

WHY WE EAT LIKE THIS

I've written about [what we eat](#) elsewhere. The one sentence answer is: **We just eat REAL FOOD.**

THE SHORT ANSWER

The short answer as to why we do this is that **eating real food (and avoiding most processed foods) is ideal for maintaining a healthy metabolism and reducing inflammation within the body.**

It's good for body composition, energy levels, sleep quality, mental attitude and quality of life. It helps eliminate sugar cravings and reestablishes a healthy relationship with food. It also works to minimize your risk for a whole host of lifestyle diseases and conditions, like diabetes, heart attack, stroke and autoimmune.

By way of shortcut I often refer to the way we eat as **being based on a "Paleo template"**. However the problem with this is that people often react negatively to this term saying things like: "Oh, so you're eating like cavemen did then?". Which of course we're not, but there are a ton of myths out there as to what is and isn't Paleo so I do understand it can get confusing for people.

The thing is that much of the actual food we eat now did not even exist in paleolithic times. Eating Paleo (certainly Paleo 2.0) really means **eating a nutrient dense, toxin-free, whole-foods based diet** that emphasizes animal protein and fats, starchy & non-starchy vegetables, fermented foods, raw dairy (when tolerated), white rice (when tolerated) and fruit as well as nuts & seeds (in moderation). But it's obviously just a lot easier to say 'Paleo'.

THE LONGER ANSWER

For me, eating real food or "eating Paleo" means considering a combination of three factors

- 1. Our evolutionary history** and how we understand we ate in the past.

2. The science research (that continues to evolve itself) at how we tolerate various foods – regardless of whether we ate them in the past or not.

3. Balancing what we understand to be the most healthful food versus the practical reality of living in society where the majority are not eating (predominantly) real food/paleo and where highly processed high sugar foods proliferate.

OUR EVOLUTIONARY HISTORY:

In respect of the first factor (that humans are biologically adapted over many thousands of years to eating whole foods: plants, meat, seafood and that as agriculture came on the scene a mere 10,000 years ago—a tiny fraction of our evolutionary history) my research leads me to consider that **foods like refined wheat and sugar are best avoided where possible.**

I just don't believe that it can be a coincidence that many of our modern diseases—including autoimmune disorders, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and obesity—have accompanied the global spread of industrialized food.

THE SCIENCE:

In respect of the second factor (the science regardless of whether it was eaten before or not): We avoid as much as possible all gluten, all wheat based products and most other grains on the basis that I consider the science at this time to show that there has been insufficient time and insufficient evolutionary pressure for humans to completely adapt to seed consumption and that, as a result, individuals that tolerate grains should be considered the minority, not the majority.

The science appears to show that many of us are likely to be able to tolerate full fat dairy and appropriately prepared legumes but if you're aiming for optimal health you owe it to yourself and your family to go without both for a period of time to assess your tolerance.

We're still experimenting with dairy – we do eat butter. As for legumes I'm not fussed to eat them and never have been so for now we don't eat. But I would not rule out legumes and ancient grains entirely if they would at some stage fit into the three factors above.

THE PRACTICAL REALITIES:

Finally – in respect of the third factor: We cook entirely gluten and soy free, and steer clear of most

grains, refined vegetable and seed oils but we're not "paleo/real food perfectionists". (The fact is that I've yet to meet anyone that is such a "perfectionist", even though people are always talking about them.)

We do eat some sugar but we eat it in the most natural forms (in fruit, honey, raw and unrefined sugar and starchy carbs) and I'm always mindful of our intake. As well, when we're eating out it's almost impossible to avoid all of the substances on our [no-go](#) list so, for example, inevitably we'll be consuming small amounts of canola oil and some gluten via cross contamination in restaurant kitchens.

OUR LITTLE EXPERIMENT

So there you have an overview of why we eat what we eat. One thing's for sure - **my food choices are not about slavishly, and mindlessly copying the diets of our ancestors. Rather, an ancestral way of eating simply provides me with somewhere to start from when deciding how to feed our family in the modern world.**

Then it's about considering the results I'm seeing in our health and wellbeing (with our little n=2 experiment - or potentially an n=4 with my husband* and step-daughter) alongside the science backed evidence and then continuing to reassess as we go whilst keeping an open mind.

*Check out [this](#) for more details.