

Ask Leyla: Will the paleo diet serve all of my nutritional needs?

Q: I've heard a lot about the paleo diet, and am thinking of trying it, but I have some concerns about how nutritious it is.

Without dairy, how will I get enough calcium? And won't eating cholesterol-laden foods raise my cholesterol?

A: Dairy is not a great source of calcium because it competes with phosphorus for absorption. Some of the best calcium sources are paleo-friendly. They include:



- Bone broths (homemade stock/soup)
- Salmon
- Collard greens
- Okra
- Mustard greens
- Turnip greens
- Broccoli
- Spinach
- Kale
- Bok choy
- Peas
- Almonds
- Sesame seeds
- Other nuts and seeds
- Oranges
- Figs

The cholesterol in foods such as eggs, meat and butter does not necessarily increase cholesterol in our bodies. For this reason, we no longer need to avoid cholesterol-rich foods. The liver makes most of the cholesterol we need (about 80%), but makes even more in response to increased consumption of refined carbohydrates. When it comes to cholesterol levels, don't be afraid of fats (except factory-made trans fats, of course), but avoid sugars and starches. That includes 100% fruit juice. Sugars and starches increase LDL, oxidize the LDL and significantly increase triglycerides—all contributing to plaque build-up in coronary arteries.

As we now know, cholesterol is not the demon it's made out to be. Here's the lowdown on cholesterol.

When eating a Paleolithic-type diet, which is naturally low in carbohydrates, cholesterol levels eventually normalize. This generally takes about 8-12 weeks.

You can read more about the Paleo diet and Dr. Loren Cordain's work at www.ThePaleoDiet.com.

To your health!