

# Demonizing red meat, or any food, doesn't improve health

By ACSH Staff — March 31, 2015

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Carroll, professor of pediatrics at Indiana University School of Medicine, dissects the current tendency to point at one class of nutrients as being the bad one responsible for most of the current diet-related ills. Thus, at various times in the past few decades, fats, carbohydrates, and yes, even proteins have been labeled as the culprit in America's increasing waistlines and prevalence of cardiovascular disease (CVD) and diabetes. Even non-calorie sweeteners have come in for their share of detractors because of the hypothesis that they cause people to actually consume more calories.

So what's going on? What about the study that concluded consumption of increased protein was linked to increased mortality? He points out the flaws in the study for example that that result was found in a subgroup of people aged 50 to 65. But in older folks, increased protein intake was associated with a lower risk of death. In addition, Dr. Carroll notes that the authors of that study defined a high protein intake as 20 percent of calories from protein a level that the USDA guidelines would not consider high.

He also points to another study of people who were assigned to one of 3 types of diets an Atkins-like low-carb diet; a moderate diet of all macronutrients (fat, protein and carbs); and a very low-fat diet. All of them resulted in similar weight losses no clear winners or losers.

His conclusion? It's hard to find a take-home message better than this: The best diet is the one

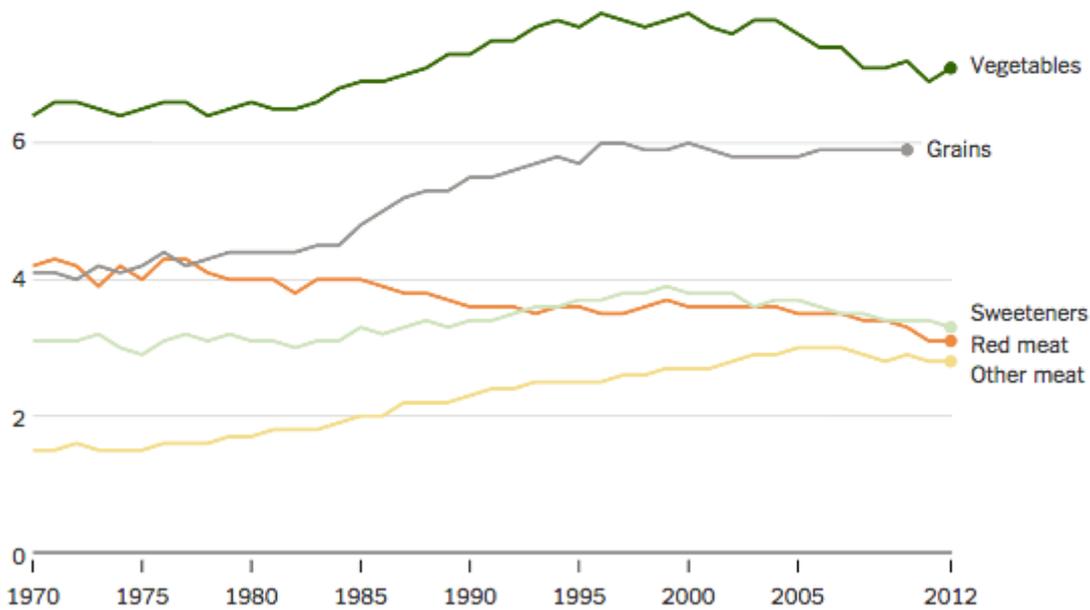
you're likely to keep. What isn't helpful is picking a nutritional culprit of bad health and proclaiming that everyone else is eating wrong.

ACSH's Dr. Ruth Kava concurs, The real issue with respect to diet-associated ills is eating too much of any and all calorie-laden foods. As the graph below demonstrates, we're actually eating less red meat than back in the 1970s, while our consumption of grains and vegetables has increased substantially. Moderation in consumption of all foods is the best way to go.

## How American Eating Habits Are Changing

Over the last few decades, Americans have changed their eating habits. The consumption of red meat has decreased as the consumption of grains has sharply increased.

**Consumption per capita, in ounces per day. Sweeteners include sugar, corn sweeteners, honey and syrup. Other meat includes poultry, fish and shellfish.**



Source: U.S.D.A. Economic Research Bureau

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