Plant Vs. Animal Protein For Your Heart Transcript

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Introduction to Dr. Fuhrman and the Protein Debate

Well, everybody, you want to really sit tight right now. Reversing Heart Disease, Naturally Summit. I'm bringing my co-host, Dr. Joel Fuhrman, to talk about a topic that is critically important everywhere in the media and for many, very confusing.

But before I go there. Make sure you understand. Dr. Fuhrman, board certified family physician for over 30 years, seven time New York Times bestselling author.

His books are legendary, have helped millions. Internationally recognized expert on nutrition and natural healing. Be sure to check out the book The End of Heart Disease and read it cover to cover after you finish the summit interviews and his newest book, Eat for Life, which is in my office just a few feet from where I'm standing because I want my patients to see it.

Dr. Fuhrman is president of the Nutritional Research Foundation and always be full of really information you want to take notes on as we go through this.

Today's topic is animal protein versus plant protein. And this is literally a food fight and social media. But we're not going to talk about social media.

We're going to talk about actual data. So thank you for being here Dr. Fuhrman. My pleasure, as always. And I'm very grateful to have reached into all these people with information that can save lives.

You bet. What's wrong with animal protein? Let's blow that topic up right now. All right. I have to say here that we have a tremendous amount of new scientific information that's been made available in the last five or six years because studies that were percolating for decades have been finally completed and published.

And these studies were long term studies tracking the amount of animal protein eaten by various populations over the decades of their life, and looking at hard endpoints of death or cause of death, like heart attack, death, cancer, death.

Animal Protein, Premature Death, and Longevity

And we're seeing here not with one study, but with multiple studies that corroborate each other with different authors around the world. And I'm going to post some of these studies here at the end so people can look at them so that as people eat more animal protein, there's a dose dependent relationship between animal protein and cardiovascular death, more animal protein, more premature death, and those with the highest intake of animal protein ketone carnivore with the most carbohydrate restriction had the most premature early life deaths, the most early deaths that were tragic.

So even though a diet that's very keto or carnivore can help some people lose, some people lose weight by cutting out all of their carbohydrates or their, you know, the processed foods, the sugars.

Maybe there's some people going to lose weight that way and have some benefit. We still want to keep in mind that snoring, that smoke, that smoking cigarettes causes weight loss, too, and amphetamines cause weight loss.

And there are other ways we could lose weight. It's not a very successful way to lose weight. They don't lose that much weight that way. But it's a way of losing weight that increases the risk of premature death.

It's a deadly way to lose weight. So we have to very strongly admonish people against falling for that cult, the high protein cult of people thinking because they feeling better or doing somewhat better by eating animal products.

That makes it safe because in the short run, it lowered their blood pressure or lower their blood glucose, or they saw some short term benefit. We only we want to do things that give us short term benefit.

We want to make sure that they're safe, but they don't cause us long term harm. And that's the major problem with these dietary wars that are going on today, because we know that these studies we're talking about and there are numerous amounts of them and they've been being occurred for the last decade show that when we eat more plant protein foods that are rich in plant protein, we live longer.

And when we eat intact, plant foods that contain protein. And let's name four types of plant intact plant foods that contain adequate protein to sustain life.

And those are intact grains like wheat berry, steel cut oats, amaranth, you know, teff. We're talking about all these different grains, beans and lentils, which are very high in protein as much as meat, in many cases, nuts and seeds.

And lastly, vegetables. Vegetables are high in protein. Broccoli, what do you think? Broccoli is? Mostly it's mostly protein. Artichokes, are are mostly protein and are mostly carbohydrate or fat.

The green vegetables are mostly protein. And so we're talking here about the ability to have more than adequate protein when you're eating intact, whole grains, green vegetables, beans and nuts and seeds and mean utilize all four in the diet, all four intact grains, vegetables, beans, nuts and seeds.

