



# EarthSave<sup>®</sup>

## Healthy People Healthy Planet<sup>™</sup>

Winter 2000 Volume 11 Number 1

## Staying Out of the Zone: How to Stay Thin AND Healthy

by John McDougall, M.D.

Obesity is now an American “epidemic.” It is an odd time in history, when more people are dying from too much food than from too little. Interestingly, a Centers for Disease Control (CDC) study found that physical activity did not change substantially between 1991 and 1998 for the people involved, but their average calorie intake did—by over 200 calories. Thus, all fingers point to the American diet.

But what has changed in the last decade? Two things come to mind for me.

The first is the popularity of processed foods; they are more readily available now than ever before, and the hectic pace of modern life causes many people to resort to them. In fact, the “Third Report on Nutritional Monitoring in the U.S.” concluded that between 1980 and 1992 the amount of money spent per person in urban households doubled for frozen prepared foods; spending on potato chips and other snack foods increased 60 percent; and spending on carbonated drinks rose 21 percent.

These convenience foods are recipes for obesity, usually containing large amounts of fat, sugar, and salt and insufficient amounts of fiber. While “convenience foods” save time in the kitchen, they may wind up stealing years from your life. Double this disaster with the efficiency of fast food restaurants to deliver all these fattening foods.

Second, fad diets have enjoyed renewed popularity. Proof that there were benefits to a low-fat diet spurred food manufacturers to produce a variety of

processed, “fat-free” foods, which Americans gobbled up under the false impression that they were healthy. Unfortunately, these processed diet foods often contain other fat-producing ingredients, such as high quantities of sugar, vegetable oils, partially hydrogenated oils, and refined flour.

The low-fat diet I have always recommended is full of whole, unprocessed foods—the foods in the outer aisles of the supermarket!

In addition, many of today’s fad diets require calorie restriction and exotic, hard-to-prepare menus, making them nearly impossible to follow on a long-term basis. Thus, people end up going off of them and gaining more weight than they originally lost in the first place. They then try another fad diet, and the same thing happens, leading to a “yo-yo syndrome” of lost and gained pounds, as well as feelings of failure.

One of the most popular versions of the fad diet today is the high-protein diet. People who have failed to lose weight eating all the processed low-fat foods that have flooded the market are flocking to these diets, to the detriment of their health.

Read on to find out why these diets are so dangerous and how to stay thin the healthy way—by eating natural, unprocessed low-fat foods!

### High-protein diets: Trading your health for temporary weight loss

I’m sure you all know somebody on a high-protein diet who’s lost 20 pounds in 30 days eating all the bacon, butter, and bleu cheese dressing she wants.

Yes, these diets are grabbing the attention of millions of people. And the reason they’re so popular is that you can temporarily lose large amounts of weight eating the high-fat foods Americans have learned to enjoy.

But there’s a hitch—something the authors of these diets won’t tell you about: You’re risking your health.

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The Demise of Human Sperm  
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# Letter from Board Chair

## Our Mission

*EarthSave promotes food choices that are healthy for people and for the planet. We educate, inspire and empower people to shift toward a plant-based diet and to take compassionate action for all life on Earth.*

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## EarthSave International

*444 NE Ravenna Blvd.  
Suite 205*

*Seattle, WA 98115  
T. 206.524.9903*

*F. 206.524.9866  
800.362.3648*

*information@earthsave.org*



## A Lifestyle for a New Millennium

It would be hard to imagine a better time to make personal resolutions than right now. It's the start of a new year, a new century, and (well, not technically, but...) a new millennium. Most Americans make some type of resolution this time of year related to improving their health. But too often they're misinformed about how to accomplish that goal. This year, make it simple on yourself. Vow to eat more fruits, more veggies, more grains and more legumes. It couldn't be any simpler than that.

By making this change, you haven't gone on a "diet." You have made a lifestyle change. And those are the types of changes that last. Unlike fad diets, such the high-protein diets so popular today (see page 1), shifting toward a plant-based diet is something that you can do forever. In fact, the further you make that shift, the more you enjoy it because of all the great benefits you realize immediately. You feel great physically, but you also feel satisfied emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. A plant-based diet is, by definition, good for your body, our environment, and our animals.

Another related worthwhile resolution you can make this year is to eat more organically grown foods. Because this industry is growing about 20% per year, it's easier and more affordable than ever to support organic farmers. Besides the obvious personal and environmental benefits of avoiding pesticides, eating organic foods means that you can avoid genetically engineered foods (see page 6). While we are experimenting with all kinds of genetically modified foods in the United States, Europeans are rejecting these altered foods outright. They're not buying the bill of goods that Monsanto and its counterparts are selling. By purchasing organically grown foods, you too can vote, with your pocketbook, against these untested modifications.

Finally, in order to help others make these resolutions in the future, consider starting an EarthSave chapter in your community. Or, if you already have one, start volunteering more in order to help your chapter grow. As Margaret Mead once wrote, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Yours for a peaceful New Year,

John D. Borders, Jr., J.D.,

Chair

# Still More Bull!

Editorial by T. Colin Campbell, Ph.D.

EXTRA! EXTRA! According to Reuters News Agency, the World Bank has just "...approved a \$93.5 million loan to help nearly 140,000 Chinese farmers raise cattle in addition to their normal crops." When added to matching funds from other sources, a total of about \$200 million, this represents about \$1,400 invested per farmer to increase his annual income \$50-\$200, using World Bank figures for calculation. And that's not all! China will also get 130 new cattle feedlots and employment for about an extra 3,000 workers.

And here's a side benefit, according to a World Bank internal document: "Beef has traditionally been a luxury meat [in China], consumed only during festival days, but the advent of the hotel-restaurant-institutional segment and self-service chain grocery stores offering a variety of chilled or frozen meat cuts is greatly assisting the consumer acceptance of beef in relation to other meats". In other words, while alleviating poverty, these funds will make it possible to service the fast food chains such as McDonald's.

I know first-hand much of this story because I was invited by a couple of brave staffers at The Bank to share my views, as well as the evidence from our comprehensive nationwide diet and health study in China. And there were others who added their views not only on the health consequences but also on the likely environmental impact of this project. After two lectures, a paper summarizing the evidence from our China study, commentaries on the presentations of others, considerable correspondence, still earlier lectures at The Bank and correspondence sent to World Bank President James Wolfensohn\*, we failed to get the decision we thought made eminently more sense. We did not believe that spending this much money to encourage the production of a very expensive food, only then to produce very expensive diseases, was in the best interest of anyone except those in the trade.

With all due respect to the sincere efforts and eloquence of the few brave souls at The Bank who sought and arranged what discourse did take place, it became abundantly clear to me that those who make the really critical and final decisions will arrogantly avoid the relevant evidence if it does not suit their alternative agenda.

It is, of course, true that in China and elsewhere there are many policy makers who sincerely believe that an improved market for beef production and consumption is in their country's best interests. There also are the vast majority of Chinese citizens who will behave just as we in the West did during a similar phase of our history. When given the

economic means to do so, they, like us, will consume beef and other animal-based foods simply for its taste. They, like us, will have been indoctrinated with the presumption that eating beef is a sign of civilization\*, a birthright, and an indication of wealth, status and power.

I could spend the rest of this editorial summarizing the evidence, which has been documented in many major expert-panel reports and original investigations in peer-reviewed science journals. I briefly share some of this evidence in two companion pieces to this article\*. Instead, I will speak to another view, namely, whether people really want to consider evidence that may be contrary to their own interests.

