

## ***SURPRISE! You're an Herbivore!***

*Early humans had diets very much like other great apes, which is to say a largely plant-based diet, drawing on foods we can pick with our hands. Research suggests that meat-eating began by scavenging—eating leftovers that carnivores had left behind. However, our bodies have never adapted to it. To this day, meat-eaters have a higher incidence of heart disease, cancer, diabetes and other problems.*

—Dr. Neal Barnard

*President, Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine*

*Author, **The Power of Your Plate***

Forgive me for presuming in advance that this information will surprise you; it certainly surprised me! For most of my life, I've heard that humans are omnivores: animals who thrive on eating both plants and animal byproducts. The fact that cave-people did this was often tooted as "evidence" of this fact—never mind the scarcity of food that existed in caveman times, or the fact that cave-people lacked knowledge of agriculture and so could not grow more food for themselves.

There's a big difference between *capability* and *need*; the fact that humans are capable of digesting meat, and have been doing so for ages, does not in itself prove that humans need meat or are supposed to be eating it. Cave-dwelling times were all about survival: eat whatever you can, whenever you can, and keep it moving so that no one eats you. Cave-people didn't know anything about biology. They didn't have an ethical code. They were just trying to stay alive for as long as possible.

People are capable of drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes; does this mean that the human body *requires* alcohol or nicotine? Of course not; and before you tell me, "But those things don't count, because they're toxic and cause diseases," *meat is also toxic to humans and also causes diseases.*

I digress. Bottom line, I was raised to believe that humans are supposed to eat both meat and plants. When I first chose to go vegetarian, and later chose to go vegan, it was with the understanding that I was choosing to give up something I *could* have—something that wouldn't actually harm me—in order to spare others from harm. It was even impressed upon me by some, and still is to this day, that I was giving up something my body needed and that my choice would ultimately threaten my chances of survival.

The first time I ever heard a complete, convincing argument that humans are naturally *herbivores*—intended to subsist on a plant-based diet—was when watching animal liberationist Gary Yourofsky's lecture at Georgia Tech, which he delivered in the summer of

2010, on YouTube. I will forever be grateful to fellow activist Stefan Bruett for emailing me a link to this inspiring lecture. In spite of the highly offensive content of Yourofsky's more recent speeches, this gem mustn't go—and, indeed, has not gone—unnoticed.

(Sadly, to the disappointment of many who he once inspired—myself included—Gary has in 2015 betrayed the vegan ethos of respecting *all* sentient beings by mocking the suffering of various humans and declaring, “F\*ck human rights!”)

Never one to take a single man's words for fact—no matter how passionately and articulately they are delivered—I sought academic and scientific resources with which to independently verify everything that Gary had said back in 2010. The results of my investigation were positive, confirming each and every biological fact spouted by Gary that proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that the human body is not designed to eat meat. It's not just that we don't *need* it (i.e. it is possible to be vegan and not die—which scores of vegans around the world prove every single day); we are not *designed* to consume it. Meat is harmful to humans, in addition to being harmful to nonhuman animals and the environment.

Before we get into the nitty-gritty of anatomy, I'd like to address briefly Human's history—or even prehistory—of being prey rather than predator, and how our existence as prey ultimately yielded a defensive rather than offensive anatomical design.

### *Early Humans as Prey*

Published in 2005, the book ***Man, the Hunted: Primates, Predators and Human Evolution*** challenged the world to think differently about the evolution of Man. One of the most common arguments I hear against veganism, alongside the whole “Circle of Life” thing, is that cavemen ate meat (we will examine the utter hilarity of such an argument later—even supposing that it were 100% true). By contrast, authors Donna Hart, a professor of anthropology at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, and Robert Wald Sussman, a professor of physical anthropology at Washington University in St. Louis, propose that for most of Man's existence, humans were positioned as prey rather than as predators.

Instinctively, this rings true to me—by the very nature of our design. We simply don't *look* like predators. We are not the strongest animals in the wild, by a long shot; we are not the fastest, either. We are not even close to being the biggest, which leads me to believe that we were probably not only prey, but *undesirable* prey at that: waste-of-time prey not worth the trouble because we would yield such a skimpy meal. Still, many have argued to me that our intelligence, which enabled us to create tools and weaponry, positioned us as predators from the start (or very near the start).