We have the max the ideal amount of protein to maximize human lifespan. So that's so these studies we're looking at show that more plant protein means longer lifespan, particularly when some of that plant protein comes from nuts and seeds.

That's the most critical finding is that protein from diets that included nuts and seeds, the nuts and seeds source of protein was the most lifespan enhancing additive.

And that soybeans lent lentils and other beans because their carbohydrate is not all bioavailability, all absorbable that are the amount of absorbable calories from beans and lentils and soy their protein content is as favorable as eating meat is.

You get the adequate protein for muscle building, for strength and athletic activity, and the mixing of beans with nuts and seeds in your diet gives you more than adequate protein for it, for physical endeavors, and for enough protein for the decrease of protein bioavailability with aging.

Because as we go from 75 to 80 5 to 90, the ability of the body to digest and assimilate protein goes down. And nutritionists, physicians and scientists generally recognize that people need more protein as they age to maintain muscle mass and to prevent sarcopenia and osteoporosis.

Plant Protein Sources and Nutritional Adequacy

And this mixture of beans with nuts and seeds and green vegetables gives us that adequate protein because there was a recent study coming out of the UK that showed that vegans in the UK had higher risks of osteoporosis and osteoporosis related fractures compared to meat eaters.

And we analyzed the diets these vegans were eating. They were eating so much white flour, so much sugar and so much oil. Don't forget, when you add oil and sugar to your diet, let's say you added 400 calories of oil and sugar, which is not out of the realm of possibility.

And that's these people were doing you just took out 30 grams of protein out of the diet, because if you put that 400 calories from nuts and seeds and beyond from real food and not from sugar and oil, and if you use nuts and beans, you use the whole nut, nothing oils the nut.

You would have got protein with that nut. So they just took out grams of protein and a diet and I compared the diet

of a new Italian diet to the British vegan diet.

It had the British speaking there had 10 to 12% to 10 to 12% protein and the new chittering diet had 16 to 18% protein. And shockingly, the Nutritarian Diet had as much protein and in many cases more protein in people eating meat because people eating meat were doing the same thing wrong as the vegans were doing.

They were putting so much oil on the food and they were eating so much sugar and things that had zero protein, that the cumulative effect of not eating the oil on the sugar made it so everything the nutrients were eating had double the calcium and double the protein and no risk of sarcopenia or osteoporosis with aging.

So protein is important because animal protein raises IGF-1, which is linked to shorter lifespan. But if you restrict animal protein to nothing and go to a vegan diet with aging as protein bioavailability goes, bioavailability and digestibility goes down, you could have IGF-1 dropping too low and just like too high, IGF-1 could be a negative risk factor to lower.

IGF-1 could also reduce immunity, increase your risk of pneumonia or cancer or other immune system dysfunctions. So we need to prevent the IGF-1 from going too low.

So what do we do? So I'm saying here that the utilization of beans and nuts and things like broccoli and soybeans particular and hemp seeds enables us to get adequate protein as we age.

And it's why we're not recommend adding a plant based diet that's a fruit bearing diet or a diet that's, you know, rice based or potato based because they're not eating out because as they age, there's too much risk of not getting sufficient protein to maximize muscle, bone and brain and keep IGF-1 elevated compared to a diet that's metabolically designed to use more beans and grains and nuts and seeds and not just be to, you could say, not having a food variety like a macrobiotic diet, just eating so much rice.

Right. Or a and and some people could thrive on a fruit based diet with eating almost all fruit when they're young because their protein viability is very they digest even a small amount of proteins are so efficiently digested.

But as they age, they're going to they it's better to be on a diet on a plant based diet, which has more protein adequacy. So we're not diminishing or evaluating the value of eating adequate protein.

We're just saying getting it from a well-designed plant based diet, because when you get it from animal products, you also raise this compound called TMH O, which you're aware of.