There is something very profound and very personal about the question of whether to be a carnivore (There is no philosophical difference between a carnivore and an omnivore, a word we generally find to be more comfortable - carnivores just don't like vegetables and fruit). People whose minds are imprisoned within the world view of consuming the juices, flesh and organs of animals seem to have a

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## Did You Know...

### Scientists Working on Test for Mad Cow Disease

Scientists say they are close to developing a blood test for diagnosing mad cow disease and similar brain illnesses in animals and humans.

—Source: CNN On-line, October 22, 1999

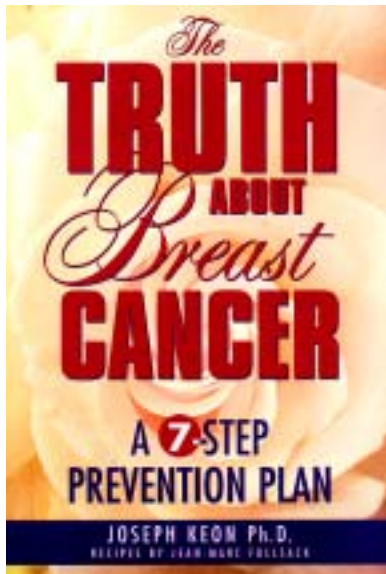




# Seven Steps to Prevent Breast Cancer

by Joseph Keon, Ph.D.

Excerpted from "The Truth About Breast Cancer" by Joseph Keon, Ph.D., (1998, by Parissound Publishing. ISBN 0964897474)



The following seven steps are recommended for reducing risk of breast cancer and improving one's health in general. This is not intended as a "part-time" or "when you feel like it" plan. This is a comprehensive lifestyle program that is intended to be followed full-time. The more of these steps you adopt in your lifestyle, the more you reduce your risk for a host of diseases and the better your overall health will be.

## Step One: Follow the Revised American Diet™

The Standard American diet poses considerable risk to your health. By following a plant-based diet, you significantly lower your intake of cholesterol and saturated fat that

contribute to the clogging of arteries and you sharply reduce your intake of toxic chemicals, such as pesticides, that concentrate in the fat of animals. Additionally, you will eliminate your exposure to the residues of powerful hormones used to raise farm animals, as well as other products unsuitable for human consumption but typically found in meats and dairy products.

A health-supporting diet contains an abundance of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and legumes. It may also contain a minimum of raw nuts and seeds for those who enjoy them and do not have difficulty digesting them, and are not struggling with a weight problem.

The Revised American Diet™ avoids rancid, hydrogenated, and fried oils. You would be prudent to avoid French fried potatoes and onion rings as well, even though they are made from plants. This also means avoiding pretty much any conventional oils sold in markets today. The exception is cold-pressed, organic, extra virgin olive oil that is sold in opaque glass containers that protect it from light. In addition, remember to avoid refined sugars and grains.

## Step Two: Choose Organically Grown Foods

The problem of pesticide contamination is far worse than most of us can begin to imagine. Every time that you have a choice, choose organic over conventional fruits, grains, vegetables, herbs, and spices. Yes, the cost is still a bit higher than that of conventional foods, but your health is well worth it! Also, pay attention to the ingredients in packaged foods. Many of the popular snack foods that are turning up in natural foods markets are sweetened with grape juice instead of refined white sugar. While at first this seems safer for one's health, the reality is that grapes are one of the most heavily treated fruits on earth. When you do buy packaged foods, look for those that have been made from organic ingredients.

## Step Three: Consume Only Purified Water

The simplest and most efficient strategy to ensure that you obtain purified water is to purchase a point-of-use filtration system for your sinks, ice maker, and even showerheads. Keep in mind that when you eat out, the restaurants will in most cases be serving you the same highly chlorinated tap water laden with a host of other contaminants. In this case, choose glass bottled water instead. Some restaurants are now offering filtered water, but don't assume that this is the case. Avoid plastic jugs of water sold at the supermarket. There is evidence that the plastics may leach endocrine-disrupting chemicals and other contaminants into the water at warmer temperatures.

## Step Four: Minimize Your Exposure to Toxic Chemicals

Take a good look around your home. You may be surprised by the number of toxic chemicals you harbor under your kitchen sink and in the bathroom, the basement, and the garage. Educate yourself about the common sources of household toxic chemicals. Today there are safe alternatives for most any household need. Seek them out after safely disposing of those you find around your house. If you are using chlorine-based bleach in your laundry, you are dumping a highly toxic and carcinogenic product into the

## Did You Know...

### Medicare To Pay For Ornish Plan

Medicare has announced plans to pay for up to 1,800 elderly Americans with severe heart disease to try Dean Ornish's famous ultra low-fat [plant-based] diet.

### Veggies Help Prevent Stroke

Men and women who eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day are less likely to suffer from ischemic stroke, the most common form of stroke, than those who eat fewer than three servings a day.

water with every load and exposing yourself to the fumes at the same time. Seek out alternative, environmentally safe laundry whiteners.

Be mindful of the fact that golf courses are a major hazard when it comes to pesticide exposure. In fact, it has been estimated that maintaining the pristine appearance of golf courses may use up to four times more pesticide per acre than farmers do on food crops...and a number of these chemicals are endocrine disruptors. The authors of *Our Stolen Future* aptly advise that, if you are a golfer, you may wish to ask the groundskeepers when they apply pesticides, so you can plan to play at different times. Also, be sure to keep your hands away from your mouth while on the course, and wash them thoroughly when leaving the course.

Finally, avoid plastic wrap and plastic water bottles, jugs, and storage containers, and avoid canned foods. Not only are the cans lined with plastic, which can leach into the food, but also, canned foods are nutritionally inferior to fresh foods.

## Step Five: Avoid Alcohol

We are very casual about social drinking in the U.S., and it is easy to lose touch with the amount of alcohol we consume. The annual per capita consumption of alcoholic beverages by persons over the age of 14 in the U.S. is 14 cases of beer, 12 bottles of wine, and 12 fifths of liquor (distilled spirits). For the reasons indicated earlier, alcohol consumption poses a risk on a number of fronts. The best approach is to quit "cold turkey." Another option is to seek out the assistance provided by such support groups as Alcoholics Anonymous. If you are a drinker, begin stocking your home with and requesting at bars, mineral water, non-alcoholic wines, sparkling cider, and other replacement drinks. Whether you make the break from alcohol by yourself or with assistance, you will undoubtedly notice a refreshing change in the way your body and mind feels. Depending on how much alcohol you consume, you may also notice additional weight loss once you eliminate alcohol from your life.

