

## **FAQs For Healthy “NMP Eating By Melanie R. Jordan Author of *Have Your Cheeseburger And Keep Your Health Too!***

### ***So, what is “NMP” eating?***

"NMP" is an acronym I created which stands for (no meat or poultry). I follow this eating style on a full-time basis and I regularly eat delicious foods like cheeseburgers, chicken parmesan, tacos, BLTs and chicken caesar salad (in their non-meat versions of course). Plus, I eat fish (twice a week maximum), fat-free and low-fat dairy products and eggs (as liquid egg substitutes or egg whites), and as part of an overall healthy diet, lots of my favorite vegetables, fruits and other simple non-meat/poultry dishes that are grain-based (think whole grain pastas and rice).

### ***Then are you a vegetarian?***

That depends on whom you ask. There are many top nutritionists who would describe my "NMP" eating style as pesco-vegetarianism. However, many vegetarians will not accept this terminology. Plus, technically, if you consume any animal flesh, even if you do qualify your use of the term, you're not a "true" vegetarian. I also don't focus on the finer points that vegetarians would think of like is there gelatin in a piece of candy?

On the other hand, the rest of the world, when faced with any reference at all to the term "vegetarian" tends to define it as "something I could never be". So I decided to create the abbreviation "NMP" (no meat or poultry) which is not an "official" dietary designation, but it most accurately describes my eating style.

The most important thing to me is that people recognize what I believe to be true--that the secret to a healthy lifestyle, is to find a way of eating healthfully that allows you to have the foods you truly love, no matter what you want to call it!

### ***Why eat fish when you don't eat meat or poultry?***

I believe, as many leading health authorities advocate, that the benefits of fish in the diet, outweigh the negatives. On the plus side is heart health (believed to come from the beneficial omega-3 fatty acids found in the fish); prevention of macular blindness; and that fish is a good source of B-12 which is an essential nutrient that many people who do not eat animal flesh protein need to use a supplement to obtain. The biggest negative is that pollution and toxins in our water may be absorbed into the fish.

By the way, if you are pregnant, working on it, or nursing, you should discuss with your doctor which fish to avoid, or to limit your intake of, to minimize your exposure to methyl mercury which is thought to be a possible factor in developmental problems. Young children should also limit their consumption of fish with high levels of mercury.

### ***But aren't chicken, turkey and lean cuts of beef or pork, healthy enough?***

I used to think so. However, they all still have unhealthy, artery-clogging saturated fat and cholesterol--even in their leanest varieties, and even if you don't eat the chicken or turkey skin (which I hope you are not doing anyway). Too much animal protein--

especially red meat--is also considered to be a contributing factor in many diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, stroke and certain cancers like breast, prostate and colon. Plus, many unhealthy foods are often eaten along with meat and poultry that can be avoided if you don't eat those foods to begin with--take a turkey club sandwich, for example.

There are also the issues of growth hormones and antibiotics that animals are exposed to that speed up the time in which they can go to market, and in some cases result in more "meat" derived from each animal. The use of these antibiotics could one day be a factor in the feared future creation of "super bacteria"--strains of bacteria that don't respond to known antibiotics anymore because we are exposed to the antibiotics all the time through food. Grass and feed that animals eat can also contain agricultural chemicals that are easily absorbed into their tissues (the flesh that is in turn consumed by people). Plus, diseases are often quickly spread within animal populations due to crowded living quarters and slaughterhouses that are not always in tip-top shape. Most people by now have heard about "mad cow disease" and salmonella--need I say more?

What it comes down to for me is if I can still eat all the foods I love without eating meat or poultry, why should I bother exposing myself to any of these potentially unhealthy situations?

### ***How do you healthfully eat dairy products and eggs?***

In order for me to have enough variety in my diet, I like including these products, but I do so in a better-than-average way. I buy organic fat-free milk or soy milk and use the egg whites that come from free-range chickens that have not been raised with any antibiotics or hormones and have been on vegetarian feed. I also use liquid egg substitutes sometimes for convenience. I haven't found any organic or non-dairy cheeses that I enjoy that have a low enough fat level, given the heart health issues in my family, so I will use most fat-free or low-fat cheeses on the market.

### ***How is it so easy to find "NMP" food that you can still enjoy?***

While the food industry has certainly put out its share of unhealthy food, some of the most ingenious food products that have come about in recent years can make a diet that reduces or excludes meat and poultry, without giving up your favorite comfort foods, deliciously possible. There are chicken patties, chicken nuggets, grilled chicken tenders, buffalo wings, hamburgers, hot dogs, meatballs, bacon, sausage, luncheon meats, beef and chicken chunks, turkey, meatloaf and more--all meatless and delicious! And since many of these products are soy-based, it is believed that there are additional health benefits to be derived as long as you don't overdo it or have special health circumstances.

### ***How can I go "NMP" when everyone I know eats meat and poultry?***

It is true that a big challenge in going "NMP" is dealing with other people--your spouse or significant other, your roommate, your friends, your kids, your family, your co-workers and social situations. Many people do not have the courage, strength or desire to take care of themselves so they just go with the flow.

That's a shame, because going "NMP" means eating healthfully and never giving up your favorite foods because you simply find delicious non-meat substitutes for them like those described in the list above. I believe more people would eat healthier if they knew there were many ways to do so while still enjoying their food, and still being able to eat out. That's why I wrote my book *Have Your Cheeseburger And Keep Your Health Too!*

***Can I lose weight by going "NMP"?***

While I can't promise that going "NMP" will help you lose weight or advise you on a personal weight loss program (please check with your healthcare professionals and possibly a licensed nutritionist on this matter). What I will tell you is that by using the unique methods in my book *Have Your Cheeseburger And Keep Your Health Too!* I did lose 20 pounds myself without any specific attempt to do so by going "NMP". No calorie-counting; no cutting back on anything. And even more importantly for someone who had been a "yo-yoer" for years, is that I have maintained that weight loss effortlessly for two years now. Wouldn't it be nice to really be able to lose weight and eat the comfort foods you truly love? Well, with "NMP" eating, it's deliciously possible!

***Can I just go "NMP" sometimes?***

Absolutely! In fact, going "NMP" part-time is a great way to try out and ease into a full-time "NMP" eating style, which is, of course, the ideal. My unique Fallback Methods discussed in my book gradually phase people into the "NMP" eating style painlessly, and they even include some "cheat" time--we're all human after all.

Or, if you decide not to go "full-time", you can at least enjoy some health benefits by going without meat and poultry more often. I believe that any effort that someone makes to move towards more of a plant-based diet should be encouraged. Every day you eat more fruits and vegetables, each meal you choose not to have red meat, each day you select whole grain pasta, is a step in the right direction.

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