There are quite a few Big Reveals in this book. One of these is that the authors employ fossil records to show that primates have been prey for *millions* of years. While in the past, efforts to understand the behavior and existence of Early Man have focused on the study of living traditional cultures (Napoleon Chagnon's work is a shining example; he positioned

humans as warriors by studying tribes of the Amazon Basin in the sixties), Hart and Sussman's study of fossil records paints an altogether different picture of Early Man. Dating back as far as three million years ago, humans not only lacked weapons, but also had small teeth (which is true to this day, comparative to natural hunters) and were roughly three feet tall. Such small stature combined with lack of weaponry makes plain that we simply could not have survived as hunters that long ago. We would have lost every battle, and eventually died out. We would not be here today if the portrait of Early Man as Hunter was at all accurate.

The authors also assert that developments such as our large brains and speech—the very tools of superiority others claim secured us a spot as predators—are in fact the result of our existence as prey. It is because we were so vulnerable for so long that we needed to develop larger brains, complex language systems, and the like. These tools enabled us to overcome, to an extent, our various disabilities comparative to the predators who were after us.

Curtis Marean, a professor in the School of Human Evolution and Social Change at Arizona State University, asserts that saber-toothed cats played an enormous role in human evolution. His theory purports that hominids—early humans—drove off other herbivores such as elephants by scavenging their food reserves, back when Africa was densely forested. At this time, these larger herbivores were the primary sources of sustenance for saber-toothed cats; ergo, humans started to threaten Saber Tooth's food supply but *did not entirely deplete it*.

As the world cooled and the forests gave way to more sparse lands (around 1.8 million years ago), both the sabertooths and their giant herbivorous prey slowly disappeared from the region. Carnivores living in grasslands rather than forests, eating more modestly sized prey (such as zebras), remained unharmed. These carnivores included relatives of the wild cats we know today, such as tigers and lions—but excluded the once-mighty, recently extinct sabertooth.

So, what happened around 1.6 million years ago is that humans found themselves in the wide, open spaces of the savannah having to duke it out with the remaining carnivorous cats who did not die out with the forests. Marean's work suggests that these conditions prompted several important changes in human physiology, such as the increased length of our lower limbs (enabling us to run faster), increased height (improving upon our intimidation factor while also increasing out sightline), and increase cranial capacity (i.e. larger brains). These are the primary differences known to us between *Homo habilis*, who was pretty much gone by 1.6 million years ago, and *Homo erectus*, who emerged on the scene around this time.

What I found most shocking is that not only did primates (including early humans) fall victim to a wide variety of predators, but also some predators were in fact designed *specifically for the consumption of primates*. Not exclusively, mind you, but some were naturally better at and more inclined to eat primates than others. So it would seem that my previous assumption was at least partially inaccurate; while many larger carnivores may

have preferred, say, an antelope to a human for dinner, this was not the case for leopards, eagles, or African raptors— just to name a few. We are, or at least were, a much more enticing dinner option than one would think just to look at us.

In researching this notion of early humans as prey, I came across a study by Charles Snowdon, a professor of psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison; and Toni Ziegler, an endocrinologist at the university, examining cooperative parenting among primates. Snowdon and Ziegler found that expectant primate fathers experienced weight gain and hormonal changes similar to that of their female counterparts during the latter's pregnancy. This effect has been observed on a much smaller scale among some human men also, but a study of human men in this position has never been conducted on a massive scale.

The results of this study have important implications. For starters, understanding these physiological changes in primate men may help us better understand the behavior of human men who are expecting the birth of a child—today. The study also has implications with respect to our history; natural predators do not make the best dads. Male lions, for instance, spend most of their time lying in the shade while females undertake both hunting and parenting responsibilities. When prey is brought home, Dad eats first; in times of scarcity, he will readily let his “wife” and children die before donating a portion of his meal to anyone.

Grizzly bears are so fiercely territorial that they will kill not only strangers but also even *their own young* for trespassing. Male grizzlies can claim up to an astonishing *1,500 miles* for themselves, and mothers must be vigilant not to allow their cubs to wander into that area.

So, if primate dads—and, by extension, human dads—are physiologically primed in order to be “good dads” and defend their young (rather than regarding them as competition for food, as lions do; or land, as grizzlies do), this may serve as yet another indication to support the claim that humans are naturally prey. The children of prey are in much more dire need of a caring, devoted father than those of natural predators, who are physiologically (if not psychologically) prepared to defend themselves at a much earlier age.

