

Powerful Effects Of A Plant-Based Diet

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I just watched an extremely provocative lecture by Michael Greger, MD called *From Table to Able: Combating Disabling Diseases with Food*. He provides a lot of data supporting a plant-based diet.

And some of the studies he quoted really made me sit up and take notice. For example: He quoted a study where 21 patients with moderate to severe diabetic neuropathy for 10 years or more were put on a plant-based diet and in 5 to 14 days 17 out of 21 experienced complete relief. Ten years or more of pain eliminated in days, that's pretty dramatic. Not only did the pain subside, glucose levels dropped and medications were reduced. Some of the patients who had been diabetics for 20 years, in a matter of weeks were off all medication.

He quoted Dean Ornish's work using a plant-based diet. Angina was reduced by 91% after one year whereas the control group who fol-



lowed traditional medical care had an increase in angina of 186%. In a follow up study of 1,000 patients incorporating a plant-based diet, 74% became angina free and another 9% moved from limiting pain to mild pain.

Dr. Greger cited a single case of a 65 year old man with severe angina, so severe he could only walk 10 steps. After going on a plant-based diet for 8 months he climbed a mountain.

Walter Kempner and his colleagues showed a reversal

of diabetic retinopathy in 25% of his patients using mostly a fruit and rice based diet.

As you know, an inefficient blood supply to the brain can have very grave consequences. Post mortem studies of Alzheimer's patients show they have significantly more atherosclerotic narrowing of the intracranial arteries. Dr. Greger showed pictures of brain MRI scans and those eating vegetarian diets had greater blood flow to the brain.

In light of that, not surprising, he quoted a study where those who eat vegetarian are 2-3 times less likely to develop dementia. He showed that the lowest rates of Alzheimer's in the world are in rural India where most natives primarily consume a plant based diet.

There is a lot of common ground in his presentation. For example, processed meats can cause problems. A study of over 600,000 Americans found if women cut their processed meat to 1.6 grams per day (1/4 slice of bacon) they could cut the risk of heart disease by 20%.

Plant-based diets include vegetables, fruits, legumes, beans, peas, lentils, seeds, nuts and whole grains. I am sure you are aware that some whole grains found in this country could be a problem. We discussed that the GMO gluten inhibit protease production. Also, there are over 300 new proteins in gluten that weren't there 50 years ago. Sticky indigestible proteins that the body can't identify will cause the immune system to react.

One reason why a plant-based diet can have such powerful effects is the effect plants have on our microbiome. Whether we are consciously aware of it or not, our dietary intake influences the structure and activity of the trillions of microorganisms residing in the human gut. It is these microorganisms that can turn on and off all kinds of signaling mechanisms involved in inflammation, immune activation etc.

Commercial meat proteins are often tainted with antibiotics from the animal feed. Those antibiotics also affect our microbiome as well. Animal proteins are the sum of the food and grains an animal eats, grains laden with pesticides and herbicides.

So the best sources of animal protein are pastured chickens and eggs, grass fed beef or wild caught fish. But here's the take home message for me: all of us, that means me, YOU, and ALL your patients have to make a conscious daily effort to increase the percentage of plants in our diet.

Plant based fibers and phytonutrients encourage the growth and health of our microbiota. Plants offer minerals in a form that the body can utilize. Plants offer natural antioxidants and phytochemicals more than we understand or have even considered.

Thirty years ago Biotics Research developed a unique tableting base using plants. You can see a link below to listen to the benefits of the vegetable tableting base. But just to give you an example, two products with the vegetable tableting base taken 2, three times a day yields an additional antioxidant capacity equivalent to 90 mg of pycnogenol. (This antioxidant ability comes naturally as part of Biotics' unique tableting base.)

Biochemical individuality is a factor that we should never discount. One size does not fit all, but it seems clear from the data Dr. Greger presents, that some people may function better on a plant-based diet.

So if our patients are not faring well on the nutritional program they are on, consider a 30 day trial of a plant-based diet. And as they add in animal proteins one at a time, monitor for returning symptoms. Giving your patients a specific time limit and defining the parameters could also inspire them to integrate more plants into their diet.

Thanks for reading this week's edition. I'll see you next Tuesday.