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## ATKINS ALARM

By: Hesh Goldstein

On September 21, 2003, the first official warning about the dangers of the Atkins diet was made in a UK government report. The report slammed the craze for high protein, low carbohydrate plans to lose weight.

The Food Standards Agency published a website alerting dieters to the dangers of low-carb eating, saying it is "dull and unrealistic" and can lead to heart disease, obesity, cancer and diabetes.

Three million people in Britain are trying to lose weight with the controversial Atkins Diet. The diet advocates lots of protein and fat in the form of eggs, meat, chicken, pork, fish, butter and cheese, and cutting out the carbohydrates in fruit, pasta, rice and potatoes.

Where the Atkins Diet advice goes astray is in depiction of carbohydrates. The diet fails to make a distinction between good and bad carbohydrates. Bad carbohydrates would be those of a refined nature. Anything white is not right. White rice, white bread, pastries and cakes made from white flour, and pasta made from refined semolina. Good carbohydrates would be those in their natural, unrefined state. Brown rice, whole wheat flour products, and other whole grains such as millet, quinoa, bulgur, whole grain couscous, etc. What makes these carbs good is the fact that they are rich in fiber. It's the fiber that acts like Liquid Plumber in the system, pushing all of the gunk out.

These starchy foods are an essential part of a healthy, balanced diet, and contain less than half the calories of fat. Cutting these out results in the body missing out on a range of nutrients. Also, low-carb diets tend to be high in fat. Eating a diet which is high in fat, especially saturated fat from flesh foods, dairy products, olive oil ( use it sparingly as it is 16% saturated fat), and the trans fats found in pastries and cakes, increases the likelihood of developing heart disease, obesity, cancer, arthritis, diabetes, constipation, and bad breath, just to name a few.

The reason why this information is withheld in the U.S. is political. The flesh and dairy industries receive subsidies from the U.S. government, these industries make political contributions to politicians at all levels, and these industries spend billions of dollars a year on advertising to keep you hooked on what they sell.

Granted, the Atkins Diet will result in rapid weight loss. The problem is that the weight comes back in a relatively short period of time and the health ramifications are not worth the endeavor. Keep in mind that the sole purpose of the Atkins Diet was to make money by simply giving people justification to keep eating the way they want and deluding them into thinking it is ok.

So, what's a person to do? Simple! Eat a plant based diet, no dairy products, high fiber whole grains and legumes, no refined foods, drink plenty of water, and exercise regularly. Most importantly though, listen to "Health Talk" on Saturday mornings. It could dramatically change your life for the better.

Stay tuned!