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We Adapt

In a recent paper in the magazine *Nature*, researchers compared the genes of a group of Inuit Indians, Europeans, and Chinese. As you might expect, there are many similarities. We're all human, after all. But there were some specific differences, including an area in the genes related to the way the Inuit processed fat and the hormones they produce and how it contributes to height and weight.



The typical Inuit diet involves high amounts of fatty fish, rich in omega-3 fatty acids and protein; they don't have access to many vegetables or fruit. We would expect this to result in increased levels of heart disease. It hasn't. Over the centuries, they appear to have adapted to the diet. While scientists don't know exactly how or why, it appears that some enzymes that control their ability to make omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids are underactive. That could be an adaptation to chronic exposure to the high-fat and high-protein diet. Because they make different enzymes that regulate these functions, they can thrive on their high-fat, high-protein diet.

What are the implications for non-Inuit's such as most of us? The Paleo Diet and high-fat devotees might say "Ah Ha! There's the proof we need!" Remember the Spartan Stadium example from [Tuesday](#)? This study isn't an answer, but it sure raises great questions. I'll cover some of those on Saturday.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

References:

1. <http://www.sciencemag.org/content/349/6254/1343.short>
2. <http://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2015/09/17/441169188/the-secret-to-the-inuit-high-fat-diet-may-be-good-genes>

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