Let us look at weaning times, for instance. Lion cubs nurse for about six to seven months, and rely on their mothers heavily for no more than two years. Hyenas are said to nurse “an unusually long time for carnivores”—up to 18 months. While this number is much more comparable to that of humans, one explanation is that hyena kills are made far from the den, while the young are babysat for back home by another adult. Unlike other predators, such as jackals, hyenas do not bring food home; so the young must suckle until they are prepared to follow their parents on the hunt, starting at about one year old.

Essentially, most carnivores are nursed for a much shorter period than humans and primates, while their fathers are more protective of their own space and food supply than their little ones. Humans and primates, by contrast, nurse longer, while our dads show physical signs of empathy and connection with our pregnant mamas.

## Your Body

### Intestinal Length

*The length of our intestines is somewhere between 7 to 13 times the length of our torso, our trunk. That's the same length of all herbivore animal intestines on this planet. They're very long, but the length of the intestines on real meat eaters—hyenas, coyotes, bears, tigers and lions—is only 3 to 6 times the length of their torso. They have a short intestinal tract so they can push through, quickly, decaying and rotting animal flesh, animal protein, cholesterol, saturated fat, trans-fatty acids...Which is why **it is impossible—I'll repeat, impossible— for any genuine meat eater to ever clog their arteries. Never happens to a real meat eater.***

*What's the number one killer of humans who choose to eat meat, cheese, milk and egg?*

*Heart disease from clogged arteries: atherosclerosis.*

—From Gary Yourofsky's Speech at Georgia Tech

In their book, *The Vegetarian Way*, nutritionists Mark and Virginia Messina compiled the following chart comparing the human body to that of herbivores, carnivores, and omnivores—the most common label (mistakenly) applied to humans:

TABLE 1.1 VEGETARIAN DIET—THE NATURAL DIET OF MAN?				
One popular argument in favor of a vegetarian diet is based on the idea that the anatomy and physiology of humans is best suited to a plant-based diet. Here, we've compared some key anatomical features of humans with those of animals who are carnivores (a meat diet only), herbivores (plant foods only), and omnivores (both plant and animal foods).				
Feature	Carnivore	Herbivore	Omnivore	Human
Teeth				
Incisors	Short and pointed	Broad, flattened, and spade-shaped	Short and pointed	Broad, flattened, and spade-shaped
Canines	Long, sharp, and curved	Dull and short or long or none	Long, sharp, and curved	Short and blunted
Molars	Sharp, jagged, and blade-shaped	Flattened with cusps vs. complex surface	Sharp blades and/or flattened	Flattened with nodular cusps
Colon	Simple and short	Long and complex	Simple and short	Long and complex
Nails	Sharp claws	Flattened nails or blunt hooves	Sharp claws	Flattened
Length of small intestine	3–6 times body length	10–12+ times body length	4–6 times body length	10–11 times body length
Saliva	No digestive enzymes	Carbohydrate-digesting enzymes	No digestive enzymes	Carbohydrate-digesting enzymes

The Messinas' chart confirms Gary's statement; it appears that the proportion of a carnivore's torso length to its intestinal length is much larger (one third to one sixth) than that of us humans (Gary says one seventh to one thirteenth; the Messinas say a tenth to an eleventh). So here already we find two credible sources making the same claim about human intestines. Let's dig deeper.

In Dr. Milton Mills's article, "The Comparative Anatomy of Eating," Mills investigates the physiological and anatomical traits of mammalian carnivores, omnivores and herbivores in an effort to deduce where we humans fit along the spectrum. One of the many features he focuses on in the digestive track: stomachs and intestines. He establishes that mammalian carnivores have an intestinal length of three to six times the lengths of their *bodies*, which he attributes to the fact that "meat is relatively easily digested."

Here, already, we find reason to believe that humans should not eat meat, as any doctor will tell you (whether said doctor supports the vegan diet or not) that humans cannot "easily" digest meat. It causes a host of ailments with which the lion and the hyena are altogether unfamiliar.

But wait—there's more!

The capacity of carnivorous stomachs is also quite large, as mammalian carnivores are hunters by nature and average about one kill per week. This means that they must be able to store meat in their bodies and digest over time—which, naturally, means they require more capacious tummies.

Humans, by contrast, not only have longer intestines (Mills says over ten times the lengths of our bodies) but also have smaller, simple tummies. Ours, unlike the tummies of mammalian carnivores, do *not* produce hydrochloric acid. Mills attributes this carnivorous trait to their need to "facilitate protein breakdown and to kill the abundant dangerous bacteria often found in decaying flesh foods." If humans were designed to consume flesh, does it not stand to reason that we, too, would produce this essential acid in our stomachs?