Trimethylamine oxide, which creates endothelial inflammation, increases cholesterol deposits, and is linked to higher rates of heart disease. We get our protein from plants, we get adequate IGF one, but not too much, and we wipe out excessive Tim Mayo as well as other pro-inflammatory substances because you produce more nitric oxide and more other beneficial compounds that that cause relaxation and good health of the blood vessels.

When we eat these good variety of these natural plants, including fibers and short chain fatty acids, you get from the gene, from the breakdown of resistant starch and fibers for beating plants and vegetables and mushrooms and beans.

And, you know, we get these things that are beneficial to the blood vessels. Interesting. Now, you mentioned some of the key foods that provide a new Trinitarian.

They're protein plant based sources, I think emphasize green vegetables as being particularly high in protein like broccoli. Broccoli sprouts. I know you know, you have a wonderful array of food items on your website, but I don't think you sell protein powders and I just want to pick your brain.

So many listeners are, of course, making various things with protein powders. What are your thoughts about that that stick to of course, not way but plant based protein powders?

That's right. I don't recommend the even though I do recommend people use soybeans and both can use tofu and tempeh and really use soybeans in their cooking, in their soups or in their salads, you know, the edamame and things.

But as a protein powder, I don't recommend people use isolated soy protein. Who is too high in protein? It's too protein rich. It raises IGF one too much.

If they're going to use a protein powder for the elderly or for athletes, I recommend pea protein, pumpkin protein, hemp protein and other these natural these non soy based proteins that we can get into a healthy whole food protein powder, you know what I mean?

Okay. So I again, not to be particularly commercial, but you know, you do so much research on the products you put together. You do have a organic pro boost protein that has both vegetables and mushrooms. So and provides additional protein from pea and chia and flax and pumpkin.

Protein Needs With Aging and the Role of Soy

And that in your approach to who would you recommend that to? Do you think as people get older, that's an option they should think of more seriously? Yeah, we use that for because I advise a lot of professional athletes and they don't want to, you know, they're the Cong on plant based diets and they want to keep their, you know, large size.

So I keep them so they when also the elderly. So we're talking about, you know, the heavy the really heavy or some people with sarcopenia or wasting diseases with aging to pump them up a little bit because we want to give them because their limited digest, their stomachs, their appetite is low.

An elderly person may be have a low. They can't eat more food. We get a little extra protein powder because the volume of the food they can consume was lower.

So mostly for as people get older with they don't want to eat more, they can eat more protein that way. And and also these professional are avid athletes and also the elderly, you know.

And well and, you know, a lot of people are going to be looking for those protein sources and that obviously brings up the topic of soy in terms of tofu at a miami bay, maybe miso soups.

Give us, you know, your approach in your years of experience and using a whole soy foods in a neutral Italian diet for protein and other benefits that it has.

And your take on that? Yeah. Don't forget, I'm not I'm saying that most people eating a really good diet are not going to need protein powders. They can just eats natural food.

It's you know, it's so in other words, most of us don't have to have that. We can just eat super healthy. So I'm 70 years old, obviously, and I'm not I didn't start.

I'm not taking and I go to the gym and I ski and I do a lot of athletic ability. And I'm still you know, I don't regularly take protein powder either.

So I'm doing pretty good, too, in my chickens and and my all day my, my sports, you know what I mean? But in any case, yes, I do recommend people use soybeans, soybeans or have anti estrogenic effects that are pretty spectacular because they the gene esteem and the estrogen like factors in soybeans bind to the E2 receptors on muscle and bone, maintaining and stimulating bone and muscle growth, bone and muscle growth with aging.

Yet they don't stimulate the E1 receptors on breast and prostate tissue. They block it. So it's not stimulated by biological estrogens. So while they're lowering risk of prostate and breast cancer, they have the positive effects on bone and muscle that estrogen does have.

So, yes, I'm recommending that I recommend that people have a variety of beans, not just soybeans, of course, but they want to eat a variety of beans.

