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, doctor 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. Doctor 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 and nutrition and natural healing. Be sure to check out the book The End of Heart Disease and read it, covered it 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.

Doctor Fuhrman is president of the Nutritional Research Foundation and always 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 on 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 Doctor Fuhrman. My pleasure as always. And I'm very grateful to have reached out to 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 5 or 6 years because we finished, 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 heart endpoints of death or cause of death like heart attack, death, cancer, death.

Animal protein and cardiovascular risk

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, 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, keto 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 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 snorting the smoke that smoking cigarets causes weight loss to and unfettered means 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 their quote, 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 lower their blood pressure or lower their blood glucose or something. 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 a current 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 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, while artichokes are mostly protein and 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. I mean, utilize all four in the diet, all for 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, lentils, lentils, and other beans, because their carbohydrate is not all bioavailability and all absorbable that are the amount of absorbable calories in 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 for physical endeavors and for enough protein for the decrease of protein bioavailability with aging.

Plant protein sources and longevity

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.

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 EU 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 as these people were doing.

You just took out 30g of protein out of the diet, because if you put that 400 calories from nuts and seeds in meat

and from real food and not from sugar and oil, and if you use nuts and beans, we've used the whole nut, not the oil nut.

You would have that protein with that nut. So they just took out grams of protein in their diet. So I compared the diet of a new criterion diet to the British vegan diet.

It had the British speaking that had 10 to 12% to 10 to 12% protein, and the neutral criterion diet had 16 to 18% protein. And shockingly, the new criterion diet had as much protein and in many cases more protein than people eating meat because people were eating meat.

We're doing the same thing wrong as the vegans were doing. They were putting so much oil on their 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 one, 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 one dropping too low.

And just like too high, IGF one could be a negative risk factor to lower. IGF one could also reduce immunity, increase your risk of pneumonia or cancer or other immune system dysfunction.

So we need the AI to prevent the IGF one from going too low. So what do we do. So I'm saying here that the utilization of beans and nuts and things like and broccoli and soybeans particularly and hemp seeds enables us to go adequate protein as we age.

And it's why we're not recommending the plant based diet that's a fruitarian diet or a diet that's, you know, rice based or potato based because they're not eating because as they age, there's too much risk of of not getting sufficient protein to maximize muscle, bone and brain and keep IGF one elevated compared to a diet that's metabolically designed to use more beans and greens and nuts and seeds, and not just B two, you could say, not having a food variety like a macrobiotic diet.

Interesting. So much rice. Right. Or 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 e they digest.

Even a small amount of proteins are so efficiently digested, but as they age, their day, it's better to be on a diet and 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 TMR, 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 excess of tmao 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, from eating plants and vegetables and mushrooms and beans.

And, you know, we get these things that are beneficial for the blood vessels. Interesting.

Protein needs with aging and osteoporosis concerns

Now, you mentioned some of the key foods that provide a new territory, their protein and 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? Let's stick to of course not way, but plant based protein powders.

That's right. I don't recommend you. 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 because it's too high in protein. It's too protein rich, 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 of 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 P and G, and flax and pumpkin and that in your, approach, who, who would you, you know, recommend that to you?

I think as people get older, that's an option. They should think of more, seriously. Yeah, we use that for me because I advise a lot of professional athletes and they don't want to, you know, they're to the con on plant based diets and they want to keep their, you know, large size.

So like keep them so they and 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 plump them up a little bit because we want to give them because their limited digestive stomachs, their appetite is low.

An elderly person maybe have a little they can't eat more foods, become a little extra protein powder because the volume of the food they can consume is lower.

So mostly for as people get older, they don't want to eat more, they can eat more protein that way. And and also these professional 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 mommy tempeh a b miso soups. Give us, you know, your approach and your years of experience.

And, using a whole soy foods and a new Trinitarian diet for protein and another, 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 reach 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, 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 and, you know, I don't regularly take protein powder either, so I'm doing pretty good, too, in my chins 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 Genzyme 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, we recommend that people eat a variety of beans. Not just soybeans of course, but they want the meat variety of beans.

Protein powders, soy, and muscle maintenance

But soy should be one of the beans they're excluding in a variety of beans and hemp seeds. And walnuts should be one of those nuts. The seeds that you use in 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.

Okay, there is a movement right now amongst medical doctors and bloggers and people on social media that talk 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 were a world class athlete, performer.

And you 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, you know, the Atkins diet in the 1980s was pushing people eat a lot of animal meat and thinking, think meat wasn't was okay. And then we have that switch to the keto and the zone and then, and now the, the, the, the carnivore or whatever people are doing the, the 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 Doctor Ornish, the studies he showed cardiovascular reversal and prostate cancer reversal, which I've been seeing for years, and we see this.

So we see that and 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 to for maximizing human longevity and will text 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 pushups 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 20s and 30s. Actually, I'm more physically fit now in my 70s. 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 when we go skiing the moguls, my back would hurt. My whole body would be so like fun. But now that I'm seven years old, I can do much stuff than I could when I was 35 because I'm more fit now and 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 Doctor Fuhrman a birthday card, it's

December 2nd. Okay, so they are away after my birthday, but I'll be 78.

That's a little after. But that's okay. Yeah. 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 nutrients and 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.

Why fish and seafood are no longer recommended

And we're going to go a little deeper into this everything protein topic and specifically a real common question. Well can't I add fish into my diet? What are the pros. What are the cons?

We're going to see that up for Doctor Fuhrman 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, 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 three fatty acids, eat those oysters, those sardines, those clams or the scallops or 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. You know, an ALS is that's really significant.

It's Lou Gehrig's disease, clusters of these around lakes and around estuaries and Chesapeake Bay and 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 BMR.

The 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, like 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 this stuff because it's been shown to be linked to both Parkinson's dementia syndrome and ALS because of exposure.

It's the way humans get exposed to BMR the most, which is this toxic role 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 bivalves. We're carrying the BMR because the plastic compounds go into their digestive track, and the average human now has a credit card amount of plastic, which is a cancer promoter, you know, in their body, and which we get mostly through seafood.

And when you eat the sardine, 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 and there, a little oysters here and there might give me some natural nutrients that the vegan diet is not optimized. Now.

Now I'm saying it makes more sense to be more conservative, to not rely on seafood for omega three 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, 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 your 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, I think that, you know, if 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 for. So why wouldn't we do everything in our power to put things in our mouth that we know we're going to benefit us?

And 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, 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 problem, 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 in us, just say no to fish is probably the best approach is 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, look forward to sharing more of you on reversing heart disease.

Naturally, some and other sessions. Have a great day, Doctor Fuhrman. You too Doctor Kahn good luck to everybody.