With respect to omnivores, Mills highlights three examples—bears, raccoons, and certain canines—but chooses to focus on the bear as the most representative example. He finds that, while one might expect omnivores to possess evenly both carnivorous and herbivorous anatomical traits, the bear's anatomy most closely mirrors that of his carnivorous brethren. The teeth and claws in particular appear to be a must-have for any animal designed to eat meat, including those who have the option to also eat fruits and vegetables.

## **Teeth and Claws**

I've decided to group these two defenses together as I find they are the most self-evident and easily observable.

Claws: we don't have them. End of story. Let your nails grow out for as long as you want

to; they will NEVER become claws. Real meat-eaters rely on their claws—or talons, as they're called amongst carnivorous birds—to shred through animal skin and divvy up the carcass, digging past bone and cartilage and other yucky things to get to the good stuff (in some cases, anyway; there are also meat-eaters who eat “bones and all,” such as vultures).

Now for the fun part: teeth. Our teeth are *mostly* flat, like those of rabbits, horses and other herbivores; tigers, lions, hyenas and other natural-born carnivores have sharp teeth.

“But but but...CANINES! We have CANINES, and they're SHARP!” you cry from the bleachers. First of all, our canines aren't *nearly* as sharp as the teeth of real meat-eaters; besides, we have so few of them, whereas the teeth of real meat eaters are all, or at least mostly, sharp.

Secondly, Gary says we have canines in order to break through tough fruits, such as apples and pears. Is this true? You'll note that in Mark and Virginia's chart, canines are listed as a category among all three types of eaters: carnivores, herbivores, and omnivores; but just in case they were mistaken, let's take a look at some other herbivores who eat tough fruits and see if this “everyone has canines” thing checks out:

*Rabbits:* Canines? Not exactly, but pretty close. Rabbits have four relatively sharp incisors that rest at the very tips of their elongated jaws, allowing them to pierce fruit. Still, an incisor is not a canine, so let's keep looking.

*Pigs:* According to Colorado State University's online biomedical database, pigs have “needle teeth,” defined as “the deciduous third incisors **and the canines.**” Their *Dental Anatomy of Pigs* article also asserts that in boars, the protrusions to which we all refer as “tusks” are in fact canines. Here's one small victory, but just to make sure pigs aren't some special exception to the rule, let's try another fruit-eater.

*Horses:* In the article “Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Equine Dentistry,” published by the American Association of Equine Practitioners, Dr. Mary DeLorey confirms that geldings (such as donkeys and mules) and stallions typically have **four canines.**

So there you have it, folks: not one but two other tried-and-true herbivores have canines, besides humans. Canines are *not* exclusive to the meat-eating community. We've all been fooled by this for far too long.

## *Your Gut*

Now I'd like to move away from all this icky biology stuff and talk about our metaphorical gut: our instincts. True carnivores are born with *carnivorous instincts*: compulsions that enable them to properly hunt down, kill and eat other animals. One of these is *pouncing*. When a potential meal goes scampering by, say, a hyena, the hyena's natural instinct is to *pounce on it*.

When was the last time you wanted to pounce on a rodent that went scuttling past you, or a dog running around your neighbor's backyard? To the rodent, you say "Ick!" To the dog, you say "Awww!" To neither of these does your *gut instinct* say, "Yum!" There are ample scientific texts out there that could explain this in better detail; but you don't really *need* those, do you? This is *common sense!* This is readily observable in your daily life; you've just been ignoring it.

When does your gut say "Yum!" to meat? When you see a commercial for a cheeseburger. The next time that happens, try to see the cheeseburger for what it really is: a bit of grilled carcass with melted cow rape on top. Not so yummy anymore, is it?

The truth is that humans don't instinctively *want* meat; they are *trained* to want it. Meat is the epitome of acquired taste. To illustrate this point, Gary offered students two comical yet poignant challenges in his lecture at Georgia Tech:

1. The next time you see a squirrel running across a lawn, try to pounce on it. Do not use tools or weapons—that's cheating. Just pounce with your legs and grab hold of that animal. Then, if you are successful, eat it: and he means *all* of it. Bones, skin, fur—every last scrap of animal flesh, uncooked. (Okay, so we know that not all carnivores eat the bone; still, we are the only species that deigns to call itself carnivorous that requires such preparations as *heating* and *seasoning* to make meat palatable.)
2. Put a baby in a crib with an apple and a live rabbit. "If the baby plays with the apple and eats the rabbit, please send me an email."