But soy should be one of the beans they're excluding in the variety of beans and hemp seeds and walnuts should be one of those nuts and seeds that you use and your variety of nuts and seeds, including some flax, ground, flax and ground chia seeds, which have tremendous anti-inflammatory effects, blood pressure lowering effects, cholesterol lowering effects and and lifespan enhancing effects on those seeds as well.

There is a movement right now among medical doctors and bloggers and people on social media that talking about the importance of the muscle as an organ for insulin sensitivity, avoiding frailty, longevity.

But that leads to the conclusion to build muscle, you have to eat animal flesh. That's what I see all over the place. You know, you are a world class athlete performer, and you still are very athletic.

What is your take on? It has to be animal flesh to build muscle. Well, my take on that is that there's lots of bad information that causes people to have health tragedies.

We start with, you know, the Atkins diet in the 1980s was pushing people eat a lot of animal meat and thinking thinking meat wasn't was okay. And then we have that switch to the keto and the zone and then the and now the the the the carnivore or whatever people are doing.

It doesn't, it doesn't die. But the amount of scientific literature continues to accumulate and the, the accumulation of evidence from scientific literature shows that those diets that are with animal protein are more dangerous or are exceedingly dangerous when you go to high levels.

Now, we know that, as you like with Dr. Ornish, his studies, he showed cardiovascular reversal and prostate cancer reversal, which I've been seeing for years.

And we see this. So we see that now A, what people's genetics are. They're able to reverse disease when they either go vegan or keep their animal product intake below 5%, you know.

So we're talking about being vegan or near vegan, too, for maximizing human longevity in Maxwell talks about cancer and heart disease. So even though and we do that with maintaining good muscle mass I'm an advocate of good muscle mass with aging and that starts with eating right when you're younger and exercising regularly when you're younger too, we do the right things.

And I want people to, you know, and I could, you know, I could show you my six pack or show you that I'm 70 years old and I can still do, you know, tensions and 70 push ups and still run fast and sprint and ski down the moguls.

And I'm still as physically fit as I was when I was in my twenties and thirties. Actually, I'm more physically fit now in my seventies.

Muscle Building, Fitness, and Plant-Based Diets

I'm, you know, about 70. I'll be 70 in a few weeks, but I'm more physically fit now than I was when I finished medical school because when I was in the after four years of medical when I was 35 years old, I didn't exercise as much, so I would go skiing.

The moguls, my back would hurt, my whole body would be so like couldn't. But now that I'm 70 years old, I can do much stuff when I could when I was 35, because I'm more fit now.

I exercise more regularly than when I went to when I was in medical school. You know what I mean? Excellent. And for those of you that want to send Dr.

Furman a birthday card, it's December 2nd. Okay. This play our way after my birthday, but I'll be seven. And that's

a little after. But that's okay. Yeah. Okay.

So I want to thank you. We've been focusing on the topic that is just everywhere, protein, protein, protein and animal protein versus plant protein. We've gotten some great information about that really headline study about osteoporosis and why the United Kingdom study had flaws.

Then that was we heard too much sugar, too much oil, and not a healthy nutrient dairying diet that can build bone. And we've talked about why animal protein is not necessary to build muscle, but it is important to focus on maintaining your lean muscle mass and you can measure that with a DEXA scan if you want to so And we're going to go a little deeper into this everything protein topic and specifically a real common question.

Well, can I add fish into my diet? What are the pros? What are the cons? We're going to see that up for Dr. Furman to handle. Now. You know, I'm glad you asked me that question because, you know, it's been a a topic that I've been looking into for years and been you know, I thought about this a lot.

But, you know, one thing we know is that we dump thousands of tons of plastic into the ocean every hour and we've completely polluted the ocean. So even if you had a small amount of fish in your diet, you know what, if you just had a little bit of oysters, a little bit of sardines to every day to get some zinc, some iodine, a little extra protein, a little extra Omega-3 fatty acids.

