

# Health Topics

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## **BLOOD TYPE DIETS AND FOOD ALLERGIES**

Q. I have been reading a book about blood type diets and how to choose foods based on that. I am blood type O. What do you think of that idea?

A. The blood type diet is based on the concept that we all have a different heritage. That is to say, we come from different places on this earth and, therefore, do better with different types of food. To illustrate, if you take people from the Arctic Circle and put them in the tropics eating watery fruit, they will probably get sick. The opposite is also true. The person in the tropics will not do well on a fatty diet. This is true for all of us. The oldest blood type is “O”. You might expect this individual to come from a “hunter/gatherer” type background. Therefore, this person will do better with a high protein and vegetable/root type diet. This would also imply that a vegetarian with blood type O might not be healthy.

This lends itself to the concept of food allergies. We can all have foods we are allergic to in varying degrees. These food allergies create inflammation in our gastrointestinal tract and cause other health problems. The most common food allergies are wheat and dairy. The most severe form of wheat allergy involves the “gluten” protein (found in wheat, oats, barley, and rye), and can result in Celiac disease. Celiac can be a life threatening illness because it destroys the ability of the intestinal tract to absorb nutrients. It is interesting that many type O individuals cannot tolerate wheat, which is consistent with the hunter/gatherer concept.

Is it possible that all of us can be put in the four major blood types for diet? Probably not, but it is a good starting place. We must recognize that it would be difficult to say that one food is universally good for everyone. One person may benefit from the healthy oils in nuts while another person may suffer terrible allergic reactions. Many allergies are so minor they often go unnoticed. Unfortunately, the foods we love the most are the ones we may be allergic to. It is typical that these foods are consumed on a daily basis.

A food allergy may be one of the underlying “hereditary” aspects of health that is said to be genetic. As for the blood type diet, there is validity to the concept and some benefit. You may, of course, have to refine that to the individual.

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