**Raw-Focused Pesca-Paleo:**

***The Pinnacle of Health Through Nutrition***

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Raw-Focused Pesca-Paleo (RFPP) is an exclusion or elimination-based nutritional system strongly overlapping with several other popular exclusionary dietary approaches, including Whole 30 and Paleo.

To understand the system, it’s useful to consider the following categorized nutritional insights and how they themselves overlap, providing a synergistic set of guiding principles for attaining superior health.

A couple caveats: I’m not a registered dietician, but a long-running student of nutrition that has tried most every dietary approach known to man. Also, this is not meant to be a comprehensive coverage of the myriad elements at play in determining the ideal diet, but as an overview of its critical components.

Those seeking more supporting information are *highly* encouraged to do their own research, as I have.

And assuming you *are* seeking a more comprehensive understanding of the principles espoused herein, I’d advise plugging into the work done by prominent Paleo-advocating food scientists like the lovely Sarah Ballantyne, the source of the book *The Paleo Approach* and its accompanying cookbook, as well as the website/blog *The Paleo Mom*. She defines comprehensive, which I say with only the utmost respect.

And while she, and Paleo advocates in general, seem(s) to place more emphasis on meat consumption (which I believe increases disease incidence when composing too much of the diet, including the risk of cancer and heart disease) and less emphasis on raw food (which is more slimming and nutrient dense and doesn’t contain the carcinogenic byproducts of cooking) and the health, environmental and ethical supremacy of wild seafood over other forms of animal protein, I nevertheless mostly agree with her.

**First of All, What is Health?**

When I write about nutrition and health, I’m always compelled to start with the philosophical logic behind the preeminent import of health for the simple reason that health tends to be taken for granted, misunderstood and treated with a type of grudging disregard by which it is woefully under-appraised.

Health is nothing less than the state of one’s existence. It is the primary contributor to quality of life.

Without good health good life becomes extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the simple reason that every moment of life is experienced *through* health. Health is the primary determinant of how good one feels and how capable they are relative to their innate abilities and, thus, the primary determinant in how much value they are able to create in their own lives and the lives of everyone that they’ll impact.

I also believe that life constitutes its own point. The inherent value of life *is* the point of life and, thus, the attempt to maximize the quality of that life is the only possible morally-concrete impetus behind everything humanity does. This is, of course, not the current driving force of humanity, but such a discussion is beyond the scope of this paper. For now, let me just say that *quality of life is preeminent*.

This line of thought leads me into a basic chain of logic:

Health is the quality of existence, or life; life constitutes its own point; nothing determines the quality of one’s health more than what one consumes through the course of one’s life (most preventable ‘dis-ease’ is consumption-based); thus, the most important factor in life is what one consumes during life.

Health, in other words, is the foundation upon which every life is built. With a shoddy, shakily-unstable foundation, everything built upon it will be shaky, weaker than it should be and ever at risk of collapse.

**So, What is Raw-Focused Pesca-Paleo?**

Acting on an amalgamation of myriad contributing considerations, the core elements of which are the focus of this paper, Raw-Focused Pesca-Paleo harnesses the insights of the strongly-paralleling Paleo and Whole 30 diets and deigns to improve them through a focus on raw, organic fruits and vegetables and wild, low-mercury seafood, all of which should be sourced as locally as possible from conscientious producers. Local produce from nearby organic community-supported agricultural farms or, even better, from one’s own organic garden hits the highest possible marks in terms of nutritional density (the sooner something is consumed from the point of harvest, the fresher and more nutritious it tends to be), environmental impact (no pollutive run-off or emissions, denuding of the land or high-carbon-footprint shipping) and the socioeconomic support of smaller farming operations with conscientious cultivation, harvesting and distribution methods. In parallel, wild fish sourced as locally as possible has the lowest potential carbon footprint of all animal foods and is highest in the healthiest types of fats.

Much more will be said on these interconnected subjects in the following pages, but for now, know that Raw-Focused Pesca-Paleo is composed of the following elements, to the minimization or outright exclusion of all else, with the intent to improve upon Paleo and Whole 30 in support of superior health:

* Raw, organic, locally-sourced fruits and vegetables
* Cooked vegetables – when you struggle to consume raw fruits and veggies, go this route
* Raw or low-heat cooked (or vinegar/citrus ‘cooked’), local, low-mercury wild seafood
* Cultured foods like sauerkraut, kimchi, kombucha and probiotic non-dairy yogurts
* Organic herb and spice seasonings, vinegars and coconut aminos (make your own!)
* Select, judicious use of virgin cold-pressed plant oils (avocado, olive and coconut especially)

While raw fruits and veggies are ideal, the second best thing for you is cooked vegetables, which still retain a good deal of their original micronutrients, all of their fiber, are naturally low in calories (depending upon how you flavor them) and remain far better for you cooked than anything else that you might put in their place, like grains or more meat. One way or another, vegetables should compose at least half of your diet. So, yes, it is recognized that eating lots of raw fruits and veggies can be tough, especially at first, so consider *gradually* including more of them in your diet while *still* consuming lots of cooked vegetables and using raw fruit as between-meal snacks. Even if you struggle to consume them in their raw form, a diet focused on cooked vegetables is a silver medal recipient, remaining superior to all other dietary foci. One strategy is to mix-up raw and cooked vegetables, in addition to probiotic veggies and fish. And if you are compelled to cook your veggies, I’d recommend focusing on dense, fibrous root vegetables, as they’re filling and stand-up well to heat; eat them roasted, boiled, steamed and ‘riced.’

