

WEDNESDAY 23 JULY 2014

Don't go the Paleo Way

The Paleo Diet is one of the hottest diet trends around, mostly due to celebrity followers and gym goers, but the country's leading nutrition body is warning Australians it's not all it's cracked up to be.

According to the Dietitians Association of Australia's CEO Claire Hewat, the scientific evidence to support eating like our Palaeolithic ancestors just doesn't stack up. And she goes as far as to call the diet potentially dangerous.

'A recent search of the published studies looking at Palaeolithic diets revealed no more than ten studies, all with very few participants over very short timeframes – most less than three months. And many people dropped out of the studies, claiming the diet was difficult to follow.

'We all eat, and so to a certain extent, we know what food makes us feel good. But rather than getting on the latest fad diet bandwagon, I urge Australians to become familiar with the Dietary Guidelinesⁱ and to seek expert nutrition advice from an Accredited Practising Dietitian,' said Ms Hewat.

She said Palaeolithic diets were first suggested by researchers in 1985 on the basis that current-day chronic disease has resulted from a gene-culture mismatch and the human body's inability to adapt from Palaeolithic times. Yet Ms Hewat said there are multiple examples suggesting that this is simply not true and that we continued to develop as a race.

'Some proponents of 'Paleo' suggest we avoid all grains, legumes, certain dairy products, conventionally-raised meats, non-organic produce, and genetically modified and processed foods. This simply isn't practical for many Australians,' said Ms Hewat.

She said an American-based assessment of the Paleo diet suggested we would need at least a nine per cent increase in income to afford this diet.

'Any diet excluding whole food groups should raise suspicions. The idea of cutting out grain-based foods and legumes is not backed by science, and eating more meat than is needed by the body certainly has risks, according to the World Health Organisation,' said Ms Hewat.

The Dietitians Association of Australia is the membership organisation representing more than 5,000 Accredited Practising Dietitians (APD). APDs use an evidence-based framework and provide tailored dietary advice that takes into consideration medical history, health conditions, medications, family and lifestyle situations and personal goals.

ENDS



MEDIA RELEASE

**For further information or to organise an interview, contact Jess Turner,
Dietitians Association of Australia, on 0409 661 920.**

Note to Editors: The Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) is the professional body representing dietitians nationally. Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) is the only national credential recognised by the Australian Government, Medicare, the Department of Veterans Affairs and most private health funds as the quality standard for nutrition and dietetics services in Australia. For more information visit www.daa.asn.au
The [Media Centre](#) on the DAA website contains DAA's Media Releases and positions on topical nutrition issues in the media.

Background

ⁱ A great deal of research is needed before organisations such as the National Health and Medical Research Council prepare dietary guidelines for the whole country. As many as 55,000 studies were used to support the recommendations in the latest Dietary Guidelines for Australians, which were released just last year.

Access the current Australian Dietary Guidelines here:

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/n55>