Many people think, "I'm type A, so I'm a natural vegetarian," or "I'm type O, so I need to eat meat." They've read Peter D'Adamo's book, Eat Right 4 Your Type, and they want to do what's right for their bodies.

And, if D'Adamo is to be believed, your blood type has immense consequences for your personal health and wellbeing. It determines the foods you can safely eat and the diseases to which you are susceptible. You need to take blood type into serious account and adhere to a strict diet with limited choice, tailored to the blood in your veins. If you're Type O, for instance, you should eat meat but avoid wheat. Type A's should eat wheat but avoid meat. A bit of a nightmare if you're cooking for a family with varied blood types.

Fortunately, however, blood type has none of the consequences D'Adamo describes. His arguments are based on demonstrably false premises and wild extrapolations. There is virtually nothing in his books that merits paying any heed at all. A quick analysis of his basic tenets illustrates the point:

**Tenet 1: Blood types are comparatively new and reflect the rise of agriculture.**

According to D'Adamo, Type O is the ancient, ancestral blood type. It's the blood type of hunter-gatherers - of meat eaters, that is. Type A blood, on the other hand, arose perhaps 15,000 - 25,000 years ago alongside the development of plant agriculture. People with this blood type are adapted to eating grains and beans. They would do better on a plant-based diet. It goes on, but there's really no point. Peter D'Adamo doesn't know what he's talking about.

Blood types are much, much older than D'Adamo would have you believe. The A-B-O blood types arose millions of years ago, long before the first humans walked the Earth. There are gorillas and horses and cats and mice with Type A, Type B or Type AB blood. Some (not cats, though) have Type O. Genetic studies have shown that Type A blood is the oldest. The gene for type B is a variant on the Type A gene. Type O, far from being the ancestral gene that D'Adamo claims, is a mutant in either or both of the Type A and Type B versions of the gene.

Your blood type, by the way, amounts to only a minor variation in the last sugar on a long sugar chain that is expressed on the surface of your cells. People with Type A blood have one kind of sugar at this end; people with Type B have a different kind. People with Type O blood can't add that last sugar, so their chain is one sugar short. It is to sugar chains like these that proteins called lectins bind. Hence, D'Adamo's second tenet:

**Tenet 2: Lectins in foods bind to specific ABO blood types and this binding affects circulation and cell function.**

As stated just above, lectins are nothing more than proteins that bind to complex sugars. According to D'Adamo, different lectins bind to different blood types. And when they bind, they do damage. The problem with his argument is that while some lectins can indeed bind to blood group molecules, they do so irrespective of blood type. They simply bind to those long sugar chains without regard to what the very last sugar is. There are very, very few that are ABO-specific and even fewer in our foods.

Wheat germ agglutinin, soybean lectin and lectins from chickpeas and rye all cause blood to agglutinate (clump together) in the test tube. Whether the blood is Type A or B or AB or O, high concentrations of these compounds can cause blood cells to stick together. No matter what your type, you should probably avoid injecting yourself with large quantities of these proteins. No need to worry about eating them, though. Lectins are pretty much destroyed in the gut. Only people with allergies to them need worry at all. For the vast majority of us, whatever our blood types, they're no problem. And, despite D'Adamo's latest claims, allergies, too, have nothing to do with your ABO blood type.

So, don't worry about your blood type when you're preparing your next meal. Peter D'Adamo's theories are based on an evolutionary history that never occurred and on molecular effects that aren't relevant. And don't worry about his claim that people with Type O blood live much longer than Type A's. That, too, has no basis in fact. Numerous studies following thousands and thousands of people have found no correlation whatsoever between blood type and longevity. Blood type matters when you are getting a transfusion. Otherwise, you need not concern yourself at all.

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