The use of industrialized, heat-and-solvent-processed plant oils is prohibited due to the immunological and cardiovascular issues they create over time, as is cooking with oils that become unstable and move towards ‘trans fats’ when heated, like olive oil, which should only be used raw in dressings and sauces.

(Trans fats, by the way, are perhaps the most unnatural of all foods, created by heating oils at high temperatures for long periods of time and used to preserve foods, solidifying them like your arteries.)

So, one of the first arguments you’re likely to hear or pose yourself against such a structured, highly- selectively form of conspicuous consumption is that it’s too limiting, and precludes the enjoyment of food. I, of course, don’t agree with this, and believe that there’s a strong degree of dependent, addictive behavior behind the use of food for instantly-gratifying comfort; that we in situations of never knowing food scarcity living in a society of gluttonous consumption of *all* things, not just food, tend to develop very unhealthy relationships with food, using it to fill gaps in our unsatisfying lives. Food becomes a crutch that we lean on to support a lack of fulfillment in our lives, and the less fulfilling our lives are the more true this becomes which, of course, creates a self-perpetuating cycle that causes immense damage over time and severely limits our ability to become our fullest, most capable forms of self. I know this from *extensive* experience with my own addictive, unhealthy relationship with food and other crutches.

Ultimately, the goal is to reach a state of mental discipline and vital energy cultivating the higher forms of our innate capacities such that we’re able to create the fulfillment of life *through* life, and thereby lose the dependency upon food to fill the gaps in our overstressed, unsatisfying, consumer-based lives. It is unlikely that this state will be reached *before* developing such a diet. Instead, I would encourage anyone reading this to consider the fact that the use of such a diet is one of the best possible paths pursuant to the higher formations of self, capacity and fulfillment; that these are concurrent and, arguably, *mutually-dependent* operations. That is, you’ll reach your most satisfied self *through* the precise same course that you master everything contributing to your healthiest self, starting with food.

At the same time, it’s not true that Raw-Focused Pesca-Paleo is unsatisfying. It’s about rewiring what you find satisfying and partaking of an expansion of your tastes, gradually learning the immensity of the fruit and vegetable kingdom and its creative incorporation into your consumption habits. For the truth is that, with sufficient dedication and time, you’ll eventually find that you don’t need all the sugar and unhealthy meats and fats and additives to feel satisfied by food. In fact, feeling such a need is itself proof of an unhealthy relationship with food and the harboring of a type of neurological corruption; it’s evidence of an addiction to the use of food as a means of overstimulating the sensory reward system.

Our biochemical reward system evolved in our brains in relation to our senses for the purposes of promoting our survival in what was historically, up until the last miniscule portion of our evolution, a perpetually food *scarce* environment that this paper presumes that you aren’t facing. We evolved, in other words, to desire the richest foods, fats and sugars because they supplied the immediate and long-term energy which enabled our survival. But in the modern environment of constant food *abundance* in which a majority of the western population suffers from one or more forms of consumption-based disease (70% of healthcare profits are based upon poor consumption habits), this neurochemically-evolved reward system is now the *enemy*; it’s an anachronism standing in the way of our superior health that we have to overcome in order to eat for strength, rather than for weakness. This evolved, outdated system has since been hijacked by the food industry and used against our best long-term interests, essentially turning most of us into addicts. In fact, transitioning over to a lower carb approach such as RFPP, you’re likely to experience some physical and psychological withdrawal systems, *especially* if switching from SAD (the Standard American Diet). Power through it. Your body and psyche will adapt.

There are *many* specific strategies for incorporating Raw-Focused Pesca-Paleo into your lifestyle; a vast array of food preparation techniques that generally adhere to its guidelines. But, very quickly, I will suggest some of my favorites, starting with what I call ‘Super Bowls.’ Every fruit and vegetables contains a different array of constituting micronutrients, each imparting their own specific benefits to those that consume them. Thus, the wider the variety of raw fruits and vegetables that you regularly eat, the more likely that your consumption will contribute to your quest for superior health. You can think of this array not just in terms of the types of produce themselves, but in terms of colors. The color of the fruits and vegetables is an indication of the nutritional array that food provides. So, with Super Bowls, what you do is include different combinations of fruits and vegetables across the rainbow of colors in a large bowl (I usually use a large salad bowl conventionally used to dish-out salad to a family or other group) along with the chosen low-heat-cooked or vinegar/citrus ‘cooked’ seafood and the smartly-selected/crafted, judiciously-applied dressing or sauce. Toss and enjoy. You’ll find that this general strategy leaves an endless world of possibilities open to you, and you’re *highly* encouraged to explore that world as, again, the more exploration you perform the more nutrients your body and brain will be empowered by. Also, the greater the exploration and diversity the greater the enjoyment, the more likely you’ll stick with it.