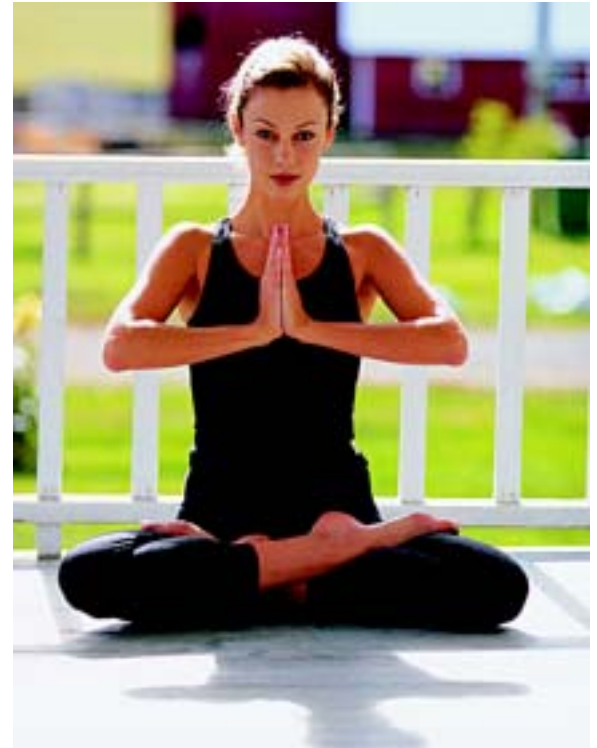
## Step Six: Exercise Regularly, and Reduce Stress

Exercise has an essential role in helping you cope with stress. The idea is to perform some sort of activity that is vigorous and will elevate your heart rate. Your best bet is to join a well-equipped athletic club where you will have access to the greatest variety of current equipment. This way you will be free to choose from any number of exercises and to fashion different routines according to your needs. You may also wish to hire a personal trainer initially as a form of inspiration and to be sure that you become familiar with proper form and technique in exercising. Other forms of stress reduction are also important, and include abdominal breathing and the Tension-Release Method I describe in my book.

## Step Seven: Meditate

This powerful form of stress reduction has been shown to benefit health in numerous important ways, including lowering blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and resting heart rate. Regular meditation allows your body and all of its interdependent systems, not the least of which is the immune system, to function at their optimal levels. The wonderful thing about meditation is that it costs nothing — there are no membership dues for a facility, and you can practice it virtually anywhere, anytime. Other forms of stress reduction that you may wish to explore include various types of tai chi and yoga.

By integrating these seven basic steps into your daily life, you are empowering yourself and reducing your risk of breast cancer as well as a host of other debilitating conditions and diseases. The increased vitality and well-being you'll experience will be your daily reward. I wish you health and vitality as you put these steps into practice. 🌍



**Did You Know...**  
**FDA Allows Health Labeling on Soy Products**  
*The FDA has announced that soy product labels are now permitted to make statements about the role of soy in reducing heart disease.*



# Genetically Altered Food: Myths and Realities

by Rick Charnes, EarthSave Boston

## Did You Know...

**It's not just calcium anymore**

*Researchers say substances found in fruit and vegetables, such as zinc, magnesium, potassium, fiber and vitamin C, can keep middle-aged women's bones strong and fracture free. The findings "suggest a link between fruit and vegetable consumption and bone health," according to investigators led by Dr. Susan A. New of the University of Surrey in Guildford, UK.*

—Am J Clin Nutr 2000 71: 142-151.

## What's killing us?

*Heart disease is the leading cause of death in those over 65, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The next most common causes of death in that age group are cancer and stroke.*

—Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 1999;48:7-22.

For those of us who follow a plant-based diet, this moment is truly a crossroads in history, a point from which we may never be able to turn back. The plant-based diet we have been following is under radical attack by a new class of foodstuffs never before seen on the planet.

We are all poised at a moment in time where we face a choice between two paths. We can either find the personal and political will to move forward to an environmentally sustainable organic agriculture, or we can follow the pied piper of big-business-controlled biotechnology into potentially uncontrollable disasters of a magnitude never before seen.

The worldwide alarm about the safety of genetically altered (GA) food has reached a monumental pitch. In Europe, and particularly in Great Britain, citizens have stated clearly and forcefully that they do not want these foods grown in their countries or served at their dinner tables. In response to huge consumer demand, many grocery chain stores in Britain have removed these foods from their shelves. In the United States, the movement against GA foods is just beginning, and we in EarthSave have an important role to play in this.

Approximately 50% of all the soy and 38% of the corn acreage planted in the U.S. this year is genetically altered, yet it is entering the market unlabeled. In addition, much of the Canola oil in the U.S. market is from gene-spliced plants. Given the prevalence of these products in processed foods, unless you are eating only organically grown food you are likely already consuming some GA food.

## What is genetically altered food?

Grains, beans, vegetables and other foodstuffs are currently being spliced with genes from viruses, bacteria and other organisms. There are two common techniques for genetic alteration: In the first, used frequently with soy, the plant is modified to resist an herbicide, usually Monsanto's Roundup™, so farmers can apply the herbicide to kill weeds without killing the young soy seedling. In the second, often used with corn, the plant is modified to contain within its genetic structure the pesticide bacterium Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*).

Biotech companies say these genetic modifications should reduce the number of chemicals applied externally. Nevertheless, indications are that farmers using these crops apply as much or more chemical as before.

Genetic alteration is a form of plant breeding radically different from anything previously practiced. Previous breeding techniques have relied on the plant's natural mechanisms of reproduction. Now, however, genes from one species are being synthetically inserted into a totally different species. In order for this to happen, the species barriers of the recipient plant must be broken down. A virus, acting as a 'vector' to overcome the plant's normal protective mechanisms, typically is used to insert the foreign genes.

## Health Risks

When the composition of the plant genome – the genetic structure of an organism – is altered, new proteins are introduced into the food chain. We are now consuming products never before considered foodstuffs, with great potential for unpredictable toxic or allergic reactions.

There has already been at least one known health disaster regarding genetically altered products. In 1989 the Japanese company Showa Denko marketed a GA version of the supplement L-tryptophan. After the release an estimated 5,000 people suffered from an outbreak of Eosinophilia Myalgia Syndrome (EMS). It was initially reported that 37 people died, and 1,500 were left with permanent disabilities.

When gene engineers splice a foreign gene into a plant or microbe, they often link it to another gene, called an antibiotic resistance marker (ARM) gene, which helps determine if the first gene was successfully spliced into the host organism. Some researchers warn that these ARM genes used in the alteration process might unexpectedly recombine with disease-causing bacteria or microbes in the environment or in the guts of animals or people who consume GA food, contributing to the growing public health danger of antibiotic resistance.

Early in 1999, prominent front-page stories in the British press trumpeted scientist Arpad Pusztai's explosive findings that GA potatoes spliced with DNA from the snowdrop plant and the Cauliflower Mosaic Virus (CaMv) — a commonly used viral 'promoter' — are poisonous to mammals. When fed to rats, these GA potatoes, found to be significantly different in chemical composition from regular potatoes, caused reduction in the weight of many organs, impairment of immunological responsiveness and signs suggestive of viral infection.

One of the rationales offered by the federal government for its approval of GA food is the claim that it is

“substantially equivalent” to non-GA food. Recent research has called this conclusion into question. For example, a study by Dr. Marc Lappe found that concentrations of beneficial phytoestrogen compounds — thought to protect against heart disease and cancer — were 12%-14% lower in genetically modified soybeans than in traditional strains. EarthSave members are well aware of the importance of soy in vegetarian products and can understand how serious a threat this poses to the health of our plant-based diet.

## Environmental Concerns

One of the most frightening concerns about the increasing acreage planted to GA crops is that pollen can travel miles from the host via wind and insects, fertilizing non-GA crops or related weed species growing nearby. This has already happened with Canola (oilseed rape) and sugar beet, creating the potential for superweeds. After touring the American Midwest, one farm analyst noted “there are Roundup™ resistant weeds everywhere now.” Furthermore, the genes inserted by the alteration process may be up to 30 times more likely to escape than the plant’s own genes.

Even organic food is threatened. Some 87,000 bags of organic corn chips manufactured by Wisconsin-based Terra Prima had to be destroyed when a Dutch importer discovered genetic contamination apparently blown over via pollen from a genetically altered plot near where the corn was grown.

