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It's in the Veins: Blood type diet proves successful for this reporter



Figs are part of the recommended diet for a person following the regimen for a Type O blood type. (Joshua Vince)

Kate Cagle

July 10, 2007 - 4:59PM

For the past week I've been eating like a caveman. When following Dr. Peter D'Adamo's popular blood type diet, I supposedly adapted my dietary wishes to the demands of my immune system that evolved 35,000 years ago. For a type O going on the diet, even for just a week, that meant no dairy, no wheat and no morning, afternoon and nightly cups of precious coffee. I really thought I was going to die.

However, Dr D'Adamo asserts in his book Eat Right 4 Your Type that just the opposite will happen. Eating just the foods that we were made to eat should increase energy, strengthen the immune system and promote healthy living. The book explains that modern food pyramids and fad diets don't work for two reasons: One, they ignore the way our bodies evolved to process food in the first place and secondly, they assume that everyone's body digests the same way.

It doesn't end there. According to D'Adamo, not only do our digestive systems work differently, but the antigens in our blood that tell our blood what belongs in our system and what doesn't can react adversely with certain foods. The book lists foods that each blood type (A, B, O, or AB) should avoid and what foods are beneficial. For type Os, foods like plums, kale and swordfish are on the beneficial list and citrus, avocado, vinegar and pepper, as well as others, are on the avoid list. Everything else just reacts neutrally in the digestive system.

Patricia Felici, a doctor of clinical nutrition and of alternative medicine, in addition to being certified by D'Adamo, recommends the diet to patients who walk in with ailments ranging from heart to stomach problems and has found that switching to the diet makes a big difference in her patients' health.

"I'll tell a type B to just go one week without eating chicken and then eat all the chicken they want," Felici said. "They come back complaining about how tired they felt after eating it again."

In theory the diet seemed horrible — I was certainly going to miss my nightly glass of milk — but in reality it wasn't that difficult. For breakfast I usually fried up a small ground beef steak on the stove and had a glass of pomegranate juice instead of orange juice, since it is acidic and therefore a no no for type Os.

I dodged temptations at work and swallowed a pill of journalistic integrity as I briskly walked past the office coffee maker. I eventually converted my coffee cup into a change jar to buy water from the vending machine. If I was hungry, I could reach for easy snacks like pre-cut carrots and grapes.

Lunch also was pretty simple. A salad, meat and vegetables or a sandwich on Ezekiel bread was fine, although I missed having the variety that comes with eating whatever you want.

Topping off the day wasn't difficult either. D'Adamo recommends that type O's eat a variety of fish. I mostly stuck with salmon, or halibut if I was feeling adventurous, and refrained from chicken or steak for dinner. Felici recommends starting slowly on the diet, focusing on eating right only most of the time, since most dieters fail when suddenly dropping old eating habits becomes too difficult. In addition, diet followers should get used to scrutinizing labels.

"You have to read ingredients and be aware of everything you put into your mouth," Felici said.

Now comes the part where I'm supposed to agree with the countless dietitians across the nation who believe that the blood type diet should be as extinct as Paleolithic eating habits. However, I have to admit that I do feel better. Sure, I miss that added jolt of caffeine in the morning and occasionally fight a pasta craving, but for the most part rice and gluten-free wheat products have filled in the gaps. I get through the work day just fine and no longer experience the standard post-lunch slump.

Every once in a while I deviated from the diet and had something crazy like avocado in my sushi or a vinaigrette on my salad. Yet I lived through the ordeal. According to Felici if you only follow the diet 60 to 70 percent of the time, you'll be just fine.

"The diet is not about weight loss but about having a strong immune system," Dr. Felici said, "I think about everything I put in my mouth and wonder if it is going to be good for my immune system or harmful."

Felici claims that following a diet suited to your blood type will not only encourage weight loss and increase energy (both of which I experienced) but also prevent genetically predisposed diseases.

Shopping at Sun Harvest made life on a diet a lot easier, as well as a lot more interesting, since they have a whole section of products that don't contain gluten and another for dairy alternatives. No, I don't recommend almond cheese (it tastes more like rubber almonds than anything close to cheese) but sprouted bread and Veggonaise taste almost as good as the mainstream alternative, as do gluten-free ginger snaps.