I also like the strategy of mixing seafood with some finely-chopped or shredded raw vegetables, like broccoli heads, and selective sauces, like avocado-oil-based veganaise, and spices, and then using this as a dip or spread with something like large carrots or cucumbers that you cut lengthwise and then top.

Then there’s the strategy of using Nori Sheets, the dried and baked seaweed used to wrap sushi rolls, as a wrap for the wide array of anything you might use in the Super Bowls, for example. The Nori Sheets stand in for the grain-based tortillas/wraps most people employ through such a strategy. Yes, tortillas are easier to fold, bite off of and chew, with Nori Sheets requiring more care in folding and more tearing with the teeth, but I got used to this minor inconvenience very quickly, and now utilize them frequently.

One more general strategy recommendation: *become a saucier!* As mentioned in a later section of this paper (Don’t Underestimate the Importance of…), the sauces and dressings added to food to increase its taste and enjoyment are equally as important as the foods that they’re flavoring; treat them as an afterthought to your own peril, including the possibility of not enjoying your foods and of unwittingly failing to adhere to the guidelines of systems like Whole 30, Paleo and RFPP because you top otherwise healthy dishes with sauces and dressings that push your meals outside those guidelines, and sometimes *well* outside them. In order to overcome this challenge, and to better appreciate your meals, I *highly* recommend that you practice making your own sauces and dressings. Yes, you can seek out the select producers that make sauces and dressings that work, and they’ll always be there ‘in a pinch,’ but if you can learn how to make tasty sauces/dressings with healthy fats and flavorings, you can mix them into or spread them over meals made of raw veggies and seafood and feel as satisfied by them as you do by more common flavoring techniques, like applying unhealthy sauces and dressings that steal away most of the benefits described herein. Thus, I recommend being adventurously creative with sauces as much as anything, and practicing and looking up recipes *here*, at the place where raw foods become fantastic!

So, now that we have the basic framework in place, let’s take a look at some of the core principles and insights supporting Raw-Focused Pesca-Paleo’s ability to deliver your superior health, self and life.

**Why Focus on Raw Food?**

Nutritional density is perhaps the most important of factors determining the total health impact of what we eat. Cooking denatures food, reducing the stability if not outright destroying many of the most beneficial nutrients imparted into the human system through the food that we eat, including *all* of the enzymes: the critical catalysts necessary for the human body to fully break-down and utilize the nutrients found in food. Yes, historical evidence connects cooking with condensing and thereby getting more calories from our food, and thereby with allowing for the energy reserves permitting ‘civilization,’ but with food abundance this is, like our aforementioned evolved bio-reward systems, an anachronism to be overcome. And yes, there is some evidence that select nutrients become more ‘bioavailable’ through cooking, but by and large this is not only *not* the case, but the nutrients remaining are difficult for your body to completely breakdown and nutritionally ‘unlock’ and take advantage of (bioavailability).

Dr. Joel Fuhrman, a highly respected nutritional scientist, asserts simply that “Health = Nutrients/Calories.” In my decades of studying nutrition on and off, I believe that this slightly over-simplified equation comes as close as possible to concisely summarizing the health impact of food.

The emphasis here is on *the power of micronutrients* (everything *after* the macronutrients: fat, protein and carbohydrates); that is, on all the innumerable nutrients that can be found in food, especially in vegetables (then fruits), and their inestimable imparted health benefits. This equation may also be rewritten as Health = Micronutrients/Macronutrients. For while fat, protein and carbohydrates provide the most basic elements for sustaining life, for providing energy and the building blocks of the body, their overconsumption is rampant in ‘advanced nations’ suffering from an excess of food supply and a concurrent deficiency of nutritional knowledge, and it’s the *micronutrients* that provide all the benefits which safeguard and increase the *quality* of life, enhancing vitality and averting or reversing disease.

Perhaps the most important principle promoted through RFPP boils down to the difference between ‘vitality’ and ‘energy.’ In fact, not all energy is created equal. Most people tend to think of energy in relation to food on what is essentially a blood-sugar level. That is, much like when one consumes something sugary and their energy skyrockets due to immediate glycemic effect; to their body being bombarded with glucose and its fast and fleeting energy supply. This is the realm of the carbohydrate; of the conversion of food into blood-sugar. The problem with this oversimplification of ‘energy’ are myriad, including the fact that such immense and typically oversupplied blood-sugar in SAD (the Standard American Diet) leads to insulin resistance, itself leading towards metabolic disorders potentially resulting in type 2 diabetes if not corrected (more on this soon), and the fact that such an energy supply is unsustainable and inflammatory, leading to the vicious yo-yo effect of rising and crashing energy and mood. So while when I say ‘energy’ you likely think of blood-sugar, or the connected concepts of the brain being ‘glucose hungry’ and the counter keto argument of ketones being a ‘cleaner,’ more sustainable form of energy or the like, I believe that the more important energetic consideration is that of *vitality*; that is, the ‘vital energy’ that comes from the body being as strong and fully functional as possible, and thereby operating on a superior cellular and anatomical level whereby you feel stronger on a constant basis because you’re healthier. This is achieved from focusing, again, on what brings *vitality*, namely by consuming as much raw, nutrient-dense fruits, vegetables and probiotic foods as possible.

