



# DALLAS AQUATIC MASTERS

*Fun, Fitness and Competition*

## **Dietary Recommendations - Where in the World Did They Come From?**

DAM Monday September 16, 2002

While doing a little research I came across interesting facts involving diet and nutrition. I thought I'd share a few of the interesting ones with the DAM Monday readers.

In 1968 Senator George McGovern was the chair of the Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs. The goal was to eliminate malnutrition by the mid 1970's but shortly after the committee had begun the task shifted to writing the first "Dietary Goals for the United States." A great goal, however the author was neither a nutritionist nor a physician specializing in nutrition, he was a labor writer whose main influence was a big fan of low fat diets. Soon government agencies began recommending that no more than 30 percent of calories should be consumed as fat and of that only 10 percent should come from saturated fat. Those guidelines pretty much remain today.

Some twenty years ago a Walter Willet MD and a few of his colleagues from a small little known school in Boston, Harvard, began health studies in mass. In fact as of today over 70,000 health care providers and over 300,000 average Americans have been studied by Willet and his group at the Harvard School of Public Health. Surprisingly the resulting data shows no relationship between total fat intake and risk for heart disease. The data also shows a diet high in simple, high glycemic carbohydrates does increase the risk of heart disease especially in women. Most of Willets research has been published in journals such as the New England Journal of Medicine, JAMA, Archives of Internal Medicine, and the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition. Strange as it may be our government and our leading health organizations have completely ignored the data.

To add insult to injury the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has given this research group nearly \$155 million over the past twenty years but has yet to recommend any of the findings.

It may be that the biggest fad diet in the world is the low-fat high carbohydrate diet. Dr. George V. Mann one of the leading researchers of the Framingham study, states his thoughts on the current dietary recommendations: "The diet-heart hypothesis that high intake of saturated fat and cholesterol causes heart disease has been repeatedly shown to be wrong, yet for complicated reasons of pride, profit, and prejudice the hypothesis continues to be exploited by scientists, fund-raising enterprises, food companies, and even governmental agencies. The public is being deceived by the greatest health scam of the century."

The take away message is if you are living on bagels and pasta and expecting to live a happy healthy life you may be doing more harm than good.

Next week I'll share some of the possible dangers of the low-fat diet high carbohydrate diet.

Now go for a swim.

Bobby