After all my moaning and groaning, I've decided to stick with the diet, as the few times I fell off the prehistoric horse I certainly felt the effects of fatigue and bloating. Although scientists claim that D'Amato's reasoning needs more scientific support, the science of the diet actually makes

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sense and explains why I had been so tired and sick lately.

Eat Right 4 Your Type focuses on health first, and according to Felici, weight loss is simply the "icing on the cake." Besides, it's a lot easier to talk yourself out of dessert when you're gambling precious energy instead of calories.

Kate Cagle writes features and entertainment for The Monitor. You can reach her at (956) 683-4427. For this and other local stories, visit www.themonitor.com.

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Reader's comments

Great article. At first I was very sceptical about this BTD but after following it for just a few months I have seen so many positive changes in my quality of life that I've become a believer.

Rex - Aug 08, 2007 07:01:07 PM [Remove Comment](#)

Amazing article. I'm glad you had the courage to think for yourself, actually give the diet a fair try and then write about it. It's more than most reporters do.

Ron-O-Non - Jul 29, 2007 02:45:12 PM [Remove Comment](#)

Actually, I believe that what we should and should not eat is tied to the phases of the moon. Unfortunately, I have not figured out all of the details yet. When I figure out all the details, I will make them available in a book which all of you can purchase on ebay. Stay tuned.

It is in the moon! - Jul 18, 2007 06:35:30 PM [Remove Comment](#)

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Wonderful article. I like that you emphasize that the BTD is about taking care of your HEALTH, as opposed to weight loss. The benefits of being healthy have been lost in our society's obsession with weight loss. The BTD is about bringing the body into balance. I'm an avid believer after following it for the past two years.

Mariel - Jul 16, 2007 03:35:04 PM

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I am A positive blood type. I eat A taco, A pound of bacon, A bowl of menudo for breakfast and I am positive I can eat more.

Yum - Jul 16, 2007 10:15:26 AM

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Although still fairly new to the diet, in the short 14 days I have been following the blood O type recommended foods, I have already experienced tremendous benefits, the best one being good solid sleep. It isn't hard to follow, and if you keep your own health improvement as the goal, you can't go wrong. This is the only diet that makes real sense. Try it!

Hannah - Jul 16, 2007 01:48:12 AM

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I had briefly skimmed over some of this diet info a few years back, but after reading this first person account, I am headed straight to the bookstore and I have a doctor visit on Wednesday. Wish me well!

Angie - Jul 14, 2007 08:17:38 PM

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Great article! A real account of some of the difficulties of changing your eating habits and typical benefits of eating for your type.

Joseph - Jul 14, 2007 05:08:20 PM

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As an avid follower type O non-secretor of Blood Type Diet for six years now it is great to see a reporter who has followed through with actually doing the diet and not just skimming the pages. Even greater that you are going to keep it up. Great news. Debra

debra - Jul 13, 2007 02:15:42 PM

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I've been following the BTD for about 10 years now and it's made a huge difference in my life. I had been diagnosed in my 40s with ulcerative colitis and for a while was living on a diet devoid of fresh anything. When I read ER4YBT it struck a chord and I've been a follower ever since. Check out the message board on Dr. D'Adamo's site and you'll find people from all over the world that have had great success with this way of life. Jane

Jane - Jul 13, 2007 02:06:00 PM

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If avoiding gluten makes you feel noticeably better, you should consider being tested for Celiac Disease.

Leta - Jul 13, 2007 12:54:07 PM

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I've been following the Blood Type Diet, BTD for short, since 1997 and I really appreciate how your article gets the point that this diet is about HEALTH and not just one aspect of health, such as getting to and maintaining a healthy weight, although the BTD can certainly help you do that. The BTD is about a system in balance, and normalizing one's weight is just one aspect of that. This diet does so much more. Those of us who give it a try end up really being astounded at the power of the thing and can't imagine going back to our pre-BTD ways. Anyway, good article!

Edna - Jul 13, 2007 08:19:39 AM

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Good job for bringing up the useful and interesting information. Please do more. Thanks

auditor - Jul 11, 2007 05:47:14 PM

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