

New research promises personalized dietary guidelines

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Better diets for fighting diabetes, obesity and heart disease may soon be only a finger-prick away. By analyzing the unique metabolic changes in an individual's body, researchers hope to develop more personalized dietary guidelines for improving health, according to an article scheduled for the Dec. 10 issue of *Chemical & Engineering News*, ACS' weekly newsmagazine.

In the article, C&EN Assistant Editor Carmen Drahl explains that not all people respond to diet in the same way: What makes some people healthy may in fact make others worse. Metabolomics, an emerging field whose practitioners study how foods affect metabolism, may provide new tools and data for customizing today's one-size-fits-all dietary guidelines for an individual's own body, the article notes.

For example, a routine blood test that measures hundreds of compounds or more could detect shifts in a person's metabolic balance to predict future health problems. Physicians then could develop a customized diet designed to work with that patient's metabolism, while follow-up blood tests could allow caregivers to track improvements in a person's health status, the article notes.

But the field is not quite ready for prime time. Academic and industry researchers alike are hard-at-work deciphering the complex science of how foods affect metabolism with the goal of building up a framework in which sound guidance for specifying personalized diet would become possible.

Source: ACS

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