So while yes, it is true that cooking food starts the breakdown process and thus makes it easier to condense calories and thereby deliver a greater number of calories and their glucose into the bloodstream faster with the same number of bites and expended consumption energy, and while this increased glucose-based energy abundance is historically connected to human beings having been able to spend more time on cultivating other abilities (which, in turn, is connected to the ‘rise of civilization’), this is also the problem: these condensed calories are denatured by the cooking, with the denatured food containing fewer fully-intact enzymes and micronutrients, which also triggers an inflammatory response because our immune system tags such food as essentially unnatural, and which also makes it harder to lose weight, as you’re getting more calories and glucose per bite. This is, again, one of the main areas in which I diverge from typical Paleo approaches such as those of Ballantyne. Personally, again, I think that the benefits of raw foods far outweigh those of cooked foods, and that many, if not most, of the modern diseases that are concurrent with the ‘rise of civilization’ came from cooking food, including the prevalence of obesity, metabolic disorders like type 2 diabetes and most forms of cancer.

In connection to this, there are at least five other factors supporting the superiority a of raw-foods-focused diet deserving coverage: *satiety, thermic effect, immunology, prebiotics and cooking byproducts*.

**Satiety**

Satiety simply refers to the ability of food to make you feel full for extended periods of time. From a weight loss and healthy body mass maintenance perspective, we ideally want foods low in calories and metabolic (glycemic) impact relative to satiety, or fullness. More than anything, this means protein, fiber and *whole, unprocessed (not yet broken down) foods*. Eating lots of raw vegetables is therefore not only the best way to maximize the intake of micronutrients (and deliver the ‘prebiotics’ for the production of the beneficial ‘probiotic’ bacteria producing most of our neurotransmitters in our guts, among other benefits, to be covered soon), it’s also the best way to take in loads of dietary fiber (mostly of the insoluble type) promoting fullness at minimal ‘caloric cost.’ And when such naturally-satiating food is raw, it has yet to undergo any dissolution (breakdown), requiring the body to work harder and longer to digest and distribute its nutrients. If you want to lose or maintain a healthy weight, therefore, you want to consume low-calorie food that your body has to work hard to make use of, which brings me to…

**The Thermic Effect**

The thermic effect of feeding refers to the energy the body expends in order to breakdown, distribute and otherwise make use of the food that we consume. This can also be thought of as the ‘net calories effect.’ That is, all food requires the burning of calories in order to process and utilize the calories contained in that food, some far more than others, yielding a ‘net’ quantity of calories absorbed by the body. With fat and carbohydrates the ‘thermic effect’ is somewhere on the order of 3-10%, yielding a net of at least 90% of the calories. With protein and fiber the number falls between *20 and* *40%*, meaning that you’re actually getting *no more than* 80% of its connected calories, and as low as 60%.

Thus, I’m sure you can see why raw vegetables and lean proteins are core to ideal weight loss and weight management systems, but there are other inner workings of the body that are just as vital.

**Immunology**

The immunologyat play in the consumption of food is highly underestimated. Connected to the ‘leaky gut syndrome’ to be discussed later, our immune systems being triggered by what we consume has a cascading impact upon our health connecting to any and all other bodily dysfunctions and diseases we may be carrying, snowballing with these ills and advancing the chronic inflammation at the root of untold, even most health issues. For me, this all starts with an immunological effect known as ‘digestive leukocytosis.’ Essentially, the theory states that the cooking of food so denatures it that the microorganisms working in our gut no longer recognize it as a natural food source, but as an invader, triggering our immune system to go to work neutralizing the threat. This, in turn, increases the stress placed upon the body from the consumption of food and releases connected inflammatory compounds. In order to avoid the worst of this effect, the theory goes, at least half of what we eat should be raw.

**Prebiotics: Feeding the Probiotics**

Raw fruits and vegetables are also natural prebiotics. Most people know the term ‘probiotic,’ referring to the healthy bacteria filling our digestive systems that helps us breakdown and properly utilize food and its contained nutrients. And with a resurgence of interest in the age-old Hippocratic insight that “all health begins in the gut,” we’re also now waking up to the age-old fact that these beneficial microorganisms produce most of the neurotransmitters necessary for maintaining superior nervous system and mental health. Depression, it turns out, is as much a *dietary* problem as anything else.

Prebiotics are essentially the food for these beneficial probiotics, permitting them to multiply relative to the health-inhibiting microorganisms also present in our gut with which they are perpetually at war for the ‘territory’ of our digestive systems. We are, as they say, our own ‘microbiomes;’ colonies of bacteria. And the more that we feed and support the health-imparting bacteria, the healthier we’ll be. Go figure.

