

A strong commitment to health has been a part of Seventh Adventist's tradition since its founding in the 1840s.

There has been three large Adventist cohort studies in the United States and Canada since the 1950s.[1]

Data from the AHS-2 study shows that Adventists smoke much less frequently than the general American population (males - 1.2%, females - 1.0%) and drink less alcohol (6.6% drink alcohol).

Diet is also significantly different from the general population with 4.2% are total vegetarian, 31.6% lacto-ovo-vegetarian, 11.4% include fish with their lacto-ovo-vegetarian diet, 6.1% are semi-vegetarian (eat meat <1 time/week) and 46.8% are non-vegetarian.

The AHS-1 study showed 30-year-old Adventist males live 7.3 years longer than the average 30-year-old white Californian male and with females living 4.4 years longer than the average Californian white female. For vegetarians it is 9.5 years longer for men and 6.1 years longer for women. The rate of breast and prostate cancer is 4 times greater in the US population than is experienced by the Adventists. Similarly, the rate of cardiovascular disease is 5 times greater in the general population.

Men drinking five to six glasses of water a day had a 60% - 70% reduction of the incidence of a fatal heart attack.[2]

There has been over 60 years of research comparing the effects of vegetarian diets on health. Within the SDA community, the more vegetarian the diet, the better the health outcomes.

Vegan Seven-day Adventists are possibly the healthiest group of people on the planet.

Californians are much healthier than the average American. Asians and Hispanics are much healthier than the average white person in the USA.[3] Significance for the diabetic Odds Ratio is less than 0.0001.

Category	%	BMI	Type 2 diabetes Odds ratio (*)
<b>Vegan</b> No red meat, fish, poultry, dairy, eggs	4.2	23.6	0.32
<b>Lacto-ovo vegetarians</b> Vegan with eggs and milk	31.6	25.7	0.43
<b>Pesco-vegetarians</b> Vegan with fish, milk and eggs	11.4	26.3	0.56
<b>Semi-vegetarians</b> Red meat, poultry less than once a week plus fish, milk, and eggs	6.1	27.3	0.69
<b>Non-vegetarians</b> Red meat, poultry more than once a week plus fish, milk, and eggs	46.9	28.8	1

**(\*) After adjustment for age, sex, ethnicity, education, income, physical activity, television watching, sleep habits and alcohol use.**

## Comparison of disease

The following table compares Californian Seventh-day Adventists. The comparison group is the Seventh-day Adventists vegetarians. All Seventh-day Adventists are much healthier than the average American.[4]

Vegetarians ate no meat, fish, or poultry; semi-vegetarians ate meat, fish, or poultry in total less than 1 time per week; non-vegetarians ate these foods one or more times per week.

Endpoint	Semi-vegetarian	Non-vegetarian	Significance
Diabetes			
• Men	1.35	1.97	0.0001
• Women	1.08	1.93	0.0001
Hypertension			
• Men	1.57	2.23	0.0001
• Women	1.44	2.24	0.0001
Rheumatoid arthritis			
• Men	1.14	1.50	0.005
• Women	1.16	1.57	0.0001
Rheumatism			
• Men	1.20	1.48	0.0001
• Women	1.28	1.61	0.0001

**Relative Risk or Odds Ratio of cardio-metabolic-related factors among vegan and lacto-ovo-vegetarian Adventists compared with non-vegetarians**

## Comparison of Mortality

The vegetarians and semi-vegetarians are compared with non-vegetarians Adventists.[5]

Vegetarians ate no meat, fish, or poultry; semi-vegetarians ate meat, fish, or poultry in total less than 1 time per week; non-vegetarians ate these foods one or more times per week.

Cause of Mortality	Vegetarian	Vegan	Significance
All-cause mortality	0.91	0.85	< 0.05
• Males	0.86	0.72	< 0.05
• Females	0.94	0.97	< 0.05
All-cancer	0.90	0.92	< 0.05
• Males	1.01	0.81	< 0.05
• Females	0.85	0.99	< 0.05
Ischemic heart disease	0.82	0.90	< 0.05
• Males	0.76	0.45	< 0.05
• Females	0.85	1.39	< 0.05
Cardiovascular disease	0.90	0.91	< 0.05
• Males	0.77	0.58	< 0.05
• Females	0.99	1.18	< 0.05
Other cause	0.91	0.74	< 0.05
• Males	0.89	0.81	< 0.05
• Females	0.93	0.70	< 0.05

**Hazard ratio of all-cancer and site-specific cancers among vegan and lacto-ovo-vegetarian Adventists compared with non-vegetarians**

As the diet becomes more vegetarian then the risk factors decreased for all categories except for female ischemic heart disease and female urinary tract cancers.

Note that the comparisons are within the Adventist community, which is much, much healthier than the general U.S. population.

## Seventh-day Adventists and Longevity

Much publicity is given to the longevity of the people of Japan and Okinawa (an archipelago that stretches from southern Japan to Taiwan). However, it is vegetarian Californian Seventh-day Adventists that have the longest lifespan and the highest levels of health on the planet.

Vegetarian Californian Adventists have a higher life expectancy at the age of 30 years than other white Californians by 9.5 years in men and 6.1 years in women, giving them the highest life expectancy of any formally described population.<sup>[6]</sup>

Note that Californians are much healthier than the average American being in the top five states for longevity with an average life expectancy of 5-6 years greater than the Mississippi states.

## Footnotes

1. Butler, T. L. et al. (2008) Cohort profile: The Adventist Health Study-2 (AHS-2). *International Journal of Epidemiology*. 37 (2), 260-265.
2. Buettner, D. (2012) *The Blue Zones. Second Ed.* Washington DC: National Geographic.
3. Tonstad, S. et al. (2009) Type of vegetarian diet, body weight, and prevalence of type 2 diabetes. *Diabetes Care*. 32 (5), 791-796.
4. Fraser, G. E. (1999) Associations between diet and cancer, ischemic heart disease, and all-cause mortality in non-Hispanic white California Seventh-day Adventists. *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. 70 (3), 532s-538s.
5. Le, L. & Sabate, J. (2014) Beyond Meatless, the Health Effects of Vegan Diets: Findings from the Adventist Cohorts. *Nutrients*. 6 (6), 2131-2147.
6. Fraser, G. E., & Shavlik, D. J. (2001). Ten Years of Life—Is It a Matter of Choice? *Archives of Internal Medicine*, 161(13), 1645-1652.