In some of the most publicized American research to date, Cornell University scientists reported that 44% of monarch butterfly larvae died within four days when fed milkweed dusted with pollen from GA corn. British research has shown that beneficial insects such as ladybugs and lacewings are damaged by feeding on GA crops, which are supposed to affect only ‘target’ insect predators. Studies have begun on possible deleterious effects on the rest of the food chain, as birds and other wildlife feed on insects that have consumed the GA crops. English Nature, the British Government’s wildlife advisor, warns that the introduction of GA herbicide-tolerant crops “could be the final blow for species like the skylark, the linnet and the corn bunting”.

As these novel organisms gradually saturate the biosphere, there is concern about the effect on soil microorganisms upon which many other organisms depend. When applied externally, Bt remains active only a few days in the environment. When engineered into the genetic structure of the plant, it can remain active in the nearby soil for at least eight months. Bt toxins are engineered into a wide range of transgenic plants already released into the environment and this build-up in the soil may have a devastating influence on pollinators and other beneficial insects.

## EarthSave’s Unique Role

The biotech companies insist that GA technology is needed to feed the world’s growing population, and their advertisements tout gene-altered food as the solution to world hunger. Delegates from 24 African nations responded to pro-biotech advertisements with the following statement:

“We...strongly object that the image of the poor and hungry from our countries is being used by giant multinational corporations to push a technology that is neither safe, environmentally friendly, nor economically beneficial to us. We do not believe that such companies or gene technologies will help our farmers to produce the food that is needed in the 21st century. On the contrary, we think it will destroy the diversity, the local knowledge and the sustainable agricultural systems that our farmers have developed for millennia and that it will thus undermine our capacity to feed ourselves.”

World hunger is not a problem of technology or insufficient production, but primarily one of unequal distribution and economic inequality. The accelerating corporatization and concentration of agriculture, in which companies such as Monsanto are playing a large part, hasten this process, thereby actually *increasing* the problem of hunger.

Furthermore, there is little evidence that GA crops produce larger yields. Research has shown mixed results, with some studies revealing approximately 5%-10% lower yields for GA soybeans.

EarthSave can play a vital role in this debate. We understand that the most environmentally sustainable way for more food to be made available is for our civilization to begin to make the shift toward a plant-based diet and agriculture. As the percentage of animal foods in the human diet gradually decreases, we will be able to use the substantial grain and legume acreage throughout the world for human consumption, thus rendering irrelevant the biotech companies’ argument.

I am convinced that this is the best response to the genetic engineering question. I hope chapters and the international organization will use our knowledge of the importance of a plant-based diet to take a leadership role in the growing movement against GA technology. 🌍



*(Condensed from an article featured on the EarthSave website. To view the article in its entirety, including footnotes, visit our website at [www.earthsave.org/ge.htm](http://www.earthsave.org/ge.htm) or send a SASE to P.O. Box 89, Mt. Hermon, CA, 95041-0089 to receive a printed copy by return mail).*



# A Decade of Service: Sheila “Mother EarthSave” Hoffman Retires

When retiring EarthSave International Board member Sheila Hoffman went to hear a John Robbins lecture in November of 1989, little did she know that the next ten years of her life would be consumed with helping John make his non-profit organization a success.

Sheila didn't know much about John Robbins prior to that talk, but had remembered reading something about John's son, Ocean, giving a copy of a book called *Diet For a New America* to Raisa Gorbachev. When she spotted a flyer announcing John would be speaking in Seattle about the connection between diet and the environment, Sheila and her husband, Spencer – both avid environmentalists – decided to go listen.

“We really felt like we got it from John's talk, before we even read the book,” recalls Sheila. “All the environmental things he talked about that night – ozone depletion, killing off algae in the water, the questions about the sustainability of the planet given our current consumption of resources — it just rang an

urgent bell for us both.”

Sheila and Spencer were also struck by Robbins' observation that if everybody cut back just ten percent in their animal food consumption, enough grain could be saved to feed all the hungry in the world. The symbolism of this statement was appealing to Sheila.

“Of course there are politics involved, and whether grain not fed to food animals would go to the hungry is an entirely separate issue,” Sheila says, “but on the way home Spencer and I were talking about how, ‘Gee, just cutting back 10% would be so easy. Maybe that isn't enough. Maybe we need to go all the way.’ We were looking for a way to have an even bigger impact.”

They both read *Diet For a New America* and as a New Year's resolution, on January 1, 1990, Sheila and Spencer dropped all animal prod-

ucts from their diet. “We were not eating a vegetarian diet. We went straight to vegan.”

In March of 1990, Sheila and Spencer attended a potluck put on by people who had heard John speak a few months earlier. It was in this meeting of about 30 or 40 people that EarthSave Seattle was born. “Many of the people who met at that first talk are still involved today ten years later,” says Sheila.

Sheila became the Seattle Chapter's first chair, thus providing the beginning of what would become a beautiful friendship with the organization. Sheila has been a Jane-of-all-trades at EarthSave, serving as Seattle volunteer Chair from 1990 to 1995, and working in a part-time paid position starting in 1994 as EarthSave International Chapter Coordinator. Sheila was also a key player in the creation of the highly successful Seattle Taste of Health (<http://tasteofhealth.org/seattle>).

In 1996, Sheila was invited to join the EarthSave International Board of Directors. During her three years of dedicated service, Sheila's energy and spirit kept everyone motivated. It was during this time she earned her well-deserved nickname, “Mother EarthSave.”

When Sheila's three year Board term ended in October, she was unanimously elected Board Member Emeritus, and presented a plaque by President Lyman, shown right.

As an owner of a car whose license plate reads “ERTHSAV,” Sheila says, “I'll always be part of EarthSave. I feel confident that both EarthSave Seattle and the ESI Board are quite capable of surviving and doing quite well without my being involved. I just turned 50 and I'm ready to take some more time to explore mind/body/spirit connection stuff. Also, my graphic design business has doubled during the past year, which keeps me pretty busy.”

Now that Sheila has some extra time on her hands, she and Spencer plan on enjoying a tandem bike they recently purchased, and riding in the Northwest Tandem Rally and then the STP (Seattle to Portland) double century.

Everyone at EarthSave loves Sheila, we'll miss her, and as always – especially with her new bicycle – it will be hard to keep up with her. 🌍



## Did You Know...

**Aging: It's not just a “gene thing”**

*A study of the aging process in identical twins shows that those who live the hardest, age the fastest, researchers report. A Columbia University study concluded that “when controlling for the effects of genetic predisposition, lifestyle can greatly influence a person's physical appearance and augment the effects of aging.” Annals of Plastic Surgery 1999; 43:585-588.*



# Taste of Health, Seattle 1999

Even the sun came out for Seattle's blockbuster Taste of Health, EarthSave's premier annual event! On the weekend of October 16-17, 1999, thousands of Puget Sound residents lined up in the rare, sparkling sunshine and packed the halls of the Northwest Rooms at Seattle Center, foregoing more usual sunny day pursuits for the opportunity to attend cooking classes by world-class chefs, learn about health and diet from famous speakers, try terrific meatless foods, and much more.

A group of 20 team leaders worked for months in advance to put on this event. In addition, hundreds of EarthSave volunteers assisted over the weekend. The end result was two days of fun, information, and delicious food for adults and children. Among the highlights were the Try-it & Buy-it Market, the children's room, a diverse restaurant room, and an impressive list of speakers. This year's Try-it & Buy-it Market attracted an unsurpassed number of vendors who offered samples of vegetarian and vegan foods. In addition to the delicious samples and coupons, many vendors sold their products at a reduced price, offering those who attended considerable savings.

