



\$hedding weight ... and mark€t cap

In the late 1990s, a new diet guide quickly made its way up the best-seller lists. It was called *Eat Right 4 Your Type*, and it suggested that people with different blood types responded to nutrients in specific ways. Based on this, we should all focus on eating certain food groups and avoiding others, and if we did so we should lose weight and gain other health benefits.

From donating blood some years earlier and being handed a loyalty card afterwards, I had a vague recollection that my blood type was O (in common with roughly half the world's population). So I went straight to the applicable chapter and was delighted to learn that I'm the typical caveman: I was encouraged to eat lots of protein, including red meat, chicken and fish. On the downside, carbohydrates had to be limited. I can't remember every single detail, but it was pretty granular.

I was an immediate convert. And it worked! I lost weight. I had more energy. I ran better. My skin had a healthier glow (or so I thought).

Like any religious fanatic, I, of course had to tell everyone about this newly discovered truth. Eat right for your type, people, you'll never look back! No doubt I irritated several friends and colleagues along the way.

A few months later, while emptying some drawers as part of a spring clean, I came across my blood donor card. And there it was, staring at me in bold font, the details of my actual blood type: A-positive ... I'd been eating for the wrong team all this time!

I was mildly embarrassed by the discovery – I would have to go and 'fess



up to many of those closest to me. But I could certainly see the humour in it.

What I found most intriguing was how well my new eating regime seemed to have worked, even though I now knew that its premise was fundamentally flawed.

Learning curve

What I learnt from this was that any sustained period of conscious eating (and in my case, limiting carbs) could lead to weight loss and improved wellbeing.

I was reminded of this episode when I bumped into an old friend for the first time in a while a few months ago. Are you OK, was my spontaneous question, as he had lost so much weight since our previous interaction.

I'm better than ever, he exclaimed with a beaming smile. And he was most appreciative of the fact that I'd noticed his newly svelte figure – all thanks to half a year on the weight-loss drug Wegovy (better known in some circles as Ozempic, which is essentially the same drug, both brought to us by the Danish company Novo Nordisk).

What intrigued me was how it worked. My guess would have been that somehow the drug helped "dissolve" the fat in the body. But no: my friend told me that the injection just makes you feel a bit bloated most of the time. So you're seldom tempted to walk to the kitchen and open the fridge.

In plain English: you simply eat less (and eventually the weight starts dropping off).

The conversation reminded me of celebrated film producer, restaurant critic and author Michael Winner. Twenty years ago, he also lost a lot of weight by simply limiting his food intake.

Winner actually wrote a book about it, called *The Fat Pig Diet*. It could all be summed up in two words, he said: eat less. But that was never going to get him a publishing contract, so he had to find an additional 147,000 words to write on the topic (which he promptly did).

Personally, I prefer to follow Winner's example of eating less, rather than injecting myself with some wonder drug. Up to a point, it looked like people like us were the minority (and Novo Nordisk was one of the best-performing shares in the world until about a year ago). Since then, however, the growth trajectory of the business has slowed and margins are no longer what they used to be; as a result, the company has shed about two-thirds of its market capitalisation.

Could it be that more and more people are simply waking up to the fact that it's easier, cheaper and healthier to just eat less? x

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