



An Extension of Morals:

Adopting a Plant-based Diet
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The Optimal Diet

Humans share approximately 99% of our DNA with Chimpanzees. We have nearly identical digestive systems so logic would dictate we should have nearly identical diets. Chimpanzees require some portion of animal-products for optimum health and that number is about about 3% which is a far stretch from the 36-45% that Americans consume. Chimps eats about 50% of calories from fat, 30% of calories from carbohydrates, and 20% of calories from protein. This is the optimal diet for humans and offers numerous health benefits such as:

- Decreased chance of developing cancer and heart disease- which are the two leading causes of death in America.
- Decreased chance of developing Alzheimer's and Dementia
- Helping to prevent and regulate Diabetes type I and II

But this begs the question- **Why are Americans eating more animal products than they need?**

Because They Want To

Approximately 25 million farm animals are slaughtered each day in the United States. Approximately nine percent — more than 850 million — of the animals reared for food in the United States each year never make it to the slaughterhouse because they have already died from stress-induced disease or injury. This is all due to the demand consumers create for their taste for animal products.

While eating excessive animal products and deteriorating your personal health may seem like a choice, can that choice morally be made at the expense of the suffering and slaughter of another sentient being?

How to Deal With That Question

Since it is wrong to cause suffering or slaughter an innocent sentient being, one could not say it is morally acceptable to continue eating animal-products in such mass quantities. Further extending that logic, there is no way a human can morally justify purchasing animals raised in factory farms due to the excessive and unnecessary suffering they endure each day. These animals are pumped with antibiotics which negatively affect their health and ours, are forced to live in their own feces and waste, are not given room to move and are compacted, have their children stripped from them at birth, are slaughtered at a small fragment of their lifespan, and in some cases turn to cannibalism due to the non-nutritious and inadequate diet they are fed.

If you purchase meat that was factory farmed, by definition you are responsible for the suffering and death of all those animals because you increased the demand to continue it.

Environmental Factors.

Coupled with the ethical dilemma of animal agriculture, there are several environmental factors that cause unnecessary suffering. Here are some facts:

- Animal agriculture is responsible for 18 percent of greenhouse gas emissions, more than the combined exhaust from all transportation.
- Livestock is responsible for 65% of all human-related emissions of nitrous oxide – a greenhouse gas with 296 times the global warming potential of carbon dioxide, and which stays in the atmosphere for 150 years.
- 5% of water consumed in the US is by private homes. 55% of water consumed in the US is for animal agriculture.
- Animal agriculture is the leading cause of species extinction, ocean dead zones, water pollution, and habitat destruction.

Facts Continued

- In the U.S. livestock produce 116,000 lbs of waste per second
- 3/4 of the world's fisheries are exploited or depleted.
- Scientists estimate as many as 650,000 whales, dolphins and seals are killed every year by fishing vessels.
- Animal agriculture is responsible for up to 91% of Amazon destruction.
- 1-2 acres of rainforest are cleared every second.

How the Environmental Factors Cause Suffering

All species suffer at the expense of animal agriculture, because it is extremely water intensive and pollutes the air. All animals breathe the same air and are exposed to pathogens which negatively affect their health and lead to death. Also, since livestock requires huge quantities of land, this land must be cleared which pushes native species to extinction and affects surrounding ecosystems by creating imbalances in the trophic levels affecting the health of all the biota within that system.

Back To The Question

“While eating excessive animal products and deteriorating your personal health may seem like a choice, can that choice morally be made at the expense of the suffering and slaughter of another sentient being?”

Can be reworded as

“Since eating excessive animal products negatively affects your health is acceptable to continue doing so even though others must pay for this choice?”

This raises a very interesting question.

What About Health Care?

The estimated annual health care costs of obesity-related illness are a staggering \$190.2 billion or nearly 21% of annual medical spending in the United States. Childhood obesity alone is responsible for \$14 billion in direct medical costs. Obesity-related medical costs in general are expected to rise significantly, especially because today's obese children are likely to become tomorrow's obese adults.

Regardless of your political view, people's money could be saved if people weren't eating themselves into disease.

There are also the indirect costs of obesity which fall into value of lost work, insurance, and wages. These costs are hard to measure.

Social Impacts of the current “American” Diet

About 700 million or 9.2% of the global population experiencing severe food insecurity which means, “People experiencing severe food insecurity have typically run out of food and, at worst, gone a day (or days) without eating.”, according to the FOA.

An additional 120 million or 1.6% of the global population experiences moderate food insecurity which means, “People experiencing moderate food insecurity face uncertainties about their ability to obtain food, and have been forced to compromise on the quality and/or quantity of the food they consume.”, according to the FOA.

What does this have to do with a plant based diet?

Quite a Bit

Humans currently have a population of about 7 billion people. We currently grow enough food to feed 10 billion people. Unfortunately, 50% of all produce grown is fed to cattle. This means there are impoverished nations that grow crops that are fed cattle for the consumption of people in the first world.

The land required to feed one person for a year:

Vegan: $\frac{1}{6}$ of an acre

Vegetarian: $\frac{1}{2}$ of an acre

Meat eater: 3 acres

Eating a High Meat Diet is Directly Affecting the Lives of the Impoverished

Since 18 people could be feed for a year from land that is currently being used to feed one person for a year, eating high meat diet is affecting the impoverished people's ability to obtain food. Also, if people are poor due to constructs like racism or sexism you making equality harder to attain by continuing to eat in the manner the average American does.

What You Can Do

The best thing you can do is adopt a plant based diet. If you can go vegan go vegan. There are some people who are unable to go vegan, but still limiting meat to 3% of your diet is optimal for health and the environment.

Also, do not purchase any meat that was factory farmed or you can directly take blame for the atrocities that take place in that industry.

Plant-Based “Diet”

A plant-based diet is not necessarily a “diet” but a way to extend your morals logically across all facets of your existence. As humans we have a evolutionary impulse in us that has allowed us to mutually share a set of morals throughout our history. We know it is wrong to cause suffering to any sentient being. We should want to eliminate the suffering inflicted on animals in the unnecessary animal agriculture industry along with the suffering it causes to 100s of millions of human beings.

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