Nor were the smallest attendees left out of the loop. In addition to free childcare with beepers for parents, there was a large children's area offering a range of fun and educational activi-

ties. Yoga classes, face painting, quiz games, craft activities, and a large maze are just some of the activities the kids enjoyed.

Speakers included Howard Lyman, David and Nikki Goldbeck, Rynn Berry, Gail Davis, and many others. There were also several cooking demonstrations by international and local chefs. Seattle's 4th Taste of Health was a great success and wonderful experience. For more information on Taste of Health events, visit the website at [www.tasteofhealth.org](http://www.tasteofhealth.org). 🌐



## They Can Sow But Can't Reap: The Demise of Human Sperm

by John Robbins

In *Diet For A New America* I stated that we are witnessing a dramatic decline in human sperm quantity and quality. If this is true, it is obviously of foremost importance. While it is true that only one sperm is required to fertilize an egg, once sperm counts drop below a certain point infertility becomes increasingly common.

While skeptics and representatives of the chemical industry have attacked *Diet For A New America*, and said sperm counts are not really dropping, developments since the book was published in 1987 have not been reassuring.

A 1992 study in the *British Medical Journal* found that men in Western countries today have less than half the sperm production their grandfathers had at the same age. (1) The report examined 61 separate

studies of sperm count in men in many countries, including the U.S., and concluded that there has been a 42% decrease in average sperm count, from 113 million per milliliter (ml) to 66 million per ml, since 1940.

(There are 4.5 milliliters in a teaspoon). Furthermore, the average volume of semen diminished from 3.4 ml to 2.75 ml, a 20% loss since 1940. Thus the average man has lost 53% of sperm production in the last 50 years.

How low can sperm counts drop before men become infertile? In many instances, men are considered infertile if their sperm counts drop as low as 20 million per ml, although it is still possible for a man with that sperm count to sire a child if other factors are all favorable. If sperm count drops much below

### Did You Know...

#### Factory Farming Linked To Disease

*Factory farms produce 2.7 million pounds of manure each year. Manure from factory farms has been linked to diseases such as E. coli, listeria, and cryptosporidium.*

—The Center for a Livable Future,  
Johns Hopkins School of Public  
Health, Baltimore, MD.

#### Antibiotic Use Puts Food Supply At Risk

*Scientists say the increased use of antibiotics in food animals is boosting the risk that dangerous "superbugs" resistant to drug treatment could be passed along to humans.*

—JAMA, 1999;282:1233-1239.

—Continued on page 13



## Did You Know...

### But our ancestors ate...?

*"We...suggest that early humans, including *H. erectus*, continued to rely on plant foods most of the time and especially during the periods of food shortage in which natural selection would have been intense."*

—"The Raw and the Stolen: Cooking and the Ecology of Human Origins", *Current Anthropology* Volume 40, Number 5, December 1999.

## Organic IS better

*Researchers say there is now firm evidence that organically-grown produce is healthier to eat than conventional crops. Soil Association Director Patrick Holden said research has shown that they contain more secondary metabolites than conventionally-grown plants.*

—BBC News, Sci/Tech, Jan. 3, 2000. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/sci/tech/newsid\\_588000/588589.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/sci/tech/newsid_588000/588589.stm)

## High-protein diets are wrong—by design

Our Creator designed us to run on carbohydrates. Glucose, one of the simplest, most basic carbohydrates, is our primary fuel. It is more easily converted into energy than fat or protein, and, therefore, our bodies will always burn it first. In addition, it is the cleanest-burning fuel of the body, creating fewer byproducts than other nutrients. By our very design, the body needs carbohydrates to operate efficiently and provide ample energy. A testament to their importance is the fact that the brain tissues, red blood cells, and cells of the kidneys will only use glucose as fuel. When you take the carbohydrates away, your body runs out of glucose and is forced to burn its secondary fuel—fat.

When your cells burn fat instead of glucose, byproducts known as ketones are produced. This creates a metabolic state called ketosis, which leads to a loss of appetite and a decrease in food intake, which results in weight loss. Ketosis also has a strong diuretic effect, resulting in significant water loss—and, again, weight loss. However, ketosis is also associated with fatigue, nausea, and low blood pressure.

## Making yourself (literally) sick to lose weight

Ketosis occurs naturally when people are starving or seriously ill. During starvation, this metabolic state is a kindness from nature allowing the victim to suffer less from hunger pangs. During illness, the suppression of the appetite frees the person to rest and recuperate rather than be forced by hunger to get and prepare food. Because the most severely carbohydrate-restricted diets, called ketogenic diets, such as the Atkins diet and the Michael and Mary Eades' Protein Power diet, simulate this metabolic state seen with serious illness, I refer to them as "the make-yourself-sick diets."

## Imagine staying sick forever

In order to remain in ketosis, you must severely restrict carbohydrates. More than 80 calories of carbohydrate, which means one-third of a baked potato, one-third cup of rice, or one orange, could be enough to take you out of ketosis and cause you to become hungry again. In order to maintain weight loss, most people must remain in this state of sickness on a long-term basis.

Living with ketosis gets old fast for most people (which you'll find completely understandable when you consider that it's going against what our Creator intended we do in the first place—burn carbohydrates). They eventually go back to their old way of eating to feel better and to

—*Staying Out of the Zone: Continued from page 1*

enjoy their diet more—only to regain their lost weight and then some.

The fundamental truth is that your body just wasn't designed to sustain this state of sickness for long—over time, it has detrimental effects.

## Flirting with heart disease and cancer

Low-carbohydrate, high-protein diets contain significant amounts of the very foods that the American Cancer Society and the American Heart Association tell us contribute to our most common diseases. Yet proponents of the high-protein diets claim that they prevent those diseases. They claim they lower levels of insulin, high levels of which are associated with atherosclerosis, high blood pressure, and diabetes. The diet may also reduce blood-cholesterol levels, blood-sugar levels, and triglycerides, because dieters eat much less as a result of the appetite suppression caused by ketosis. (Other high-protein diets—such as the Carbohydrate Addicts and the Zone diets—also may reduce these risk factors by restricting food intake.)

However, the fact that these diets lower a few individual risk factors does not mean they are healthy. Cancer chemotherapy will also lower your cholesterol level and triglycerides by causing a loss of appetite that results in less food consumption.<sup>1</sup> Yet no one would promote chemotherapy as a healthy weight-loss approach.

The truth is we know very little about the effects of these diets on risk factors for heart and other diseases, because the authors, to my knowledge, don't study their results and publish them in scientific journals for others to evaluate. Nor—with one exception—has anyone one else taken an interest in doing so.

The exception to this is a 1980 study published in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* that examined the effects of the diet described in Dr. Atkins' *Diet Revolution* on 24 subjects over a 12-week period.<sup>2</sup> Those participating in this study, both men and women, lost an average of about 15 pounds in eight weeks. However, their LDL "bad" cholesterol and free fatty acids increased significantly. (High levels of LDL cholesterol are associated with more coronary artery disease, and high levels of free fatty acids are believed to cause potentially dangerous irregular heartbeats.<sup>3</sup>) In addition, their HDL "good" cholesterol was significantly reduced, suggesting an increased risk of heart attacks.

## Protein washes your bones into the toilet

Osteoporosis and kidney stones are caused primarily by a diet rich in animal foods. Meats, seafood, fish, eggs, and cheese provide an abundance of acid that must be neutralized in order for the body to maintain its proper pH balance. The body uses its bones as a buffering system. This causes bone loss that eventually leads to osteoporosis.<sup>4</sup> The high-protein diet also alters the kidneys' physiology, resulting in the loss of this bone material into the urinary system. During its passage through the ureters, calcium can solidify into kidney stones.<sup>5</sup>

Besides causing these long-term health problems, high-protein diets also cause immediate disorders, such as constipation, reduced mental function, bad breath, and dehydration.

