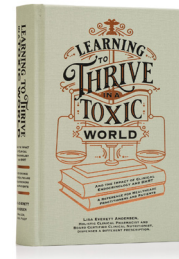


It's Okay to Eat Beans.

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It is not only ok to eat beans, but global experts agree eating more beans and fruits are the top two ways to increase health and longevity.

There was an idea that became popular in a book written by Dr. Steven Gundry that people should not eat beans because they contain lectins. It would seem that he comes to this conclusion from a misinterpretation of history and not from science or epidemiological studies. He even sells lectin blocking supplements. He also says egg yolks decrease total cholesterol (quoting the egg industry) which has been proven over and over again as not only untrue but opposite of the truth. Even though he is a former cardiologist, he basically supports the keto-type diet: low carbs and high protein. But as Dr. Greger reminds us in one of his videos on the subject, Dr. Atkins of the Atkins diet was also a cardiologist, and he had heart disease, a history of hypertension and congestive heart failure, and weighed 258 pounds when he died.

The reality is, there are many types of lectins that occur in the plant kingdom. Some lectins can be toxic, such as those found in castor beans or kidney beans. Others are non-toxic, such as those found in lentils, tomatoes, and peanuts.

Studies show non-toxic and non-toxic levels of lectins can turn colorectal cancer cells back to normal cells. Four servings of legumes per week resulted in significant drop (40%) in C-reactive protein. It is no wonder that the healthiest populations on our planet eat a lot of legumes and beans.

The lectins found in beans, including kidney beans, are toxic only if eaten raw and in large quantities. But who eats raw beans that are hard as a rock?! Cooking beans to the point of being soft enough to smash with a fork destroys 100% of the lectins.

The whole “bad bean” lectin theory was based on a fad weight loss program in Japan, whereby participants were instructed to toast raw white kidney beans for 3 minutes. The beans were then ground into powder and sprinkled onto rice. Three minutes of toasting is not long enough to denature and destroy the lectin proteins. Therefore, many of those people became ill with vomiting and diarrhea, and a few were even hospitalized. Raw beans need to be soaked overnight then boiled for 15-30 minutes, or if not soaked, boiled for an hour or more. They could also be pressure cooked per the instructions of the cooker device or on the package of beans. Remember, the key is to cook them long enough to be smashable. There are no lectins in canned beans because they have been soaked and boiled appropriately.

I have patients who tried the “lectin-free diet” only to find that they were missing out on some of their favorite foods and many, many nutrients. They found it too hard to follow and void of benefits. The belief that they would be rid of all their digestive gas simply did not pan out. So every one of them abandoned the restrictive diet.

If you have trouble with gassiness after eating beans, it is probably because you do not eat them often enough for your intestine to develop the enzymes necessary to break down the various components present in beans. Cultures who eat beans every day are rarely bothered with bloated tummies. A very effective trick is to open a can of organic beans and start eating 1 teaspoon to 1 tablespoonful every day. This will help you build the necessary enzymes to digest legumes. You can also try taking enzymes with betaine HCl with your meals. Over time, these highly nutritious, delicious legumes will be your friend.

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