Of course, consuming cultured foods like kimchi and sauerkraut is encouraged for the same reason.

**Cooking Byproducts**

Cooking creates byproducts that are toxic to the human body, *especially* at high temperature and low moisture levels, as when frying, grilling and roasting, per common examples. Researchers have drawn connections between these byproducts and the acceleration of aging, the creation and exacerbation of chronic inflammation and the increased risk of all consumption-based diseases (which are most diseases; as most diseases are based upon poor dietary and general lifestyle habits), including cancer.

Some of the most common and concerning of these byproducts include heterocyclic amines (HCAs), advanced glycation end products (AGEs), acrylamide and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs).

Obviously the discussion involving such byproducts, their causation and how and why they influence the aforementioned health risks is complex. What is simple, however, is that they tend to start forming at about the temperature at which water boils (212 degrees Fahrenheit, or 100 degrees Celsius), and that their concentration tends to increase in proportion to the temperature level and absence of moisture.

The best way to avoid them altogether? You guessed it: eat as much of your food as possible raw. And, if you must cook any great portion of your food, use ‘low and slow’ techniques and those involving water.

Now that we have an overview on the invaluable health benefits of focusing on raw foods, let’s look at some other factors contributing to the superior health impact of the Raw-Focused Pesca-Paleo Diet.

**Why Focus on Wild Seafood For Protein?**

As will be argued in the coming sections, and in league with the proponents of Paleo and Whole 30, the two primary problems with the vegan diet are that, in complete exclusion of animal foods, it tends to be too high in metabolism-taxing carbohydrates and to depend upon plant-based protein sources which the human body didn’t evolve to healthfully process. A majority of the vegan’s protein comes from what are essentially seeds, including not only foods labeled as seeds, like pumpkin and sunflower seeds, as examples, but nuts, beans and grains, all of which are, again, essentially seeds in that they are the propagating mechanism of the plant; the sprouting source from which the next generation is ‘born,’ per say. And just like with animals, plants protect their young and unborn with defensive mechanisms that cause immunological distress in those that consume them; especially those that didn’t evolve to do so.

There’s a reason that these foods, and others excluded in this diet, are the most commonly linked to immunological responses. Even if not producing full-blown allergies or Celiac Disease from the gluten in wheat and its cousin grasses, they will nevertheless lead to more subtle, insidious issues in most people.

On all other grounds I praise vegans, as the approach is based upon compassion for living beings and is thus extremely ethical. It also requires immense discipline to maintain, and I consider discipline one of the most important factors in life, believing it to be the difference between knowing and doing what’s right. So then why not go with a vegetarian diet? Is this not a viable compromise between the vegan and the carnivore? Because eggs and dairy are equally and perhaps even more problematic for human health, commonly creating digestive and immunological issues and rising cardiovascular disease risk.

So why wild seafood? Because most commonly consumed land animals come with a whole host of health risks, including the aforementioned immunological risks when they’re conventionally grain-fed (as is said, you’re not just what you eat, but what you eat eats), and drastically elevated risks of developing cancer and cardiovascular disease due to their typical high-saturated-fat profiles. Such risks can be reduced through true pasture-raised or hunted, leaner meats, both of which are also much more conscientious sources of non-tortured animal foods and tend to be more environmentally-mindful.

The best source of animal protein is wild (not ‘wild caught,’ which isn’t truly wild) seafood of the low-mercury level type (i.e. not the larger fish in which mercury is condensed over time) that, ideally, is as locally-sourced as possible. Catching it yourself is ideal, just as with cultivating your own organic produce. Not only does wild fish have *far* lower of a carbon cost and lead to much less environmental degradation compared to land animals, especially conventionally raised and butchered land animals, but it’s also nowhere near as cruel to the wild-living animal. But, perhaps most importantly from a dietary standpoint, *seafood has the healthiest fat profile of all animal foods due to the dense Omega-3-Fatty-Acids which they build up in their tissues from the eating of aquatic plants, the source of those Omega 3’s*. The benefits of diets high in Omega 3’s are myriad, and go a long way in explaining the correlation between those living in longevity-based ‘Blue Zones’ and the consumption habits of those inhabitants.

Note: RFPP doesn’t necessarily entirely exclude land animal meats, as land animal meats (seafood *is* meat, i.e. animal muscle, by the way) have nutritional and satiating value and are arguably necessary from the standpoint of variety in order to stick with RFPP in the long term; yet it’s highly recommended that wild seafood constitute the majority of your meat consumption for the aforementioned reasons. And when you do choose to partake of land animal fare, try to be as considerate of the source as possible, as such meat is *not* created equal. Consuming naturally-grazing, locally-sourced fare is best. Also, there’s a good argument to be made for consuming ‘offal,’ organ and other nutritionally-dense non-traditional parts of the animal, as well as specially-benefitting connective tissue and bone broth.

