eat food, not too much, mostly plants." However, it is possible to follow the ratios above and have your larder two-thirds full of plants, one-third animal. For instance, one plant product the authors are very persuasive about is coconut oil. It is one of the short-chain saturated fats, which they call "safe fats," because they can: increase HDL (high density lipoprotein cholesterol); increase body temperature which helps in energy production; and contribute to muscle building. The

Jaminets also extol the lowering of the ratio between omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids.

Step two involves avoiding toxins and the authors blame fructose, long-chain vegetable oils, legumes, and grains -- especially wheat -- for contributing mightily to human disease. What they say about grains and legumes can, however, is countered by soaking them and discarding the soak water. The grain, seed, or nut participates in plant strategy to survive the intestinal tract in tact, so as to grow eventually in a new place. The soaking can effectively circumvent that strategy and allow the eater to digest the grain, nut, or legume. Nevertheless, some people do develop allergies for which no amount of soaking will matter. Wheat gluten is a prime suspect.

Step three takes you into the world of supplements, in case your diet isn't sufficient. After carefully explaining their rationale, the authors offer a summary of what might be needed, even on their diet: vitamins C, D, and K2, chromium, copper, iodine, magnesium, and selenium. They explain the importance of the vitamin-A–to-vitamin-D ratio and suggest 3:1, not higher.

Step four gets into diseases, which the authors claim may be prevented or cured by the right eating strategy. One shortcoming of this book is the absence of an index. If you want to see what's recommended for gout, or neuropathy, or cancer, or acid reflux, you have to look through the book. However, the website (see below) promises that an index will soon be available there.

You may wonder what the rationale is for considering this "paleo" diet. Several avenues are given, none totally convincing. One is research into what 20th c. hunter-gatherers ate. Another is to eat what nursing babies get in mother's milk, i.e., 39% carbohydrate, 54% fat, and 7% protein (by calorie). If you don't buy that argument, then try eating what you are: 60% fat, 20% protein – and then add 20% carbohydrates for the brain – and drink a lot of water because we're mostly that!

The final rationale is an intriguing analysis of mammalian food <u>after</u> digestion. It seems carnivores, herbivores, and omnivores all end up with

somewhat similar ratios of amino acids, glucose, and fats. Carnivores eat ruminants and turn the protein into glucose in their livers. Herbivores are helped by bacteria to turn their food into protein and additional fat. Humans, having smaller livers than carnivores of similar stature, have less capacity to turn protein into glucose; so our "strategy" is to extract it directly from carbohydrates. It's these big brains of ours calling for constant supply of glucose!

To see the evolutionary argument for eating the 20%-15%-65% carb-protein-fat (by calorie) ratios, look at the summary provided on page 15 for what mammals in the wild provide for themselves, i.e., not what they consume, but what becomes of it after digestion in the stomach, gut, or liver. Remember, this holds for carnivores, herbivores, and omnivores.
0%-16% carbohydrate
15%-25% protein
59%-85% fats

After all this talk about eating, let us not forget fasting. A short fast is credited with helping cells clear out both their own garbage as well as unwelcome pathogens. The process is called autophagy. Sixteen hours is said to be enough to trigger autophagy and the fast need only eliminate protein and carbohydrate. Fat and fiber get in scot-free! And if you "fast" for 16 hours, you can then eat for eight. The hope is that ailments involving viruses and bacteria inside cells will diminish by this strategy. Lyme disease is one example, possibly MS and Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

I recommend this book highly to anyone interested in diet and health. The authors, a husband-wife team of scientists in the Boston area, also have a website ~~ http://perfecthealthdiet.com/ ~~ where you can pursue these questions and find recipes, too. The Jaminets have themselves found much improved health eating as they describe so, if you are having problems, perhaps you will, too!

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For questions about this essay or related issues: Call 617-491-3239 or visit www.nutrition-matters.info