## Another side effect: Constipation

If you do choose to try a high-protein diet, make sure you have plenty of laxatives on hand. High-protein diets cause constipation because they are composed chiefly of foods (meat, fish, and cheese) that are completely free of dietary fiber, which is necessary for proper bowel function. Low-fiber diets are also believed to cause varicose veins, hemorrhoids, and hiatal hernia.

Fiber, found only in plant foods (food high in carbohydrates), has many health-promoting qualities. It binds with carcinogens, fats, and cholesterol and eliminates them in the feces. By eliminating carcinogens, it reduces your risk of developing cancer, and by eliminating fat and cholesterol, it reduces your risk of heart disease, atherosclerosis, and obesity. Fiber also improves the efficiency of insulin, so that we need less of it to maintain appropriate blood-sugar levels.

## Sharp as a tack? Not anymore.

Another immediate effect you may notice on a high-protein diet is reduced mental capacity. A recent study shows that mental functioning is impaired by ketosis. The study tested the ability of a group of people on a ketogenic diet to perform on a neuropsychological test that requires high levels of mental processing and flexibility. The researchers concluded that the high-protein diet impaired their mental function.<sup>6</sup>

## They drain your body of its most important element

Carbohydrate-deficient diets cause dehydration. In fact, this is the main reason that the initial weight loss for people on these diets is so rapid. When you consume insufficient amounts

of carbohydrates, your body burns the carbohydrates (glycogen) you have stored in the liver and muscles. The average body stores 300 grams of glycogen, with 2.7 grams of water stored with each gram of glycogen. Thus, depletion of your body's glycogen would result in an almost overnight weight loss of 8,110 grams (over 3 pounds) of water and glycogen. Once your body has depleted its glycogen stores, it starts burning its stored fat, creating ketones that have a strong diuretic effect on your kidneys, resulting in additional water loss.

Keith Ayoob, professor of nutrition at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City, warns about the bad breath caused by the high-protein diets.<sup>7</sup> This unpleasant side effect is caused by the ketones produced when your body is forced to burn fat. These ketones are partly eliminated from your body via your breath. Although halitosis isn't physically damaging to you, it could seriously damage your social or business life.

## Is there anything good about these diets?

One thing I'll agree with the authors of high-protein diets about is that refined carbohydrates do raise insulin levels, and, as a result, when combined with fat, they promote obesity. These diets recommend that you avoid sugar, white flour, milk, ice cream, cakes, pies, soft drinks, and low-fat-diet products that contain large amounts of highly refined carbohydrates. I heartily agree!

Also, to their credit, many recommend a high intake of green and yellow vegetables, such as asparagus, cauliflower, and onions. But they fail the dieter by restricting healthy complex carbohydrates like rice, corn, beans, and potatoes and by recommending butter, eggs, meat and other very high-fat and/ or high-protein foods.

## The truth: Complex carbohydrates are the secret to health and weight loss

A diet based on complex carbohydrates with the addition of fruits and vegetables will cause effortless, permanent weight loss without hunger, while promoting good health. You can eat delicious dishes like minestrone soup, chili, and bean burritos. You won't ever have to make yourself sick again with fried cheese cubes wrapped in bacon. And it's a program you can stick to—for the rest of your new, healthy, and long vital life! 🌍



*Dr. McDougall is the founder and medical director of the nationally renowned McDougall Program, a twelve-day, live-in plan at St. Helena Hospital in California's Napa Valley. He is also the author of several bestselling books on diet and health, including "The McDougall Program: 12 Days to Dynamic Health." Visit Dr. McDougall's website at [www.drmcDougall.com](http://www.drmcDougall.com), or call 1-800-570-1654. To order a subscription to Dr. McDougall's newsletter, "To Your Health," please call 1-800-851-7100 or 410-783-8440.*

## Footnotes

- 1 Biochem Int, vol. 24, p. 1015, 1991
- 2 JADA, vol. 77, p. 264, 1980
- 3 Lancet, vol. 343, p. 155, 1994
- 4 J Nutri, vol. 128, p. 1051, 1998
- 5 J Pediatr, vol. 117, p. 743, 1990
- 6 Int J Obes Relat Metab Disord, vol. 19, p. 811, 1995
- 7 Time, vol. 154, no. 18, 1999

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very difficult time even imagining evidence to the contrary. They prefer to be oblivious to the health evidence against these products or, at times, to be hostile to the messengers of such evidence.

In an internal e-mail correspondence at The Bank, a senior Bank staffer responsible for the beef cattle project wrote the following when asked about potential problems associated with the consumption of animal-based foods:

“Thank you for your memo. Briefly, the answer is no, we haven’t taken ‘the serious problems associated with animal-based foods into account.’ I don’t think we will do so, either, at least not until China’s dietary patterns look a lot more like Western ones, because to do so could easily be taken as a fairly extreme form of paternalism...or worse.”

“...To most people in the world, eating foods they like is part of what is called ‘living.’ Not doing so is part of what is called ‘poverty.’ Choosing what to eat is part of what is called ‘freedom.’ The beauty of prosperity is that it expands the zone of choice, a zone of freedom

perhaps even more highly valued in Chinese culture than ours. The Chinese masses, with a bit of money, are also consuming much more tobacco, alcohol, sugar, oils, motorcycles, and other probably unhealthy commodities than ever before. But, frankly, they seem much happier than even 10 years ago. When you read the details of the grisly famine of 1959-61, imposed on them by another group of people who knew what was best for them, perhaps they can be excused a bit of happiness.

Nonetheless, following this and other ‘dialogue’ of a similar nature, we were led to believe during the spring of 1998 that the project had been dismantled and that we had been persuasive in our arguments against its funding. During the summer of 1999, however, we got word that it was being resurrected, if indeed it was ever tabled. Five speakers, including myself, were invited, including a senior Bank staffer quite familiar with, and presumably supportive of the proposal. It was during the panel discussion following the presentations that I first learned from my fellow Bank panelist of the prevailing view among the project advocates within the Bank. We learned, quite surprisingly, that the evidence supporting the health value of a plant-based diet was not sufficiently persuasive to these folks, who also did not attend the symposium, thus suggesting that they really had little or no interest in the evidence.

What are these project advocates thinking, especially after so many national and international reports

from expert panels over the past quarter century have concluded that we should be shifting to a plant-based diet? And what about the evidence from rural China itself, the most comprehensive survey of any country, showing a highly significant association between the consumption of even small amounts of animal-based foods and increasing prevalence of heart disease, cancer, and similar diseases so common here in the West?

For me, being convinced of the evidence in favor of a plant-based diet is not about the evidence or the facts. Instead, it is about issues of a very different kind. Ignorance I can tolerate, for it means that we have failed to adequately articulate the evidence. Personal preference in the face of actually knowing the evidence also is tolerable, for who am I to tell others what to eat? But arrogance, that state of mind which aggressively determines important policies for the public at large while intentionally avoiding the evidence, is a very different matter.

Decisions of this sort are not new, of course. Please be assured that I am not quite that naive. Like so many have said before, those who make the golden rules are the very same ones who have the gold. Such behavior has gone on for a very long time and it is not expected to be suspended any time soon. The arguments against the consumption of animal-based foods, on grounds of ill health, is very old indeed.