**The Protected Seeds of Plants: Antinutrients and Leaky Gut**

As recently mentioned, all biology is highly protective of its offspring. In plants, the defense of the next generation is made possible through built-in protections of anything directly sprouting into the offspring. All such foods are essentially *seeds*, including not just those things called seeds in the conventional food industry parlance, but all grains, nuts and beans/legumes as well. The consumption of anything falling into this category will entail the consumption of elements that might best be broadly labeled ‘antinutrients;’ these antinutrients not only have no nutritional value themselves, but will often lead to very subtle, gradually-accruing damage, dysfunction and connected immune reactions, including chronic inflammation, in the beings that continue to consume them, *especially* those beings that didn’t evolve the means to destroy or circumvent the antinutrients within their own bodies. They are also known to interfere with the proper digestion, absorption and bodily-utilization of the other healthy micronutrients imparted by these foods, which is why they are considered to be the *anti* of nutrients.

There are many sub-categories of antinutrients, including those termed ‘lectins,’ which are protective carbohydrate-binding proteins built into almost all foods, to some degree, but which are particularly dense in the aforementioned seed foods, as well as in the nightshades (potatoes, tomatoes, eggplant, peppers etc.) that aren’t outrighted banned in this diet, but should likely be consumed sparingly.

The most infamous of lectins is, of course, gluten. Yet it’s just one example. What I believe is useful in the context of the antinutrient discussion is to look at those foods that are most likely to create allergic reactions in people, to ask yourself why, and to use this knowledge as guidance in your own exclusions.

And yet the most common mistake that is made is to assume that just because you don’t have an allergic reaction to something, just because you don’t suffer from Celiac Disease in relation to gluten consumption or a peanut allergy, as examples, that it’s ok to eat these foods. This assumption dismisses the fact that there is a difference between an *acute* reaction to the consumption of something unhealthy, aka an ‘allergic reaction,’ and a far more insidious, slowly-detrimental *chronic* reaction to those same elements in people that possess some degree of tolerance for them; what is typically called a ‘sensitivity.’ It is my contention that we didn’t evolve to healthfully consume these foods, that the fact that we have to process and heat so many of them in order for them to be palatable and digestible is a strong indication of this natural unsuitability, and that even when you *can* tolerate them that you’ll still experience degradative effects over time, but in such a slowly-accruing manner that most don’t notice.

It is said that, through SAD (the Standard American Diet), all people that partake of it are a little bit sick all of the time, though they’re unaware of it and assume that it’s ‘normal.’ *It’s not*. All of these directly cited else generally alluded to foods create subtle, accruing damage over time. Much of this is due to the ‘Leaky Gut’ phenomenon in which the digestive tract is slowly damaged through their consumption in a manner creating unnatural, microscopic tears, or gaps, in the intestinal tract which allows for too much permeability (passage through) of the semi-permeable nutrient-absorption biostructure which, in turn, allows food particulates to ‘leak’ through which weren’t meant to pass through which, in turn, creates an overactive demand upon the immune system that’s always at work attempting to destroy these infiltrators. This, in turn, encourages a chronic state of inflammation that can directly cause gastrointestinal disorders while concurrently snowballing with and exacerbating all other inflammations.

**Where the Nutritional and Evolutionary Sciences Meet**

Core to the exclusionary diets, and suggested by the term ‘paleo’ itself, is the fact that human beings evolved over hundreds of millions of years to healthfully consume certain foods. In fact, the argument can be made that we *co-evolved* with those foods, making a marriage between the very constitution of our bodies and the consumption of these foods for the full, proper functioning, maintenance and protection of our bodies. Unfortunately, as per the previous section of this paper, we’ve moved away from our natural diets and become psychologically and economically invested in and dependent upon foods that are largely unnatural to our bodies, and which, therefore, lead to unnatural results over time.

It has become a trite assertion in the highly contentious world of nutrition, but it’s true: *we’re hunter-gatherers by evolved nature*. And yet we’re *far* more gatherers than we are hunters. Evolving from our ape brethren, our bodies are far more indicative of an herbivore than a carnivore: teeth made for grinding, digestive systems made for the gradual extraction of fibrous, nutrient-dense vegetable matter, multi-colored vision made for identifying ripe, ready-to-eat fruits and vegetables… all of the herbivore. And being primarily gatherers in the days before the industrialized farming, processing and shipping that has alienated us from our food with deleterious psychological effect (one of the *many* reasons that I highly recommend cultivating as much of your own food as possible), we consumed most our fruits and vegetables directly after harvesting and, thus, raw and as fresh and nutrient-dense as possible.

It wasn’t until the last miniscule shred of our collective histories embedded into our genetic structures through the force of evolution that we began hunting for animal meat and cooking and processing food and eating the seeds of grasses. And much of what we add to food to preserve it and enhance its flavor in the manipulation of our aforementioned neurochemical reward systems for the unscrupulous profits of the food industry I’m convinced we’ll *never* be anatomically suited to consume. In fact, a strong argument can be made that if you have to process or cook a food in order to eat it, like the seeds of grasses that we call grains or the unclean meats we so regularly consume in the west, *it shouldn’t be eaten*. It all boils down (no pun intended) to the fact that our evolutionary histories and our consumption habits should align in the support of our health. When they don’t, unnaturality results.