Of all the creatures on the planet who consume the byproducts of other creatures, humans are the *only* ones who have to boil, skin, season, fry, bake, or otherwise treat their meat before they consume it. This fact is apparent to us since childhood, as we never witness a lion or a hyena on TV or at a zoo engaged in cooking. The only nonhumans we ever see cooking are animated.

Speciesism runs deep. We are so used to regarding ourselves as unique in the animal kingdom that we accept without question the notion that we, and we alone, have to perform a series of functions on meat before we consume it. Not even our closest relatives, our fellow primates, engage in cooking; rather, they abstain from meat entirely. Most people do not have a hard time understanding how and why chimpanzees are our closest relatives. We accept and live in harmony with our many similarities to these creatures—except that one. We make exceptions for ourselves, even in the face of overwhelming evidence.

In an interview I conducted with him in December 2014, John Sanbonmatsu, Associate Professor of Philosophy at Worcester Polytechnic Institute and author of *The Postmodern Prince: Critical Theory, Left Strategy and the Making of a New Political Subject*, brilliantly summed up this human tendency by recalling what Paul Sartre referred to as "bad faith."



*We continually make excuses for behavior we know is not really justified, deep down, so that we won't have to take responsibility for the choices we make as free beings.*

We must be vigilant. We must be as horrified by the thought of a calf being taken from his mother sow as we are by the thought of a human child being ripped from the arms of his human mother. We must be as mortified by the notion of a “rape rack” as we are by the thought of a row of human women chained to a wall and raped daily. As long as we keep making excuses and thinking of these creatures as “something else,” something *other-ly*, the violence will never end.

Ever see the movie *Chicken Run*? It's a great claymation film released in 2000 about chickens escaping a farm. The 2008 film *Bolt*, while illustrating humans eating chicken and burgers and other forms of meat throughout, focuses on the plight of a small canine actor who doesn't know he's an actor, and learns from friends he meets along his journey (particularly a cat named Mittens) how to just *be a dog*. In both films, humans are seen maliciously misleading animals and depriving them of their natural lives, attempting to convince them instead that a human industry (be it agriculture or Hollywood) is the one and only place for them; and in both films, the moral of the story is that *the humans are wrong*.

Movies like *Bolt* and *Chicken Run* encourage young children to have respect and compassion for animals; later, these same children are taught that in the “Real World,” people eat animals all the time, and it's no big deal and nothing about which to get upset.

We all love watching heartwarming family films in which people motivated by greed or hatred lose and those who stay true to themselves and demonstrate kindness win. We actively seek these movies for our children; then, at some indeterminable point, varying from family to family, we slowly start to un-teach them. We train them to turn their sympathy switches off and attempt to normalize for them the imprisonment, murder and consumption of creatures we once inspired them to regard as friends.

*Once upon a Forest* (1993) is by far one of my favorite children's movies of all time. My mother rented it for me from the local public library when I was about six. I am too embarrassed to reveal how many times I've watched it since then. It tells the story of the Furlings, a gaggle of woodland critters—a hedgehog, a raccoon, a mouse, and so forth—and their wise teacher, Cornelius the Badger. Humans—known to the critters as Shoemans due to their limited perspective from the ground of humans as large, rubber boots—are responsible for the release of poisoned gas into the forest. A driver throws a glass bottle out of his window, which breaks, causing the tires of his gas-filled truck to pop and ultimately overturning the truck. Michelle, Cornelius's granddaughter, inhales some of the leaking gas and becomes gravely ill. It falls to the Furlings to retrieve medicinal plants for her in a far-off region of the forest.

Children naturally empathize with Michelle and the Furlings when watching this movie, and adults allow them to feel that way; we even encourage it. We herald this movie as a

lesson not to throw bottles out of windows—i.e., not to engage in land pollution. Then we sit them down for a nice steak dinner...and we frown and squirm in our seats when they look up from their plates and ask, “Doesn’t this come from a dead cow?”

### *But My Doctor Says...*

Eat meat or die? I’m not surprised. There are many reasons doctors continue to encourage their patients to eat meat and dairy. One of these, based on experiences many of my friends and colleagues have reported to me, seems to be that vegans who are more concerned with the moral imperative than nutrition (such as myself) don’t always make the extra effort to get enough nutrition from their new diet. Instead, these vegans rely too heavily on faux meats and cheeses, neglecting the plethora of vegetables, fruits, nuts and grains at their disposal.

(Guilty as charged; I subsisted during my first couple of years as a vegan almost exclusively on Boca Spicy Chik’n Patties and Daiya Tapioca “Cheese.” From about 2005 to 2007, the only green aspect of my diet was avocado.)

