



Leaky Gut, Leaky Brain

By Kalpana (Rose) M. Kumar, M.D.

We have been on diets since the 1970's. We have lost weight, gained weight, birthed eating disorders, and are now more obese than ever. Our diets have failed us. We need to rethink dieting.

My patients often ask me what they can do to lose weight. Those most successful at losing weight follow my simple advice. They eat consciously. They eat plenty of organic fruits, vegetables, lentils, and legumes, with an emphasis on dark colored super-foods. They minimize poultry and dairy, and eliminate soda and food /drinks high in sugar. They eliminate processed foods and alcohol. I advise them to cook their food, stop using their microwave and minimize eating out. I ask them to eliminate red meat and pork, (foods high in saturated fat) ALL trans-fats, petroleum based food colorings, artificial sweeteners, and high fructose corn syrup. Those who do this, lower their cholesterol on average by 70 points and regain mental clarity. As an added benefit, their weight drops as a result of conscious eating. The ingredients added to foods today are not natural, and unfortunately are plentiful in the American diet. Over the years, we have normalized processed foods as a regular part of our diet. These foods are unnatural and are making us sick and obese.

We can date the beginning of our dieting craze back to when processed foods were introduced in the market. When processed, the biochemical makeup of food changes. It becomes distorted and unnatural. Our cells only recognize foods created by nature, not a processing plant. When we put nature into our body, it heals. It regains resilience and even aging slows down. Processed foods do the opposite. They inflame the body, causing cell death, rapid aging, and degeneration.

Recent research has shown that 1 in 5 Americans are at risk for Alzheimer's disease. For American's who live to age 85, the incidence increases to 1 in 2. A hundred years ago, the average American ate 5 pounds of sugar per year. Today, the annual average is 200 pounds. Researchers have discovered a direct correlation between Alzheimer's disease and a diet high in sugar and saturated fat. In addition, processed foods contain heavy metals. These can deposit in the plaque found in the brains of Alzheimer patients. These foods are also low in Omega 3. A low level of omega 3 has been shown to be directly correlated with depression, anxiety, Attention Deficit Disorder, Autism, and Alzheimer's disease.

Another important factor that contributes to inflammatory diseases like Alzheimer's and the myriad of nervous system disorders present in our country today is *leaky gut*. The intestinal biome consists of approximately 90 trillion gut bacteria that protect the integrity of the intestinal lining. The biome is compromised by inflammatory and chemical foods, sugar, preservatives, artificial colors and sweeteners, high fructose corn syrup, and antibiotics (including those present in non-organic meat and dairy). When the intestinal biome is compromised, molecules of food leak into the blood stream causing inflammation in all systems of the body, including the nervous system. This lowers dopamine and serotonin levels in the brain which increases sugar and carbohydrate cravings aggravating the inflammatory process. Inflammation due to leaky gut, contributes to food and chemical sensitivities, depression, anxiety, and a myriad of mental disorders in addition memory loss, and Alzheimer's disease. The most effective preventive solution is to eat an organic plant-based diet with an added multi-organism probiotic, and omega 3 fatty acids.

The good news is that inflammation is reversible. Decades of scientific research has shown that we can restore the integrity of our cells by making lifestyle changes that include regular exercise and anti-inflammatory foods. Restoring the integrity of our gut biome potentiates this. In fact, a lifestyle that consistently includes these choices can even slow down the aging process.

Today's teenagers who have sedentary lifestyles that include a heavy intake of processed foods and sugar have the cell age of a 50 to 60 year old. This means that they have a maximum of 30 years of life left. This may be the first time in the history of the human race that a younger generation will not live past mid-life. On the positive side, the cells in a child's body are resilient. If guided to lead a healthy lifestyle that includes regular exercise and organic, plant based foods, their cells can heal, regaining decades of their life span and reversing chronic diseases like diabetes, obesity, ADD, and ADHD among others.

The solution to restoring health is as simple as conscious eating and exercise. Healing is ultimately a result of the choices we make. These choices can prevent and reverse the majority of chronic diseases prevalent in our country today.

I encourage you to try these lifestyle changes for a month. You will be surprised as to how much better you will feel, and that is a guarantee!

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