Eat those oysters, those sardines, those clams or the scallops, whatever. And I'm saying to you that that may have been okay, you know, 20, 50 years ago.

But today there's clusters of Parkinson's disease and ALS. No one else is. That's really significant. It's Lou Gehrig's disease, clusters of these around lakes and around estuaries and Chesapeake Bay in areas where people do eat more seafood because of the overgrowth, the algae bloom and the cyanobacteria that live on the algae bloom create invasion of BMA a toxin that concentrates in high amounts in bivalves and shellfish because they're bottom feeders.

So bivalves are oysters, clams, mussels and scallops and shellfish live on the bottom of the ocean, too. I clams and lobsters for me over the prior years, I used to think I'm going to go off my diet on a special occasion.

Let me have something like shellfish or bivalves, and I even know what the word bivalve was anyway. But I like that stuff. But now I wouldn't touch the stuff because it's been shown to be linked to both Parkinson's dementia syndrome and ALS because of exposing.

Why Fish and Seafood Are Not Recommended

It's the way humans get exposed to be made the most, which is this toxic rock from agricultural runoff and fish farms, you know, so we're talking here about it used to be avoid deep sea fish due to the do the amount of mercury and BPA and other toxic ingredients in larger predatory fish.

But now even the smaller fish in coastal waters are contaminated with plastics as well as the Bible's book having the BMA because the plastic compounds go into their digestive tract and the average human now has a credit card amount of plastic, which is a cancer promoter, you know, in their body, which we get mostly to seafood.

And when you eat the sardines, you eat the digestive track of the sardine, which is full of plastic. So whereas I might was thinking 20 years ago a little sardines here or there or a little oysters here and there might give me some natural nutrients that the vegan diet's not optimized down.

Now, I'm saying it makes more sense to be more conservative, to not rely on seafood for Omega-3 fatty acids. Take the vegan algae supplement. Don't rely on seafood for the added zinc.

Take the extra zinc. If you want to, which I do recommend and take the extra iodine and B12 because otherwise seafood, which could be a source of those nutrients, are now too contaminated to consider that as a significant

source of adequate nutrients.

Now now there's been a recent report that they actually have found on heart pathology, maybe somebody's having a heart transplant, that when they take the heart out and look at it under the microscope, there's actually microplastics in your heart muscle.

And that is not something we probably would have found in the past and can't be good. So I appreciate that. How any thoughts about saturated fat in fish if you're option was a nice lentil soup or a piece of fish in terms of that implication for heart disease?

You know, I don't know. I mean, yeah, I think that, you know, if a person had these toxins occasionally, it may not have a major effect. But my point of view is why take the risk?

You know, we know we're getting we can adequately supplement with the things that fish contains, like zinc or DHA. So why wouldn't we do everything in our power to put things in our mouth that we know are going to benefit us?

And I say make every meal count, make every mouthful count. And particularly if you have some medical problem you're trying to reverse, why do something that may cause an issue may not in small amounts or tiny amounts, but why not make every meal count fully and don't take any risk?

So I'm you know, I may be a little radical, but I think that being healthy is worth it. Living without fear makes it worth it. And knowing you have full confidence that you're doing everything right.

And also when you start to dabble in things like that, a little bit leads to more like lights. The fire of you desire to have things you shouldn't be eating.

So I'm saying just stick with the program, get it right. And if you have some significant problems, it's probably better you go all the way plant based, you know, probably better to do it this way.

But good, good, good. So for a lot of reasons and a lot of them that represent real life in 2024 and the environment and microplastics and heavy metals.

And climate change and destruction of our environment, all these things play together for us to move in this direction. Or just say no to fish is probably the best approach.

It's one that I have done for a very long time. Well, thank you so much for taking your time to talk about this important everything about protein topic.

I think everybody got great information and I look forward to sharing more of you on Reversing Heart Disease Naturally Summit in other sessions. Have a great day Dr. Fuhrman.

You too, Dr. Kahn. Good luck to everybody.