

Book Review

Review by Gregory S. Kelly, N.D.

Eat Right 4 Your Type: The Individualized Diet Solution to Staying Healthy, Living Longer & Achieving Your Ideal Weight

by Dr. Peter J. D'Adamo
with Catherine Whitney

G. P. Putnam's Sons; ISBN: 0-399-14255-X
1997, Hard Cover, \$22.95 (\$30.95 CAN), 392 pages
<http://www.dadamo.com/index.htm>

Peter D'Adamo, ND, is a graduate of Bastyr University now in private practice in Connecticut. He is a well-respected physician, researcher, and lecturer. This book is based upon 15 years of his own research and observations, and 35 years of research by his father, James D'Adamo, who is also a naturopathic physician, and whose pioneering work with blood types and diet was described in the book *One Man's Food*.

The premise of the book is that if you use your blood type as a guide for eating and living, you will be healthier, you will reach your ideal body weight, and you will slow the aging process. Because blood types historically evolved due to changes in diet, culture, and social conditions, each blood type has particular strengths and limitations. When these are known and followed, it becomes easier to maintain health.

With the abundance of diet books available, an obvious question to ask is, "How do we choose which diet to follow?" Paraphrasing Dr. D'Adamo, "We can no more choose the right diet than we can our hair or eye color. It has already been chosen for us." Accordingly, there are no absolute right or wrong lifestyles or diets; there are only right or wrong choices based on each individual's genetic code.

Blood type is a powerful indicator of your genetic code. Blood types have evolved over thousands of years and contain the genetic message of diets and behaviors from our ancestors. By following the diet prescribed for one's blood type, an individual can make choices that correspond to their biological profile.

While several systems exist to categorize blood, including Lewis, Rhesus (Rh), and MN blood group systems, Dr. D'Adamo has found that 90% of the factors dealing with the connection between health and blood type are dependent on the ABO, or primary blood type system.

Every life form has unique antigens that form part of its chemical signature. Similarly, each blood type possesses an antigen with a unique chemical structure. Blood type antigens are ubiquitous throughout the body and are among the most powerful antigens involved in the process of identification of "friend or foe." When the body senses foreign antigens, antibodies are generated which defend the body against the invaders. The "anti-other-blood" type antibodies are among the strongest antibodies in our immune system.

It has long been recognized that some foods are capable of causing the cells of a certain blood type to agglutinate while having no impact on cells of another blood type. This reaction is dependent upon the interaction of human cells with the lectins found in food.

A lectin can be defined as any compound found in nature, usually diverse protein structures, which can interact with surface antigens found on the body's cells, causing them to agglutinate. Following ingestion of food, a chemical reaction can occur between the food you eat and your blood or tissues because of these lectins. Many food lectins have characteristics sufficiently similar to certain blood type antigens to be identified as an enemy. If you eat a food that contains lectins incompatible with your blood type, the blood cells will agglutinate. Food lectins can also interact with white blood cells, acting as mitogens and stimulating cell division and replication.

The interaction of specific food lectins with blood type can play a large role in the determination of which foods act as medicine or poison for an individual. This interaction, along with other genetic predispositions associated with blood types, forms the foundation of the dietary recommendations proposed in this book.

Dr. D'Adamo discusses characteristics of each blood type and makes recommendations for diet, supplementation, botanical support, and exercise. In the chapters dedicated to specific blood types, he recommends foods which are beneficial, neutral, or should be avoided. One section of the book is dedicated to the discussion of common medical problems and their correlation to blood type as well as strategies for their prevention or treatment. I found it interesting that many microbes mimic blood type antigens as a strategy to avoid detection by the immune system, a factor which impacts on both susceptibility and outcome in several diseases.

The book also includes a brief but fascinating introduction to the interaction of food lectins and cancer. Because the production of surface sugars in cancer cells is altered, resulting in greater amounts of glycoproteins, cancer cells are easier targets for lectins to agglutinate than healthy cells. While much of

the information is preliminary, Dr. D'Adamo discusses possibilities for prevention and therapy based on this interaction between cancer cells and lectins.

The target audience of this book is the lay public; however, the book provides an invaluable introduction to the interaction of food lectins and blood types for health care practitioners. Occasionally, Dr. D'Adamo describes specific lectin and blood type interactions; however, technical information is minimized in favor of dietary guidance. For those wanting technical information, the reference section provides citations to scientific literature.

Although this book does not claim to be a panacea, it offers valuable distinctions and refinements to restore the natural protective functions of your immune system and to obtain better clinical results. So as Dr. D'Adamo challenges: determine your blood type and follow your blood type diet for 2 weeks. Experience the results and decide its value for yourself.