

*New Study Shows Ancient Hawaiian Diet Cures Modern Ills  
... also cures automatic weight loss*

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Reversal of serious illness and weight loss without limiting calories was demonstrated by a non-calorie restricted traditional Hawaiian diet at the **Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center** in Hawaii. An average weight loss of 17.1 pounds per person was noted along with reversal heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes in a study involving 19 Native-Hawaiian adults over a period of just three weeks. This was even more remarkable because Hawaiians have among the highest rates of obesity and death from these diseases in the nation. The results of this study was published in the world's leading nutrition journal, the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, by Terry Shintani, M.D., M.P.H., Hawaiian nutritionist Claire Hughes, M.S., R.D., Helen Kanawaliwali O'Connor, C.H.W., and Sheila Beckham, M.P.H., R.D.C. in the June 1991 edition.

In this program, known as the Waianae Diet Program (WDP), Native-Hawaiians were placed on a diet consisting of exclusively Native-Hawaiian foods (available before Western contact) for a period of 21 days. They were allowed to eat as much as they wanted with the exception of some restriction on the quantity of animal protein. Results indicated an average weight loss of 17.1 pounds over 21 days. In addition, cholesterol fell 14.1% from an average of 222.3 mg/dl to an average of 191 mg/dl, with a slight improvement in HDL to cholesterol ration. Triglycerides, a risk factor for heart disease improved as well, falling from an average of 211.3 to 163 mg/dl. Blood sugar control improved in all seven individuals with diabetes on the program with the overall blood sugar level decreasing from 161.9 to 123.4 mg/dl. One individual who was on 60 units of insulin per day no longer needs any diabetes medication one year later. There was no increase in exercise on the program and analysis of the intake revealed that the participants ate more food on the diet but ingested fewer calories.

The WDP was designed in response to the tragic irony that in Hawaii, the healthiest state in the union, Native Hawaiians have the shortest life-span as compared to all other ethnic groups in America. Most of the deaths are diet and obesity related. Hawaiians have among the highest rates of obesity in the nation with a prevalence of approximately 65%. By sharp contrast, early writing, photographs and drawing indicate that Hawaiians were of a "thin rather than full habit" (Stewart 1883). Diet related diseases such as heart disease, stroke, cancer and diabetes were also rare in ancient Hawaiians.

The researchers believed that a change in the diet to modern foods rather than "overeating" is the cause of obesity and the deadly profile of modern diseases in Native Hawaiians today. In contrast to the high fat, high cholesterol modern diet, the Hawaiian diet was approximately 7 to 12% fat and high in complex carbohydrates and bulk. The principal foods on the diet was taro (a starchy tuber), poi (a mashed form of taro), sweet

potatoes, yams, breadfruit, assorted greens, seaweed, fruit, small amounts of fish and occasionally chicken. Degree of satisfaction was measured, and it was determined to be relatively high during the program. The program also taught the substitution of modern equivalent foods and modern recipes for the maintenance of the healthy changes in the diet. This facilitates the use of the program concepts by the general public.

In addition, the WDP included Hawaiian healers to teach spiritual, mental, emotional as well as physical health as an integral part of the program. This is consistent with ancient Hawaiian cultural values. Community networking was also an integral part of the program and each participant was encouraged to be a teacher and promoter of the WDP's healthy lifestyle message. This approach is already yielding benefits as one participant has already caused 70 others to experience the program through their own collective efforts.

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- **Mortality**

The Waianae Diet Program was designed in response to the high rates of mortality among Native-Hawaiians. Currently, four of the six leading causes of death among pure and part-Hawaiians are diet-related including heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes. These diet-related diseases account for approximately 70% of the deaths among Native-Hawaiians.

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- **Weight Loss without Counting Calories**

Waianae Diet Program demonstrated that people could lose weight without counting calories. Participants ate until they were satisfied. They actually ate more food on the program than they did ordinarily. They ate 4.1 pounds of food a day compared to 3.7 pounds before the program. But they ate nearly 1,000 calories less and lost an average of 17 pounds per person in only three weeks.

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- **Cholesterol**

Cholesterol is a waxy substance that deposits in arteries and causes heart attacks and strokes. These are the number one and number three killers of Hawaiians. Cholesterol is found only in animal-type foods (beef, pork, chicken, eggs, dairy, etc.) Your cholesterol should be no higher than 200 mg/dl and is better if it is around 150 to 160 mg/dl. For every 1% you decrease your cholesterol, you decrease your heart attack risk by 2% until you get down to 150 mg/dl at which point your heart attack risk is practically zero.

In the Waianae Diet Program, the average cholesterol decreased an average of 14% from 222 to 191. This means a reduction in heart attack risk of 28%.

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- **Blood Sugar**

Blood sugar control improved for all seven participants who had diabetes. This is especially important because Hawaiians die faster of diabetes than all races in the U.S. The average blood sugar fell from 161.9 mg/dl to 123.4 mg/dl. One individual who continued the program for over a year no longer needs any diabetes medication after being on 60 units of insulin three years before the program. Because of this effect on blood sugar, if you are on diabetes medication, it is very important that you see your physician before changing your diet significantly.

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- **Composition of the diet**

The Waianae Diet was intended to reflect what Hawaiians ate in ancient times. It was very low in fat (7-12%), high in starches (75-80%) and moderate in protein (12-15%). This is in sharp contrast to the high fat Standard American Diet. The S.A.D. has 400% more fat than the Hawaiian diet. Is it any wonder that high fat diets make high fat people?

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- **Blood Pressure**

Blood pressure also improved significantly on the program. The average systolic blood pressure fell 9% and the diastolic pressure fell 11%. This is significant because high blood pressure increases the risk of heart attack and stroke. The diet may be so effective in lowering blood pressure that if you are on medication, it is especially important that you see your physician before drastically altering your diet.