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# A healthy person in a healthy body

We want to be healthy. We know that our well-being is largely in our hands. That's good and bad. Good, because there's a lot that we can do ourselves that actually has an impact on our own health and well-being. Bad, because when we fall ill, we feel a certain kind of odium: "He didn't take care of himself and here's the result."

In one of his sketches, Michał Kempa, a satirist and stand-up comedy master, introduces himself as a man born in 1648, so very old. When asked how he managed to live so long, he replies: "I run a lot and eat kale. Oh, and I toe strike while running, not heel strike – and that's the key." This seems like a joke at first sight, but not entirely, because this "recipe" for longevity boils down to what we already know – when it comes to health and associated longevity, environmental factors get you three-quarters of the way there. Scientists believe that our longevity, health and good physical condition, without which a satisfying existence is impossible, is 60 percent down to diet. Our lifestyle (e.g. amount and quality of movement) accounts for the next 20 percent, while only 20 percent is due to genes. What's more, some genetic predispositions to certain diseases can be overcome... through diet and lifestyle.

Even 10 years ago, if someone asked for soymilk for their coffee in a café, they were accused of decadence, snobbery, or eccentricity in the best-case scenario. Now, vegetable drinks are everywhere and servers in cafés ask what kind of milk the customer wants with their coffee. The soy latte has become a symbol of a hipster lifestyle, but it's really something more. It's a trend where people say: "I don't eat and don't drink what isn't good for me, and I choose what benefits me", which is based on a desire to put health first. It includes numerous "sub-trends", such as giving up dishes with gluten, removing dairy products from one's diet, regular drinking of green tea or introducing products lauded by nutritionists into one's diet (e.g. kale). Another important trend is to give up meat. The WHO refreshes its recommended food pyramid from time to time and keeps

moving meat higher – to products that should be eaten less often. Young, well-being-oriented people are increasingly often complying with these recommendations. Even though Polish statistics are lacking in this respect, Australian or German studies, for example, show a clear, year-on-year increase of several percent in the number of people switching to vegetarianism. According to current scientific knowledge, such a diet is associated with a lower risk of diseases, such as: colorectal cancer, heart and vascular disease, type 2 diabetes, hypertension and even depression (although in the last case the relationship is not so clear). And since giving up meat is not exactly easy for people brought up in a meat-eating culture, a new approach to diets was born, the so-called flexitarianism. Flexitarians are people who eat vegetarian dishes a few days a week, but they devour steak or fish when they feel like it. And that's great, because every day without meat is like walking up a flight of stairs – every step up and every day without meat extend one's life by a few seconds.

However, it's worth noting that every fashion should be tailored to a person's needs. For example, going gluten-free is fashionable, but gluten, even though it does real harm to some people, is completely harmless to others. Despite the fact that foregoing grain-based dishes might be good for the figure, a gluten-free diet also forces one to discard whole grain products and that's not so good. The healthiest diet is based on a large amount of vegetables, a slightly smaller amount of fruit, some whole grain products, a few eggs and occasionally fish. The key here is not to find one recipe, but to maintain a healthy variety. ●