

# Carnivore, Omnivore, or Herbivore

## Part 2 of 2

Our Health and Temperance topic for today is continuing the question, “What kind of animal are you?”

Are you an herbivore? An herbivore is an animal that gets its energy from eating plants, and only plants. Many herbivores have special digestive systems that let them digest all kinds of plants, including grasses. As originally created by God, both man and ALL the animals were herbivores. No animal killed and ate another animal.

<sup>29</sup> And God said, “See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. <sup>30</sup> Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food”; and it was so. *Genesis 1:29–30 NKJV*

Or are you a carnivore . . . an animal that feeds on the flesh of other animals. After the flood, God did add that “every living thing that lives shall be food for you . . .” but with some restrictions such as not eating unclean animals, nor animals that have died of their own accord, nor eating the blood or fat therein.

Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you . . . *Genesis 9:3 (first part) NKJV*

Maybe we are omnivores eating both plants and animal flesh. Let’s review some characteristics of carnivore animals comparing them to those of the human animal.

Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. *Genesis 9:3 NKJV*

In review of the major points of the previous presentation on carnivores and herbivores, we noted:

- That the opening of the mouth of a dog is much greater and wider than our mouth can open,
- The “walled-in” oral cavity of an herbivore has the ability to greatly expand during eating,
- Carnivores’ teeth are separated so that tough pieces of meat would not get stuck between them. The incisors are small and the canines are quite long and dagger-like. The molars are flattened and triangular with jagged edges so that they can function like serrated blades.
- Herbivore incisors are wide, flattened and rectangular and the molars are square and flattened on top to provide a grinding surface. The molars do not glide side by side vertically in a slicing motion, but glide across one another horizontally to crush and grind.
- Carnivores have claws while herbivores have no claws. Humans have the same characteristics of teeth and claws as herbivores.
- The saliva of carnivores does not contain digestive enzymes. Instead, it is acidic.
- The saliva of herbivores is alkaline, which helps pre-digest plant foods. Human saliva is alkaline.
- The carnivores’ jaw muscle—the tempōrālis—is massive.
- The jaw of carnivores is a simple hinge joint in line with the teeth but in herbivores the jaw joint is located in a position above the teeth.

- The stomach volume of a carnivore represents 60–70% of the total capacity of the digestive system and it has an exceptional ability to secrete hydrochloric acid in large volumes.
- Herbivore stomachs represent only 21–to–27 percent of the total capacity of the digestive system and the pH levels are twenty times less acidic.

Herbivores that eat plants rich in cellulose have to digest food by bacterial enzyme action to obtain the nutrient value. Herbivores are divided into two groups: ruminants (who ferment food in the front part of the intestine) and those who ferment food in the hindgut. The ruminants are the herbivores with the famous multi-chambered stomach. Herbivores that eat soft vegetation do not need a multi-chambered stomach, so they have a simple stomach and a long small intestine. These animals ferment difficult-to-digest fibrous portions in the colon. Humans are non-ruminant herbivores.

The small intestine (where the absorption of food molecules takes place) in carnivores is short—about 3–5 times the body length. The small intestine of herbivores is quite long (over 10 times the body length) in order to provide sufficient time and space for the absorption of nutrients.

Carnivore bowels are smooth, shaped like a pipe, so meat passes through quickly—they don't have bumps or pockets. Herbivore bowels are bumpy and pouch-like with lots of pockets, like a winding mountain road, so plant foods pass through slowly for optimal nutrient absorption.

Carnivores don't require fiber to help move food through their short and smooth digestive tracts. Herbivores require dietary fiber to move food through their long and bumpy digestive tracts, to prevent the bowels from becoming clogged with rotting food.

Cholesterol is not a problem for a carnivore's digestive system. A carnivore such as a cat can handle a high-cholesterol diet without negative health consequences. A herbivore cannot. Herbivores have zero dietary need for cholesterol because their bodies manufacture all they need. Cholesterol is only found in animal foods, never in plant foods. A plant-based diet is by definition cholesterol-free.

Human bowels have the same characteristics as those of herbivores.

It could be assumed that omnivores are carnivores with some adaptations to the herbivorous diet. That is the case with bears, raccoons and some other specific species that are considered part of the Canine families. Although the bear diet includes meat, their nutrition is primarily plant-based (78–80% of their diet consists of plant foods). Bears cannot digest fibrous vegetation and are therefore very picky. Their diet is dominated by primarily succulent herbage, tubers and berries.

In general, bears exhibit anatomical features of carnivores. Their jaw joint is level with the molars. The temporalis muscle is massive. The small intestine is short (less than five times body length), as in the case of the pure carnivores, and the colon is simple, smooth and short. The only adaptation to plant food is in their teeth arrangement. Bears have the peg-shaped incisors, large canines and shearing premolars of carnivores, while the molars have become squared with rounded cusps for crushing and grinding like herbivores.

In summary,

- Carnivores have claws. Herbivores and humans do not.
- Carnivores sweat through their tongue. They have no sweat glands or pores. Herbivores and humans sweat through the pores of the skin.
- Carnivores have sharp fangs for tearing. Herbivores do not have sharp fangs. Neither do humans.
- Carnivores do not have flat molars for grinding. Herbivores and humans do.

- Carnivores have small salivary glands while herbivores and humans have well developed salivary glands for predigestion of grains and fruits.
- Carnivores have strong hydrochloric acid in the stomach to digest meat. The stomach acid in herbivores and in humans is twenty times weaker.
- Carnivores have smooth intestines that are three times the body length. Herbivores and humans have bumpy and pouch-like intestines that are six times the length of the body.

The obvious conclusion from the anatomical features is that humans are herbivores that are designed—created by God—to eat and efficiently digest plant foods such as fruits, herbs, and grains. The diet of animal flesh meat is unnatural for humans.

But, we are told that we need protein to build strong muscles. Eating animal flesh to get protein is like buying a finished house, demolishing it (through digestion), and then building your new house using the residue of the first house. It will never be as complete as the original source. Herbivore animals—including humans—make protein from the building block materials found in plants while carnivores reprocess protein from herbivore animals that they have eaten.