

# Nutrition Nuggets: *Animal Protein vs Plant Protein*

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Reference for this article: Dr. Campbell's lecture in Fundamentals of Plant-based Nutrition, 2009

Protein was discovered in 1839, and thus began our love affair with protein, says Dr. T. Colin Campbell, Ph.D., author of *The China Study*. Like his peers, Dr. Campbell believed protein to be “of prime importance” which is the meaning of the Greek word, “proteios,” from which the word protein is derived. Since for most people protein has been almost synonymous with meat, our reverence for protein has been a reverence for meat. Unfortunately, this has led to significant health problems.

Dr. Campbell discovered through his research that no matter how important protein is, consuming an excess of protein, above what we

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really need, can be very damaging to our health. And if this excess protein is of animal origin rather than from plants, the effects of excess protein are far worse.

- Animal proteins act as fertilizer that make cancers grow. The research used casein, a milk protein, but Dr. Campbell believes this effect is true of all animal proteins. When they tried their experiments with soy protein and wheat

protein, this effect was not seen. Animal proteins promote the growth of cancer; plant proteins do not.

- Consuming animal protein raises blood cholesterol levels -- more so than consuming saturated fat and cholesterol. Of course, when one eats animal products, they are getting all three: animal protein, saturated fat, and cholesterol.
- Consuming animal protein promotes osteoporosis by creating acid in our blood, which then draws calcium from our bones to neutralize the acid.
- Animal protein, particularly casein, contributes to the initiation of Type 1 diabetes.
- Animal protein is also associated with the formation of Alzheimer's disease, kidney stones, and other diseases.

Dr. Campbell is quick to point out that we don't eat any nutrient in isolation, including protein. So what this discussion really points out is that eating animal products promotes disease, and simply eating lower-fat versions of animal products does not solve the problem. Eating plants, on the other hand, promotes health. So his recommendation is to eat a varied plant-based diet of whole, unprocessed and minimally-processed foods and let the symphony of nutrition work its magic in us!