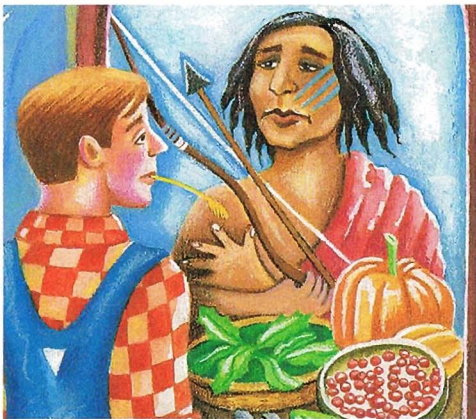


The low-fat, low-carb diet?

I believe I have the thrifty gene and would like to try the high-protein, low-carbohydrate diet described by Dr. Olders in your June issue. But I am not partial to fats and would like to keep them to a minimum. What would be the effect of following the diet except for the high fat intake? Would I have to increase protein to maintain calories?—**J.B., Toronto**

Dr. Olders replies: The fat in any diet is largely responsible for flavor and texture so, for starters, reducing fat would tend to make a diet less palatable. Fat is also important in the satiety response so cutting down on fats might result in your eating more calories, not fewer. There is also a risk when reducing fat of not getting sufficient amounts of the fat-soluble vitamins, A, D, and E, and of essential fatty acids. Moreover, some research shows the risk of cardiovascular disease is lower when dietary monounsaturated fat is higher.

On a low-carbohydrate diet, the proportion of protein and/or fat must increase. If you also reduce fat, there is nothing left except protein. Animal protein foods are expensive and high-protein diets may be dangerous for people with kidney problems. There is anecdotal evidence, too, that high-protein diets can result in illness. In summary, I think it's a bad idea to reduce fats (except for trans-fatty acids). Are you positive that you don't like fats, or is your dislike based on your beliefs about fat's effects on your health? You wouldn't enjoy ice cream or cheese cake if you thought they were good for you?—**Dr. Henry Olders, Jewish General Hospital, Montreal**



Sue Tramm