



## 2,400 Years of Knowledge... Gone in Two Generations!

By Thomas Morrow MD

***“Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food.”***  
– HIPPOCRATES, FATHER OF MEDICINE, 431 B.C.

**T**he fastest growing disease in the US... no, actually the entire human race... is type 2 diabetes.

I started medical school in 1973 at the age of 22. Up until then, I had met only two people who had diabetes; a fellow student in elementary school with type 1 (an autoimmune disease) and my employer, who had type 2.

Fast forward to 2018. If you know 9 adults, you will probably know at least one with type 2. And if you know 3 adults, one of them probably has pre-diabetes...which is a condition where the body’s ability to handle glucose has already deteriorated to the point where the blood sugar is becoming elevated, but not high enough to actually make the diagnosis of diabetes.

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Why? Why has pre-diabetes and type 2 diabetes become so common?

Most would answer; “because we Americans have become fatter” or “we are not exercising” or “we are eating too much fast food” or even “it is because of the invention of the TV remote control”.

And all of these are correct, but to

quote Paul Harvey let’s talk about the “rest of the story”.

First, some history. Until the 1920’s, infections were the leading cause of premature death in humans and the average age at death was 47. That all started to change when penicillin was discovered in 1928. After WWII, as longevity increased, cardiovascular disease (heart attacks and strokes) popped to the top and considerable attention was focused on finding the cause. Autopsies of heart attack patients revealed cholesterol in the walls of the coronary arteries and scientists concluded that cholesterol was the enemy. Thousands of acres of trees were felled to make paper to publish the articles on how to prevent and treat this public health menace.

America started a War on Fat; in particular saturated fat. The Department of Agriculture changed our food pyramid to suggest we decrease animal fat and eat more carbohydrates (carbs) and more vegetable based fats. We exchanged animal fat for corn oil, butter for margarine. Overall, we avoided fat like the plague and focused on increasing our carbohydrate intake... because what else could you increase? There are only 3 basic sources of food:

protein, fat, and carbohydrates.

But society was also changing... with more families becoming “double income” families and the move to a “commuter” lifestyle, we started to eat more prepared food and we started to eat out more. Food companies and fast food companies responded in a way that only American business can respond...they industrialized the creation of food...or at least what we were lulled into thinking was food. Prepared foods came to dominate the grocery stores and cheap, fast food filled with processed ingredients became the norm. We turned fruit into juice, grain into white flour.

***“...and we responded by eating more processed food and cooking less. And as a nation, we saw a dramatic increase in our body weight...and we saw an explosion of diabetes.”***

Food scientists found three ingredients that are rare in nature were also VERY delightful to eat: sugar, salt, and fat. Think of it. Before industrialization of our grocery products, sugar was only found in fresh fruit or honey. Salt does not exist on the surface of the earth as rain

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dissolves it and washes it away. Wild meat lacks fat...that is why deer hunters mix venison with pork to give it the desired flavor and consistency.

Our “food” was developed in ways to actually make it “addicting” to our taste buds. One company actually had a slogan: “Bet you can’t eat just one!”...and we responded by eating more processed food and cooking less. And as a nation, we saw a dramatic increase in our body weight...and we saw an explosion of diabetes. We took diabetes, a relatively rare condition, to one where some estimates suggest 1 in every 3 people in the US will develop diabetes by mid-century!

But, our war on fat was based on a lack of a full understanding of what caused coronary disease. We thought it was caused by saturated fat and dietary cholesterol. But over the past few decades, scientific research has resulted in publication after publication on how all of the public policy changes, all of the advertising, all of the marketing, and all of the hype has been based on wrong conclusions. Our here-to-fore poor understanding of what really causes coronary disease was wrong. It is not caused by eating cholesterol, but by... inflammation.

Which gets us to the basic cause of our epidemic... inflammatory compounds, insulin, and insulin resistance.

When we strip out the nutrients, we remove hundreds of natural anti-inflammatories found in spices, berries, vegetables, nuts, whole grains, and fruits. We compound that with

a plethora of processed “white foods” ... sugar, flour, bread, pasta, and of course soda filled with high fructose corn syrup. And we became enamored with corn oil... a very high Omega 6 based oil.

Much of the change was based on facts...but incomplete facts. Sure, SOME oils like alpha linoleic acid, polyphenols and omega-3 fatty acids present in nuts, extra virgin olive oil,

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vegetables and oily fish (that rapidly attenuate inflammation and coronary thrombosis) are healthier than animal fats, but most vegetable oils contain high concentrations of omega 6 fatty acids...and these oil components can lead to inflammation.

**A high stress, low exercise lifestyle, coupled with high refined carb diet, results in huge increases in insulin secretion, which in turn, changes our entire physiology and drives the calories into our cells and eventually results in obesity and insulin resistance and hypertension, lipid disorders, and increases in cancer, heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, and strokes...the list goes on and on.**

Because of our highly refined diet, we are hungrier, fatter, sicker and lack the energy and stamina to make it to our next meal. And a growing body of evidence suggests strongly that we have also changed the composition of the

bacteria in our gut...(but that is another big story!)

Over the last half century, our nation undertook the largest single human experiment in the history of the world. We changed activity levels, our food supply, stripped out the nutrients and changed our preferred fat... and we basically created a population that is less healthy than the WWII generation.

But, what does that mean to you? **Reduce your carb intake and move to healthy fats.** Basically, if it is refined, comes in a box, is white (except for cauliflower), comes with a pop-top, contains high amounts of omega 6 fatty acids, doesn’t require at least a few minutes to prepare; don’t eat it... or at least cut back on it significantly. And you will decrease your risk of diabetes as well as dozens of other illnesses.

Food is medicine...and bad food is bad medicine...move to real food. Hippocrates understood this twenty-four centuries ago. You should too.

To see your risk for pre-diabetes, take this test: <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/pdf/prediabetestest.pdf>.

Suggested Books: Sugar, Salt, Fat by Michael Ross and The Obesity Code by Jason Fong MD.

### References:

<https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/885973> Saturated fat does not clog the arteries.

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See more from Dr. Morrow in our January Advisor newsletter by visiting [http://www.rsa-al.gov/uploads/files/PEEHIP\\_Advisor\\_Jan\\_18\\_web.pdf](http://www.rsa-al.gov/uploads/files/PEEHIP_Advisor_Jan_18_web.pdf).