

Re: Why is DRI (for fat) 20–35% of your calories?

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Source: <http://sci.tech–archive.net/Archive/sci.med.nutrition/2008–04/msg00216.html>

- *From:* Marshall Price <d021317c@xxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Mon, 28 Apr 2008 01:41:53 –0400
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niklanei@xxxxxxxxxx wrote:

Is there an explanation behind DRI being 20–35% of one's total calorie consumption. What is the reasoning behind this? Would like to know the research behind these values.

I'm sure the reasoning must be spelled out somewhere. Where did you find the figures?

I know that when I was studying nutrition back in the seventies, there was some concern that Americans ate too much fat. It was thought to contribute to heart disease, colon cancer, breast cancer, and obesity, among other things, and we were getting over 30% of our calories from fat, while other, healthier countries (at least with respect to the diseases we were most concerned about) got less than 25%.

There was also some speculation that protein might promote tumor growth and inflammation, and concern about whether hunger throughout the world could be eliminated if we raised less cattle, ate less meat, and freed up grains, both for export and to eat ourselves. It was the age of "Diet for a Small Planet," "Two Acre Eden," "Mother Earth News," "The Whole Earth Catalog," Rodale Press, macrobiotics, seven–grain bread, and organic gardening. Countries in which protein consumption was low suffered less cancer. On the other hand, because protein is amphoteric, when we eat less of it, we have to pay more attention to the acid–base balance of our diets and bodies.

It was also thought that too much carbohydrate led to obesity, diabetes, inflammation, and so on, and it was known that extremely low carbohydrate diets actually helped people lose weight (inexplicably) in spite of eating plenty of calories, so there were arguments for reducing all three sources of energy.

But the main emphasis was, and still is, on fat. And the general advice is "eat less fat," regardless of how much you're eating now. But the pendulum's swinging the other way nowadays, so it's hard to say what's going on.

The health promoters have always said everybody needs more exercise (such as veggie juicer salesman Jack LaLanne, who said that if you exercised enough, it didn't matter what garbage you ate), though there were a few people (such as George Bernard Shaw, who said he never exercised and didn't believe it was healthy — though he actually did do a lot of walking) and William Howard Taft (who told my mother he saw nothing wrong with being fat; he loved being fat — though he had gone on an extreme, successful weight–loss diet not long before, which probably saved his life) — whose credibility gave the energetic ones an uphill battle.

But then there were arguments like the one that all vertebrates, from hummingbirds to elephants, seem to have a fixed number of heartbeats, so the more exercise you got, the quicker you'd run out; and the examples of the

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occasional athlete dying inexplicably at the peak of his career or health nut who died young.

People got tired of hearing about all the things which could cause cancer, especially smokers, whom the tobacco companies were eager to support, and there seemed to be a serious risk of backlash. America got into shape for WW II, out of shape in the fifties, back into shape for JFK, out of shape under Nixon, and so forth. I'm glad to see young people looking healthy nowadays, but I'm worried about their intellects.

So I guess it's no wonder that these things are influenced by the times and politics. The question is whether they can be influenced by science -- and whether the science exists. We already have hucksters proposing to study your genes and design a perfect lifestyle custom-made to fit. It'll never end.

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