It’s clear from the research that too much consumption of animal protein *drastically* increases the risk of developing cardiovascular disease and cancer. It also overstresses the digestive system, colon and kidneys forced to deal with and always attempting to purge itself of the effects of this unnatural type and degree of consumption. SAD consumers actually eat somewhere on the order of *three to five times* the amount of protein that their bodies can naturally handle, creating the aforementioned unnatural stresses precipitating a vast array of health ills. This is why the best use of Raw-Focused Pesca-Paleo is one that considers seafood a filling *complement* to raw fruits and vegetables, not as the main course.

Speaking of seafood, looking at the early course of human history, when we *did* start to harvest meat it was always *far* more likely to be seafood than land animals, for two primary reasons: (1) We lived and formed communities around and along waterways, for rather obvious reasons, and (2) Seafood could be abundantly caught and harvested at far lower risk and generally at less effort (less energy expenditure) than was entailed in killing land animals, the hunting of which might involve miles of pursuit and their often violent self-defense, and would also often involve competition with other dangerous predators.

**Metabolic Impact**

There’s a reason pancreas-taxing insulin-resistance leading to ‘metabolic syndrome’ and, eventually, to Type 2 Diabetes is so rampant in our society: as with animal protein, the average western eater consumes *far* more carbohydrates that his or her body can healthfully process and make use of.

This isn’t just a sugar thing or a matter of the glycemic index/effect (the rate at which the consumption of the particular food leads to a rise in blood-glucose, or blood-sugar levels), but is, just as importantly, if not more so, a matter of total glycemic *impact*. That is, even when a consumer becomes aware of the sugary substances that *quickly* raise blood sugar, they often remain oblivious to or dismissive of the fact that what I call ‘carbohydrate-dense’ foods are equally as dangerous to the metabolism and increasing of long term weight gain and potential obesity. Starchy foods and grains are *extremely* carb-dense, and generally low in micronutrient density compared to the fresh fruits and vegetables advocated by RFPP.

Yes, fresh fruits often have high glycemic indexes and can temporarily shoot-up blood-sugar levels, especially when not consumed along with low-carb foods that can dramatically curtail this effect. Yet they aren’t carbohydrate-*dense* and, just as importantly, they’re *loaded* with invaluable micronutrients.

What I’m getting at is that carbohydrates aren’t the enemy in and of themselves. It’s more about the *density*, or total glycemic impact, of the carbohydrates than it is about the short-term effect. This is true for perhaps everyone *except* those already suffering from glucose insensitivity and/or diabetes. In fact, as you’ve likely heard, carbohydrates are the primary macronutrient constituent of *all* plant foods, and the brain *loves* them. You’ll be more productive, healthier and happier, and far more likely to maintain a healthy diet, without trying too hard to exclude them a la the ‘Keto’ and ‘Atkins’ approaches that are unsustainable and degradative to the body over time. It’s just that the body, especially the metabolism and waistline, doesn’t want *too* much of them, as is delivered by the Standard American (over-sweetened) Diet in which sugars, especially high fructose corn syrup, is added to almost everything, manipulating the aforementioned neurochemical reward system and causing damage to the human body over time. And you’ll find that RFPP delivers carbs in a natural, sustainable manner conducive not just to losing weight in the overweight and maintaining a healthy body mass, but to protecting the metabolism that has been so wantonly abused by the corporations that unscrupulously support SAD.

**Don’t Underestimate the Importance of Grocery Shopping and Added Flavorings**

The easiest example of the phenomenon of underestimating the importance of what is applied to the core food in order to enhance its flavor and enjoyability may be that of the person who, driven by the desire to eat healthy and lose weight, proudly proclaims to his or her self or others that they’re going to “have a salad” before slathering it with bacon bits, hard-boiled eggs, croutons and, most commonly, a very unhealthy dressing loaded with the most unnatural of plant oils, preservatives and high fructose corn syrup. What is done in these cases, of course, is to make the salad almost or exactly as unhealthy as the burger and fries that might have been eaten otherwise. Yes, you’ve likely increased the number of micronutrients that you consumed through the fresh vegetables (especially if it’s a dark green leaf like spinach or kale rather than iceberg lettuce, which is mostly water) in your salad in lieu of the burger and fries, but then you added all the calories and disease-risk-enhancers, thereby largely undermining your efforts. This, of course, leads to a truth not to be underestimated: *dressings aren’t all created equal*!

Read the list of ingredients! There’s no way to be a healthy eater *without* being a competent grocery shopper. In fact, I consider grocery shopping to be amongst the most underestimated of skillsets considering the impact it has upon the quality, longevity and capacity of the lives it directly impacts.

