

## Is there a scientific basis to the paleo diet?

The problem with modern diets is that they rely too heavily on modern, processed foods. If only we emulated the eating habits of our paleolithic predecessors, we'd be healthier and less obese. That's the premise of popular "paleo" diets.

"We are Stone Agers living in the Space Age," writes Loren Cordain in his book ["The Paleo Diet: Lose Weight and Get Healthy by Eating the Foods You Were Designed to Eat."](#)

Why should we [eat like our ancestors did](#) during the [Paleolithic period](#), which ended about 12,000 years ago? Because our genes have changed very little in the 300 or so generations since then, Cordain told me, and they're adapted to a world where food was hunted, fished or gathered from the natural environment. Our bodies didn't evolve to run on the refined foods found on grocery shelves today, he says.

But nor did we evolve to be healthy, says Daniel Lieberman, a professor of human evolutionary biology at Harvard University and author of ["The Story of the Human Body: Evolution, Health, and Disease."](#)

Jessica Larson, a nutritionist and registered dietitian at the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion at the USDA, cautions, "At this time, there is not enough research on the paleo diet and its potential impact on health over time."

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