

# Don't Ignore Eating Your Vegetables

**Question:** I seem healthier since I became a vegan. Do you believe God made us to be vegetarians?

J.P., Boise, Idaho

**Answer:** The book of Genesis says God gave us every “seed-bearing plant” and “tree that has fruit with seed in it” as our food (see 1:29). From that verse alone we could draw the conclusion that He created us to be vegetarians.

However, God also equipped our bodies with canine teeth, a fact that tells me He designed us to eat meat as well. The problem is, most of us consume meat as if we had nothing but canine teeth (ones the size of a saber-toothed tiger's)!

Meat is a good source of protein, but it has no medicinal value. It is also much more likely than the lowly vegetable to cause an illness in your body. The fact is, it's pretty tough to get a degenerative disease if your diet is free from pesticides, antibiotics, preservatives and hormones—substances that most American foods, especially meats, are loaded with.

In contrast, whole foods organically grown and pesticide-free contain the precise nutrients our bodies need for fighting off disease. Take the tomato, for example. The body uses lycopene—the tomato's red pigment that also helps combat prostate cancer—much more effectively when it derives the nutrient from the tomato rather than from a supplement.

I happen to be a strong proponent of a vegetarian diet, particularly a broad one that includes fruits, legumes and grains. I put all my patients at Oasis of Hope Hospital on a mild vegetarian diet that allows (mostly to avoid mutiny!) a miniscule portion of fish or free-range chicken. I've seen how a strict vegetarian diet with a high intake of carrot juice

and green juices such as barley or papaya can stop or reverse heart disease, diabetes and some cancers.

Cancer, especially of the breast, is directly related to the amount of fat and protein ingested. This has been shown by a cooperative study called the China Project, which I wrote about in my book *The Hope of Living Cancer Free* (Siloam). Chinese women eat an average of four grams ( ounces) of animal protein a day and American women an average of one pound (16 ounces) a day. Researchers determined this difference to be the reason incidences of breast cancer are more than 10 times higher among American women than Chinese women.

My position on meat consumption is like the apostle Paul's on his personal liberty—all things are permissible but not all things are beneficial (see 1 Cor. 6:12). If you eat meat, do so in very small quantities and buy free-range meats without hormones and antibiotics.

**Question:** Why does the Old Testament say we can't eat pork and shellfish? I love bacon with my eggs, and fresh shrimp and oysters.

S.T., Micanopy, Florida

**Answer:** God tells us in Leviticus 11 that some meat is "clean" and some isn't. He instructs us to eat only the meat of animals that chew cud and have split hooves. That rules out pork. Wow, no bacon?

He also tells us to detest anything living in the water that does not have fins and scales. Oh, no—no lobster, shrimp or abalone?

It gets worse: We're not supposed to eat eagles, vultures, owls, storks or bats either! Seriously, though—are pigs, sharks and lobsters truly not clean? In fact, they are not.

The creatures God banned did not have detoxifying systems—and still don't. They are storage units for all the poisons,

toxins and sewage they ingest or absorb. Simply put, they are nature's garbage collectors.

After Jesus brought grace into the world, the apostle Peter was told in a vision that he should no longer call "unclean" what God had made "clean" (see Acts 10:9-22). It's understood that his dream was at least symbolic—so he would comprehend grace and know Gentiles were accepted by God. But was it also, as some believe, corrective—so he would be unconcerned about eating meats previously forbidden under the Levitical law? Maybe.

Is it a sin to eat the meat of the creatures outlawed in Leviticus 11? Well, I don't think if you eat pork you will go to hell. But it is very likely that you will go to heaven much sooner.