As a result of this lack of vigilance, many new vegans suffer from malnutrition in the early days of their journey towards animal liberation; and when they visit their doctor, the doctor asks, “Have you made any changes to your diet or lifestyle lately?”

It makes sense, on the surface, to say that when someone has stopped eating something, if that person becomes ill, perhaps he or she ought to start eating it again. With veganism, this is simply not the case. No one *has* to go back to eating meat; people just have to be more conscientious about what they’re eating instead. They have to make more of an effort to get certain nutrients and avoid overreliance on processed meat and dairy substitutes.

Your doctor (most likely) isn’t evil; he or she is not trying to lead you down the wrong path intentionally. If your body is suffering, your doctor seeks to alleviate that suffering; and if the suffering began after you eschewed animal byproducts from your diet, the simplest solution that emerges is to just go back to eating the way you did before.

That said, the easiest path is not always the right path. It is perfectly possible to spend a lifetime eating vegan and not want for anything. This isn’t speculation; people exist as living proof! Are these people superhuman? Are their nutritional needs any different from yours? No—they simply made the commitment, got educated, and stuck to it. They didn’t panic at the emergence of certain weaknesses or deficiencies in their bodies; instead, they took the necessary steps to address them *without abandoning their commitment to the cause*.

There are tons of resources out there written by doctors, nutritionists, and others who support the plant-based diet. Chapter Nine of this book includes a list of such books, which I highly recommend to anyone struggling with this issue—whether you have concerns of

your own or you are running out of steam in arguments with your stubborn healthcare professional.

The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM) heralds the plant-based diet as “the healthiest overall.” Their website includes an FAQ about veganism, addressing topics from “Is it healthy to raise a child vegan?” to “What’s wrong with drinking milk?” The doctors address these issues from a purely clinical standpoint, leaving ethics at the door and speaking solely about what is best for YOUR body (and that of your child). Over and over again, their answers emphasize the superiority of the plant-based diet over all other diets from the perspective of human health. PCRM also runs a free, online twenty-one-day program to help people transition into a vegan diet (in January, April, and September of each year).

In July of 2012, *U.S. News and World Report* published an article detailing the many health benefits of the plant-based diet. I won’t go into all of them here; but one shining example is the plant-based diet’s radical improvement of cardiovascular health. Michael Davidson, Director of Preventive Cardiology at the University of Chicago Medical Center, said “It’s an exceptionally healthy diet, especially when it comes to cardiac health.” He first reasserted the more popularly cited health benefits to veganism, such as reducing saturated fat intake and eliminating cholesterol. Dr. Davidson then went on to explain that increasing intake of “cardiac protective” fruits, vegetables, and grains—packed with antioxidants and other phytochemicals that protect cells from damage caused by free radicals—is also a deciding factor in how veganism protects the human heart.

The soluble fiber found in plant protein also helps to lower cholesterol. In the 2006 *Diabetes Care* report, LDL cholesterol (“low-density lipoprotein”—the “bad” cholesterol) dropped 21.2 percent in the vegan group after 22 weeks, compared with 10.7 percent in the group following guidelines that permitted meat and dairy consumption.

This isn’t about making doctors look stupid. They’re not. You don’t go to medical school for a hundred years and spend another hundred years saving people’s lives because you’re stupid. It’s about showing them *new* evidence of this (relatively) *new* idea and relying on their intelligence—not to mention their commitment to the Hippocratic Oath—to be able to grasp it and implement it effectively. Educate and inform: that’s the Liberationist Way. Don’t insult, don’t impugn; simply present your doctor with some appropriate, credible resources and *stick to your guns*.

More and more, the medical community is embracing the vegan diet; but it’s not everywhere just yet. In some places, in some hospitals, in some practices, there are still some eat-meat-or-diehard doctors who either don’t know the facts or simply don’t want to change the way they do business—and therefore choose to *ignore* the facts. If your doctor, in spite of whatever resource you throw at him or her, continues to insist that you eat meat or dairy, find another one! Don’t let anyone bully you into abandoning the movement. There is no medically valid excuse whatsoever for human consumption of nonhuman animal byproducts.

The American Holistic Medical Association's website allows you to search for vegan-friendly doctors in your area—and yes, you can find traditional Western doctors on this website. Don't let the word "holistic" intimidate you. There are also myriad vegan communities online where I'm sure you can find at least one other vegan in your area; request a referral if you're uncomfortable fishing for doctors online.