



## eat less and live longer

Aging is no longer the immutable process it was once thought to be. Genes that extend our life span have been identified, and we are now learning what lifestyle habits switch on these genes and how we can best protect our cells from premature aging. So far, eating less seems to top the list.

### calorie restriction

Calorie restriction is the single most powerful way to slow the aging process. The concept is not new. Hundreds of animal studies conducted since the 1930s show that with severe dietary restriction, one's life span can be extended by as much as 40 to 60 percent!

Similar evidence in humans comes from the Biosphere 2 experiment, a miniature world built under a glass roof in Arizona. Due to an unforeseen food shortage, volunteers were limited to 1,750 to 2,100 calories per day. Following a two-year stint on a diet of vegetables, fruits, nuts, grains, and legumes, and only small amounts of dairy, eggs, and meat, they experienced significant drops in their blood pressure, glucose, and insulin levels (and many other parameters), suggesting a healthier, younger body.

In the CALERIE study, three United States universities are currently investigating the long-term effects of caloric restriction in humans. Early data confirms the previous longevity

findings in animals and indicates that a low-calorie diet reduces the risk of many killer diseases.

A Calorie Restriction Society has already been established to support those seeking long life and who feel they don't need to wait for further results (see <http://www.calorierestriction.org>).

### how to limit calories

Limiting calories doesn't mean you have to be severe about your diet. Even a modest 10 percent restriction of calories may provide significant benefits. Some people like to eat only two meals per day. Others fast one day per week or strictly avoid snacking between meals. Eating only nutrient-dense or unrefined plant foods also reduces calories and may explain why vegans have the lowest body weight without dieting.

It's never too late to start. Immediate, life-prolonging effects have been demonstrated. But the system has no memory, so the benefits don't continue if you stop.

Nutritionist Sue Radd is the award-winning author of *The Breakfast Book* and coauthor of *Eat To Live*, internationally acclaimed for showing how savvy eating can combat cancer and heart disease and improve well-being. See the latest at <http://www.sueradd.com>.