There’s no mystery in how to lose weight – burn more calories and/or eat fewer ones – it’s all about energy balance. Exercise burns more calories. Simple changes like using stairs instead of the lift, parking a little further from your destination, and walking 30 minutes a day, can make a significant difference – small changes can eventually lead to big improvements.

An easier way than portion control to consume less calories, is to eat less fat, because fat (whether saturated, monounsaturated or unsaturated) has more than twice the calories per gram of protein or of carbohydrate. Eating less fat means consuming fewer calories without having to eat less food, thus increasing satiety without adding calories.

Food volume (and not calories) is to consume less calories, is to eat less fat, consistently have lower energy intakes. The data suggest that reducing fat, without losing weight, is to eat less fat, and also plant proteins and animal proteins achieve this. However in general, plant-based proteins and seafood-based proteins are more healthy than animal-derived ones. Body weight is inversely associated with dietary fibre and carbohydrates, and is positively associated with protein intake. Meat has virtually no dietary fibre.

Professor Ornish’s dietary advice is about abundance, not deprivation – feeling better, not just living longer. He emphasizes eating more foods that are beneficial rather than just eating fewer unhealthy ones. There are at least 100,000 substances in foods that have powerful anti-cancer, anti-atherosclerosis, anti-inflammatory and anti-anxiety properties. They include phytochemicals, phytosterols, carotenoids, retinoids, isoflavonoids, genistein, lycopene, polyphenols, and sulforaphanes and others. These protective factors are essentially found in foods, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, soy products and some fish. These foods are rich in good carbohydrates, good fats, good proteins, and other protective substances.

Ornish’s Preventive Medicine Research Institute conducted a double-blind, placebo-controlled, randomised controlled trial looking at the effects of pomegranate juice in people with coronary heart disease. After only 3 months, they found that blood flow to the heart was improved in those who drank one eight-ounce glass of pomegranate juice each day, whereas patients on placebo got marginally worse.1

Many studies are showing that pomegranate juice may help prevent and even slow down the development of prostate cancer and other tumours. A particular study showed that a daily eight-ounce glass of pomegranate juice may reduce the recurrence of prostate cancer. Researchers claim that the effect may be so large as to help older men outlive the disease.2

Red wine can be good for your heart, but you could receive similar beneficial effects from unfermented wine, i.e., grape juice. Substances such as flavonoids in grapes help keep arterial walls flexible, improve blood flow and reduce risk of disease. Red wine also help keep blood cholesterol from building up in your arterial walls. Antioxidants in grape juice appear to linger longer in the body than in wine, according to researchers at the University of California’s institute of wine science at Davis, suggesting that alcohol may actually hasten the breakdown of antioxidants in the blood.

Researchers at Harvard Medical School and the National Institute on Aging, report that resveratrol, a natural substance found in the skin of red grapes and red wine, helps reduce the harmful effects of a high-calorie diet in mice and significantly extended their life span. However, the amounts of resveratrol given to the mice were equivalent to drinking 750 to 1,500 bottles of red wine daily.3

References

References