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Supplement to
The Art of Getting Well
Blood Type and its Influence on Diet

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The basic premise of this article is that if you use your blood type as a guide for the daily selection of foods, you will be healthier, you will reach your ideal body weight, and you just might slow the aging process.

With the abundance of diet plans available, an obvious question to ask is, "Which diet should I choose to follow?" The truth is we can no more choose the right diet than we can our hair or eye color. It has already been chosen for us, and the secret of it lies in an aspect of our genetic blueprint known as our blood type. Accordingly, there are no absolute right or wrong lifestyles or diets; there are only right or wrong choices based on each individual's genetic code.

Anthropologists have speculated that blood types historically evolved due to changes in diet, culture, and social conditions. Due to these differing environmental factors, each blood type has particular strengths and limitations. When these tendencies are known and diet is modified to maximize an individual's genetic strengths, it becomes easier to maintain health. So, the first critical component of the blood type diet revolves around the question of which foods your blood type ancestors had available, and thrived upon.

A second critical component of the blood type diet is the idea that some foods might contain substances with opposing blood type activity. Every life form has unique antigens that form part of their chemical signature. Similarly, each blood type possesses an antigen with a unique chemical structure. Blood type antigens are ubiquitous throughout the body and are among the most powerful antigens involved in the process of identification of "friend or foe." When the body senses foreign antigens, antibodies are generated which defend the body against the invaders. The "anti-other-blood" type antibodies are among the strongest antibodies in our immune system. For example blood type A contains the A antigen on cells and correspondingly produces an antibody against blood group B. Blood type B, on the other hand, has the opposite configuration, with a B antigen on cells and production of antibodies against blood type A. Blood type O produces antibodies against the A antigen and the B antigen, while blood type AB produces no anti-ABO blood group activity.

In the case of an inappropriate blood transfusion, these antibodies can generate a life threatening reaction; however, little attention has been shown to these antibodies in other contexts. Fortunately (or unfortunately) many foods have components which might look similar enough to an opposing blood group antigen to generate a mild antibody response. For

example, the antibody created by blood type A looks for anything that is B-like, and B-like substances contain a sugar known as galactosamine. So eating foods which contain this sugar might provoke an unwanted immune response.

The last major piece of the blood type puzzle has to do with dietary proteins known as lectins. It has long been recognized that some foods are capable of causing the cells of a certain blood type to agglutinate while having no impact on cells of another blood type. While other foods will actually indiscriminately agglutinate cells of all blood types. These reactions are dependent upon the interaction of human cells with specific lectins found in food.

A lectin can simplistically be defined (note: the actual definition is more complicated) as any compound found in nature, usually diverse protein structures, which can interact with surface antigens found on the body's cells, causing them to agglutinate. Following ingestion of food containing a detrimental lectin, a chemical reaction can occur between the food you eat and your blood or tissues because of these lectins.

As a general rule, blood type O thrives on animal protein and tends to experience a great deal of health problems when they eat a lot of grains and beans. Some specific foods to avoid include wheat, corn, dairy, cauliflower, and oranges.

Type A individuals thrive on a vegetarian diet. Considered to have evolved as a primary blood type to deal with the historical challenges associated with farming and cultivation, blood type A individuals typically do not have the digestive capacity to deal with large quantities of animal protein, but can metabolize a wide range of grains and beans effectively. Soy, lentils, buckwheat, some fish, and plenty of vegetables energizes these individuals.

Blood type B is considered to be the nomad and has the greatest range of food choices. This blood type is typically thrives on most dairy products, and does well on meats like lamb and venison. Although individuals with this blood type have the most dietary flexibility, certain common foods such as chicken and corn can be very aggravating.

Blood type AB represents a merging of Types A and B; blending strengths and weaknesses of these two blood types. Like Type B, AB's require meat protein; but, because of their A-like sensitive digestive tract and naturally low stomach acid, AB's need smaller and less frequent portions. Because of the enigmatic blend of the A and B blood types, type AB individuals tend to have health challenges if they consume foods that are detrimental to either type A's or type B's.

A fuller explanation of the role of blood types and health, as well as comprehensive recommendations of foods to include and omit from your diet based upon your blood type, can be found in the book *Eat Right for Your Type* published by G.P. Putnam's Son's (ISBN 0-399-14255-X.) Information on blood type and diet can also be accessed at Peter J. D'Adamo's, N.D., web-site at <http://www.dadamo.com>.