Take a moral stance and refuse to bring unnatural food additives, oils and preservatives into the home in the first place and you’ve taken the first critical step in becoming a healthy person. Avoid processed and packaged foods in general. As mentioned earlier, the healthy creation of flavor additives is key to this quest. So learn how to create your own dressings using healthier bases, such as cold-pressed avocado and olive oils, vinegars and coconut milk. Expand your understanding of calorie-free organic herbs and spices, different vinegars, a broad and ever-changing, exploratory use of fresh fruits and vegetables, the use of complementing, balancing flavors and textures and the substitution of coconut aminos (a personal favorite for creating the savory sensation) for soy sauce, as soy is a common culprit in food allergies and sensitivities because its is derived from a typically GMO bean (seed).

Developing the art of concocting your own flavorings, including your own sauces, dressings and spice blends, confers at least three major advantages: (1) it saves money, as individually buying and mixing the elements composing these items is far cheaper than buying them, especially when you get good at it and thereby become efficient and economic with your creations (2) it adds a distinct level of increased culinary artistry, connection to and enjoyment of the food when you’re more involved in its flavor, as opposed to just pouring pre-made concoctions on your food (3) it tends to produce healthier flavorings, as you have more control over their composition and don’t have to settle for the generally low-quality, unhealthy elements mixed into pre-mades by the commonly unscrupulous food producers that just want to create something tasty with a long shelf life as cheaply as possible in order to maximize profits.

When you allow a sense of artistry and exploration to replace the mindless ‘just throw fat and sugar at it’ approach, combined with the capacity to shop for healthy flavorings, you’ve come a long way already!

**Lifetime Guidelines: Patience, Grasshopper**

Finally, people will inevitably ask questions like: What’s the timeframe on this diet? How long can, and *should*, it be maintained? Comparisons are made to the Whole 30 Diet. Does that make this a one month reset diet, like Whole 30, in which you have to start over if you experience the slightest slipup, and wherein you gradually reintroduce foods that you eliminated in order to determine your tolerance?

The short answer: Raw-Focused Pesca-Paleo is an ideal diet built to foster the highest functionality of the human body and, therefore, is meant to serve as one’s guidelines *for life*. I understand the purpose of Whole 30, and believe that determining what your food sensitives are and how certain foods make you feel is beneficial, but my ultimate interest in Whole 30, Paleo, South Beach etc. is to determine how best to achieve *long-term* superior health.Therefore, either after performing resets such as Whole 30, else going straight for RFPP, I believe that the best dietary systems should be designed so that they can be applied to the *continued* quest for and maintenance of a maximization of our health pursuant to our highest possible levels of capability, value-production and the pursuit of happiness. Therefore, RFPP is meant to be *sustainably* employed. Whether you consider going away from it for periods a ‘lapse’ or ‘taking a break,’ or it to be ‘for home use only – when I’m out I’m not going to worry,’ or whatever other mindset you may come to maintain, what’s true is that *the more that its guidelines are followed, and the longer the time spent guided by those lines through the course of your life, the better rewarded you’ll be.*

On some level, dietary systems like Raw-Focused Pesca-Paleo are implicit critiques, if not outright condemnations, of western cultural norms that encourage thoughtless, gluttonous, instant gratification over-consumption. Therefore, it’s worth realizing straightaway that making the commitment to lose weight, cure your health ills, feel better and become your strongest self requires knowing that, on some level, you’re going to war with prevailing western cultural norms. Moving away from our SAD, overfed, instantly-gratifying mindsets requires *major* adjustment in and of itself. And since food is core to our existences, that adjustment is front and center; it’s an unavoidable battle being declared. Thus, you have to know immediately that it will be *extremely* challenging to follow-through with something like RFPP.

So, during those periods when you fall away from it, which you will, don’t berate yourself too severely or think, well, I messed up, I have to start over, or anything of the like. Such thoughts are indicative of the ‘all or nothing’ mental mistake; of believing that you either do it entirely, perfectly stringently, or you get nothing from it. This is nonsense. While you will see more benefits without intermittent disruptions for a whole host of reasons, including, for example, the digestive and immune systems rebuilding and strengthening themselves over time far better without constant interruptions, generally speaking, the rewards you’ll receive by following this diet are commensurate with the diligence and timeframe of the commitment. You want it to become second nature over time; simply the way you eat, not a ‘diet.’

As a last note, I want to remind the reader that all those things most worth doing, because they grant the greatest rewards, are difficult to do, and require great commitments of time, energy and discipline. In fact, reward tends to be commensurate with difficulty, so you *want* it to be difficult. Health is no exception to this rule. In fact, it might be argued that it epitomizes the rule. So please don’t forget the fact that reversing health ills, healing, losing weight, feeling better, pursuing best health and best self… these things require great time and discipline (the difference between knowing what to do and having the strength to do it). So I would encourage you to be patient, to not take an all or nothing stance, to not give up, and to use Raw-Focused Pesca-Paleo not just as a system for chasing superior health and wellbeing, but to strengthen your own discipline, ever reminding yourself that instant results tend to be cheap and fleeting, which is *not* what you’re after. You’re after the highest quality, longest lasting benefits here, and hopefully with your endeavors in life in general. Tenacity and patience are essential.

Thank-you for your time, and here’s to the quest for the discovery of superior health and your best self!