Socrates wondered about the consequences of people becoming affluent, especially as they moved to urban centers. He claimed that there would be a need for “great quantities of all kinds of cattle for those who wish to eat them”. He then went on to ask, “...shall we not experience the need for medical men to a much greater extent under this than under the former [dietary] regime?” He also was far ahead of his time when he wondered how it would be possible to get the extra land for producing cattle meat, when compared with the land required to produce the same amount of food from plant material. Why was Socrates, and others even before him, 2,500 years ago, so smart while we, eons later, are so dumb? It seems that we have learned far more how to manipulate information, and far less how to understand and to share information.

Although my cynicism remains relatively intact, I could be persuaded that maybe we are about to enter a new and more promising age. Perhaps, we could use these rapidly emerging and powerful information technologies to spread the word ourselves, without going through the jungle of bureaucracy heretofore controlled by the few for the few. But—and this is very important—we also must figure out ways to promote information that is articulate, sincere, and reliable if we will ever be able to develop this desperately needed new world view. 🌐



T. Colin Campbell, Ph.D.

\* View the companion pieces to this article and the letter to James Wolfensohn on the EarthSave website at [www.earthsave.org/morebull.htm](http://www.earthsave.org/morebull.htm). Visit Dr. Campbell’s website, *New Century Nutrition*, [www.newcenturynutrition.com](http://www.newcenturynutrition.com).

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that, however, reproduction becomes increasingly unlikely. Below 5 million, a man is definitely sterile.

Diminished sperm count is not the only factor in male sterility. If sperm quality is compromised, higher sperm counts are needed for reproduction to take place. As sperm motility (the ability of the sperm to move) is impaired, the sperm may be unable to pass through the cervical mucous or penetrate the hard outer shell of the egg. When sperm motility is reduced, sperm become increasingly incapable of fertilizing the egg.

Abnormally shaped sperm also have difficulty fertilizing an egg. In one study, if 14% or more of sperm had round enlarged heads (indicating early unraveling of genetic material) the chances for pregnancy fell to about 20%.<sup>(2)</sup>

It appears increasingly certain that in today's world both the quantity and quality of male human sperm are declining. The *New England Journal of Medicine* reported in 1995 that not only had sperm count declined 33% during the past 20 years among fertile, healthy men in Paris, France, but also that, during the same period, the proportion of motile sperm (sperm able to swim) declined at the rate of 0.6% per year, and the proportion of normally shaped sperm (compared to misshapen sperm) declined at the rate of 0.5% per year.<sup>(3)</sup>

We now have a scientific consensus that both sperm counts and the quality of sperm are declining. Yet the chemical industry has only stepped up its efforts to convince the public and elected officials that the data is too ambiguous and controversial to justify alarm. To do so, they point to possible "confounding factors," such as subject abstinence time before sampling, and differing methods of analysis, that can influence the accuracy of sperm count data. Their tactic is to take legitimate but relatively minor issues and blow them out of all proportion to imply that nothing conclusive has been learned.

In 1999, however, the journal *BioEssays* published a major report by University of Missouri epidemiologist Shanna Swan that found the dramatic decline of average sperm density in the U.S. and Western Europe to be even greater than previously estimated.<sup>(4)</sup> In a meta-review of data from more than 60 studies, Swan found that average sperm counts among healthy American men dropped from 120 million sperm per milliliter of semen in 1938 to just over 50 million in 1988. In Europe, she found, sperm counts dropped to roughly the same level, and have been dropping by the staggering rate of 3.1% each year between 1971 and 1990.

Despite the efforts of the Chemical Manufacturer's Association, Monsanto, DuPont, etc., to cloud the issue, the evidence of declining sperm levels contin-

ues to mount. It was *The New Yorker Magazine* that, in 1961, first published Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. In 1996, *The New Yorker Magazine* ran a long feature story called "Silent Sperm."<sup>(5)</sup> The author, Lawrence Wright, interviewed dozens of prominent researchers in the field of endocrinology and reproductive health and made some interesting points:

1) Danish endocrinologist Niels E. Skakkebaek said it has become difficult for sperm banks to establish a core of donors. In some areas of Denmark, for example, they are having to recruit ten potential donors to find one with good semen quality.

2) Skakkebaek also reported that 84% of the Danish men he studied had sperm quality below the standards set by the World Health Organization.

3) There has been a three-fold increase in men whose sperm count is below 20 million, the point at which fertility is jeopardized.

4) Researchers at the Washington Fertility Study Center report that the sperm counts of their donors, largely medical students, have suffered a steady decline for many years, to the point that the researchers are now worried that, if the decline continues at the same rate, by the year 2002 there will be no potential donors who can meet the approved or recommended standards.

5) The fact is that the number of morphologically normal sperm (meaning sperm with a normal shape) produced by the average man has dropped below the level of those of a hamster, which has testicles a fraction the size of a man's.

Why is all this happening? The prevailing explanation implicates environmental chemicals called endocrine disrupters that masquerade as hormones. Specifically, synthetic chemicals that mimic the female sex hormone estrogen may influence male development in utero or during the formative years of early childhood when hormone sensitivity is high.

In 1993, a study published in *The Lancet* traced the decline to males being exposed in the womb to female sex hormones that permanently alter their sexual development, and greatly reduce a man's ability to produce sperm.<sup>(6)</sup> The study, along with one published later in 1993 in the *Journal of Endocrinology* established several diet-linked sources of increased estrogenic exposure to males in the womb<sup>(7)</sup>:

1) The modern diet increases the levels of natural estrogen in women. Fiber in the diet today is lower than it was 50 years ago. Natural estrogens excreted



John Robbins, EarthSave founder and author of *Diet for a New America*.

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# Chapters

## Alaska

APU Box 11  
4101 University Drive  
Anchorage, AK 99508  
(907) 566-3622

## California

Inland Empire  
3243 Spring Garden St.  
Riverside, CA 92501  
(909) 682-1196

Orange County  
19744 Beach Blvd #372  
Huntington Beach, CA  
92648  
(714) 835-1775

Marin  
P.O. Box 2086  
Mill Valley, CA 94942  
(415) 383-9143

Sacramento  
P.O. Box 188099  
Sacramento, CA 95818-  
8099  
(916) 733-2165

Santa Barbara  
2022 Cliff Dr. #259  
Santa Barbara, CA 93109  
(805) 566-7506

## Connecticut

P.O. Box 331  
N. Branford, CT 06471  
(203) 488-6739

## Florida

Miami  
P.O. Box 160191  
Miami, FL 33116  
(305) 228-1116

Space Coast  
164 Jamaica Dr.  
Cocoa Beach, FL 32931  
(407) 799-0786

## Indiana

Bloomington  
5964 Crandall Ave  
Ellettsville, IN 47429  
(812) 854-5766

## Kentucky

Lexington  
106 DeShay Rd.  
Lexington, KY 40502  
(606) 293-8966

Louisville  
P.O. Box 4397  
Louisville, KY 40202  
(502) 569-1876

# Chapter Update: EarthSave Baltimore

EarthSave Baltimore is an excellent example of what can be done by a small group of dedicated people. Fueled largely by the enthusiasm of founding core group members Don and Ginny Robertson, the Baltimore chapter hosts monthly potlucks and occasional restaurant outings, maintains a volunteer "phone tree" to inform members and interested parties of upcoming events, and promotes the EarthSave mission via speaking engagements and other venues. This group also understands the value of working with other like-minded organizations...for example, this year, instead of competing with the nearby Vegetarian Resource Group's Turkey Free Thanksgiving, they urged interested people to attend the VRG event, adding significantly to that event's turnout.

