

# Ask Leyla: A Healthier Nation



**Q:** If there was just one change you could make to the typical American diet to make us a healthier nation, what would it be?

**A:** What a great question!

With the twin epidemics of obesity and diabetes – *Diabesity*, it's more important than ever to make improvements in diet and lifestyle. Both of these conditions are indeed, *lifestyle choices*.

It's well known that the "Westernization" of eating patterns and food choices across the world over the last several decades has resulted in the increasing prevalence of overweight and obesity. And we can now add the emerging epidemic of Alzheimer's disease—also affected by diet.

The burden to our healthcare system is crippling! But no doubt, the pharmaceutical industry would love for you to take their medicines when many of these metabolic abnormalities can be fixed with diet and lifestyle changes.

In my opinion, the single most important change would be to rid one's diet of sugar and refined carbs—processed foods/drinks. Unfortunately, the low-fat revolution that started decades ago has taken a serious toll on our health. After all, eating low fat meant relying on lots of carbohydrates—including the refined variety. This advice, along with the vegetable oil lobby pushing polyunsaturated vegetable oils for heart disease prevention, have been the biggest insults to our collective health. As a matter of fact, the American Heart Association is *still* touting pro-inflammatory vegetable oils as healthy!

Eating whole unprocessed, nutrient-dense foods, *the way they're found in nature* is the way to go. Simply removing all sugar and processed foods from the diet can deliver enormous benefits to health and wellbeing.

To your health!

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