EarthSave Baltimore was chartered in 1997, after Don and Ginny heard Dr. Michael Klaper speak about EarthSave at the North American Vegetarian Society's (NAVS) "Summerfest." Although he had been interested in the idea of vegetarianism from childhood, Don had recently begun studying the issue in depth and felt moved by a need to "get the word out." The time was right, and EarthSave Baltimore was born. With Don's enthusiasm, Ginny's eloquence and the dedication of a group of telephone-armed volunteers, the group is well-suited to carry the EarthSave message into the next millennium...one bite at a time.

EarthSave Baltimore: 517 Talbott Ave.,  
Lutherville, MD, 21093-4947, (410) 252-3043,  
earthsaverdon@hotmail.com

## Interested in starting an EarthSave Chapter?

If you'd like information on starting an EarthSave Chapter in your area, please call Audrey Nickel at (831) 335-4879, or email her at [audrey@earthsave.org](mailto:audrey@earthsave.org).



# Where's the Bird?

When it comes to EarthSave, the bird is happy, healthy, and, in some cases, enjoying dinner right along with the human participants! From simple potlucks to elegant catered dinners, the Turkey Free Thanksgiving is a favorite EarthSave tradition and a wonderful outreach tool. Here's what some of our chapters did for Thanksgiving, 1999:

Miami and Louisville both offered gourmet catered dinners. Portland/Vancouver provided "Tofurkey" and potatoes, requesting that guests bring a side dish or dessert to share. Potlucks were the order of the day for everybody else. Great vegan food wasn't the only attraction at many of these events: Several offered speaker programs (Erik Marcus, author of *Vegan: The New Ethics of Eating*, spoke to Miami and Space Coast; Dr. Warren Leon, co-author of *A Consumer's Guide to Effective Environmental Choices*, spoke in Louisville; Robert Cohen, author of *Not Milk* and executive director of the Dairy Education Board, took the podium in Lexington; local naturopath and EarthSave member Dr. Dicken Weatherby spoke on "Eating Healthily during the Holidays" in Southern Oregon; and EarthSave's own Howard Lyman wowed them on Long Island). Many also offered entertainment, ranging from dancing in Bellingham (Seattle) to poetry reading in Hudson Valley, "The Healthy Humor Show" in Cincinnati, and "Songs and Dances of Universal Peace" in Southern Oregon.

Oh yes...and the guest of honor at the Inland Empire (CA) Turkey Free Thanksgiving dinner? None other than Bertrand the Turkey.

## From the EarthSave Discussion Board...

"I read a copy of *Diet for a New America* while vacationing this summer, and was completely taken by its clear message. Having struggled with being overweight my whole life, I had never thought to change my eating habits purely for reasons of health, ethics and ecology, but decided to give it a try. I started changing my eating style on October 1st with the intent of simply eating better, regardless of where my weight ended up. By the end of the year, and AS A SIDE EFFECT, I had lost 36 pounds, completely effortlessly. Never felt the old hunger cravings. This is nothing short of a miracle. I haven't felt this good in 15 years. I have a long way to go yet, but I no longer have any doubt this is the way we were meant to eat." Visit the *EarthSave Discussion Board* at <http://www.vegsource.org/earthsave/>.

in the bile are more readily reabsorbed into the bloodstream when the lower intestine contains little dietary fiber. Thus, a fetus today may be exposed to higher levels of the mother's own natural estrogens, compared to a fetus 50 years ago. (Fiber is found in all whole grains, vegetables and fruits; and is absent in all meats, dairy products, and eggs.)

2) Synthetic estrogens, including DES, were fed to beef cattle from the 1950s through the 1970s to make them grow more meat faster. Though DES has been outlawed for use in U.S. livestock, hormones such as Steer-oid, Ralgro, Compudose, and Synovex are still used in virtually every cattle feedlot in the country. This is the primary reason the European Economic Union refuses to import U.S. beef. Such practices have increased the quantity of estrogens in meat-eating women, and may have contaminated some water supplies.

3) Another source of increased estrogens in women today is the many synthetic organic chemicals and heavy metals that have been released into the environment in massive quantities since World War II. Some of these compounds, such as PCBs and dioxins, concentrate in ever higher levels on higher rungs of the food chains. Vegetarians, and even more

notably vegans, thus enjoy some degree of protection.

4) A study published in *The Lancet* in 1994 found that organic farmers had much higher sperm counts than farmers using chemicals. (8)

Many animals produce up to 1,400 times as much sperm as is needed for fertility. (9) Human males are not nearly so prolific. The average human male produces only five or six times as much sperm as is needed for fertility. In the best of circumstances, humans don't have much sperm to spare.

To summarize, in the last 50 years, the sperm count of the average American male has dropped from 120 million sperm per milliliter of semen to just over 50 million, and there have been losses in sperm quality that markedly enlarge the impact and significance of these reductions. At levels of 20 million, many men experience an inability to reproduce, but with the decline in sperm motility and in normally shaped sperm we may in the future see higher sperm counts needed for fertility. Meanwhile, sperm counts continue to drop. At what point will our elected officials wake up?

In recent years, we have seen the tobacco industry defend its products by trying to create a smokescreen of controversy — and the result has been millions of

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**Maryland**

Baltimore  
517 Talbott Ave.  
Lutherville, MD 21093-4947  
(410) 252-3043  
earthsaverdon@hotmail.com

**Massachusetts**

Boston  
(617) 824-4225  
EarthSaveBoston@bigfoot.com

**New York**

Hudson Valley  
2 Jefferson Rd.  
Scarsdale, NY 10583  
(914) 472-7392

Long Island  
P.O. Box 292  
Huntington, NY 11743  
(516) 421-3791

**Ohio**

Cincinnati  
P.O. Box 3125  
Cincinnati, OH 45201-3125  
(513) 929-2500

Cleveland  
P.O. Box 16271  
Rocky River, OH 44116  
(440) 899-2882

**Oregon**

Eugene  
283 N Polk  
Eugene, OR 97431  
(541) 686-6761

Southern Oregon  
472 Walker Ave  
Ashland, OR 97520  
(541) 482-5330

Portland, OR/Vancouver, WA  
13376 SW Chelsea Loop  
Tigard, OR 97223  
(503) 968-5838 (Oregon)  
(360) 253-6557 (Washington)

**Tennessee**

P.O. Box 198245  
Nashville, TN 37219-8245  
(615) 781-1552

**Utah**

Salt Lake City  
170 St. Moritz Strasse  
Park City, UT 84098  
(435) 657-0961

**Washington**

P.O. Box 9422  
Seattle, WA 98109  
(206) 781-6602

**Canada**

2480 Spruce Street, Ste. G106,  
Vancouver, BC  
Canada, V6H 1E2  
(604) 731-5885  
office@earthsave.bc.ca

deaths to lung cancer, emphysema, etc. Now we are seeing the chemical industry doing the same thing only the result may eventually come to jeopardize the survival not just of countless individuals, but of our species itself. 🌐

### Footnotes

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## The EarthSave Newsletter

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### Editor

Audrey Nickel

### Contributors

John D. Borders, Jr. J.D., T. Colin Campbell, Ph.D., Rick Charnes, John McDougall, M.D., John Robbins

### Copy Editors

John D. Borders, Jr., J.D., Jeff Nelson, Audrey Nickel

### Graphic Design & Production

Sheila Hoffman, Newsletters & More, Seattle

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EarthSave International  
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Seattle, WA 98115

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