

## The Triathlon Summit - Learn the Diet Secrets to Take Your Triathlon Performance to the Next Level

KERRY: Hello, hello everyone. This is Kerry Sullivan here with the Triathlon Summit. I'm just calling in here to say you guys are the right place. We've got Brendan Brazier who is going to be talking with us tonight on diet. So it should be pretty exciting. I'm not sure if Brendan is on the line quite yet. When he gets here we will get started. Who else do we have on the line tonight?

SHARON: Sharon Newman from California.

KERRY: Hey, how are you doing today?

SHARON: Good! How are you doing?

KERRY: Doing excellent! Doing excellent!

SHARON: Thanks so much for having this for us.

KERRY: No problem, I'm glad you're enjoying it. Good deal. Who else have we got out there?  
[Background noise] All right!

CHRISTOPHER: Hello [indecipherable] from North Carolina.

KERRY: I'm sorry, who do we have from North Carolina? We have someone from North Carolina and some other people who are online that I can see as well but they cannot quite chime in there. Like I said, we are just waiting for Brendan Brazier to come on the line here. We will be able get started pretty soon. Should be good.

KERRY: All right. Like I said before, my name is Kerry Sullivan, and you guys are in the right place tonight for the Triathlon Summit call with Brendan Brazier. He should be joining us shortly here. Brendan, you on the call yet?

BRENDAN: I'm here.

KERRY: All right. Good deal. Good deal. All right. So that is good, indeed. All right. Well, with that, we are at the top of the hour, and we will get started here with the Triathlon Summit. We've got Brendan Brazier on the call tonight. Brendan is one of only a few professional athletes in the world that is a 100 percent plant-based diet person. He's also a professional Ironman triathlete, a best-selling author on performance nutrition, and the creator of an award-winning line of whole-food nutritional products that maybe some of you have heard, called Vega. He's also a two-time Canadian 50-kilometer ultra marathon champion, and he's had some good results at Ironman Canada, where he's finished 21st, 14th, and 11th. And he's taken 8th place at Ironman Utah, as well. So he's definitely a guy who can walk the walk and talk the talk on this subject, for sure. He's performed at a top level, and that is the person who we got on here. So, Brendan, how you doing tonight?

BRENDAN: I'm good, thanks. How are you?

KERRY: I'm doing very well. I'm doing very well. So, basically, why don't we start off with first, you're a vegan. Why don't you explain to everyone out there what a vegan exactly is?

## The Triathlon Summit - Learn the Diet Secrets to Take Your Triathlon Performance to the Next Level

**BRENDAN:** Sure. It's someone who doesn't eat any animal products at all. So, not just not eating meat, which would be vegetarian; also, not eating anything that comes from an animal. So any kind of dairy product, or eggs, as well.

**KERRY:** OK. So basically, why don't you talk a little bit about what are some of the reasons that people do this for a health standpoint? In terms of, why is it a good call to be a vegan?

**BRENDAN:** A lot of people are getting into it now for reasons such as osteoporosis and arthritis. When they're getting older later in life, if they're noticing that their bone density is not very good; if they're worried about fractures. It's a more alkaline diet, so it's much healthier for the bones, and it's really good for reducing inflammation. So anyone who's older and concerned about arthritis, as well, they are usually the ones who give that a try, the vegan diet, really find that it works well.

But for me, it all started for performance. When I was around 15, I just wanted to be a better athlete, and I tried all different kinds of diets. Some worked OK; some didn't work well at all. And then I tried the completely vegan diet. At first, it didn't work well. I was hungry all the time and tired. I wasn't recovering well and I didn't feel very good. But then I learned how to do it properly and I definitely noticed a big improvement. I could train much more and I improved faster. So that's what sold me on it. And that was 18 years ago now, since I first tried it. And like I said, it didn't work great right away, but over a couple of years of looking into it and trying it, I learned the subtleties, and it worked really well for me.

**KERRY:** OK. I'm sorry; you know what, I muted out the why, and things like that on there, and I think people kind of misheard what you said were two of the benefits that you talked about in the beginning, in terms of just being alkaline and bone density and all that. Could you just repeat that for us real quick?

**BRENDAN:** Yeah, sure. A lot of people who are getting older these days are getting really good results with a plant-based vegan diet as well, because it's an alkaline-forming diet, which is very beneficial for people who are concerned about bone density. When you keep your body more alkaline, it helps keep the bones stronger, whereas an acidic-forming diet, ones high in processed foods or animal products, can really leach the calcium out of the bones, and weaken the bones, and it increases the risk of any kind of fracture and osteoporosis as well. Also an alkaline forming diet will help reduce inflammation. So it's good for anyone with arthritis. And anyone who's got knee pain or any kind of joint pain at all, any kind of inflammation. People will notice a big difference within, usually, 48 hours of eating a more alkaline diet. And a plant-based diet is definitely more alkaline than standard meat-based diets.

**KERRY:** OK, great. Great. And you were talking a little bit about some of the -- you were having some issues in the beginning and it didn't really work out for you, in terms of a vegan diet. So what are some of the pitfalls that you made? Because I'm sure they're pretty common to people who try that diet out in the beginning.

**BRENDAN:** Yeah. Yeah, I think a lot of people make the same mistakes that I made. One of them was just filling up on refined carbohydrates. I ate tons of pasta and rice and bread, and just loaded up that way. I didn't feel that great. I was tired a lot of the time, too, and it was kind of strange. I was reading some sport nutrition books and I basically learned about the whole calories-out/calories-in train of thought. And I figured that since the calorie is a measure of food energy, the more calories I ate, the more energy I would have, but it just wasn't working out

## The Triathlon Summit - Learn the Diet Secrets to Take Your Triathlon Performance to the Next Level

that way. I was eating a lot of calories. I was getting them mostly from peanut butter and bread and pasta and all these highly refined foods that have tons of calories, but they don't really have lots of nutrition. Plus your body has to work really hard to digest and assimilate those types of refined foods and build digestive enzymes as well. A healthy body can do that, but it requires energy. If you're spending energy to get energy out of your food, obviously the net gain from the food you've eaten is going to be far lower. It's just like with money; if you spend it you no longer have it, so if you spend lots of energy you have less. I realized that was something I was doing wrong; just eating the wrong types of foods and getting the wrong types of calories.

**KERRY:** Good deal. Good deal. All right. So what kind of things did you add to your diet that you found made a difference in terms of the way you felt in your performance?

**BRENDAN:** Well, pretty much what I did is looked into the things I was eating, and just basically tried to find out what was lacking. I found quite a few things lacking. I found complete protein, vitamin B12, iron, calcium, omega-3 fatty acids. All these things really were not part of my diet. So I found plant-based sources for each of those, blended them together, and then had a blender drink every day after my workout. And within a few weeks, I was feeling much better. I felt as though I was recovering way better, I wasn't hungry all the time, and then it got to the point where I could recover much quicker. And then I could schedule workouts closer together and improve faster. And basically from there, I just had that blender drink every day and it evolved a lot over the years. Eventually that's what became Vega and became a commercially available product four years ago. But that's how it started off, and it's really just highly raw, so lots of enzymes and also just very nutrient-dense foods as well. Not refined; they're good whole-food sources.

**KERRY:** Excellent. Excellent. All right. Since you brought up Vega, why don't you explain to everyone what exactly Vega is now? I mean, you kind of explained it right there, but give us a little taste of what it is.

**BRENDAN:** Sure. Well, the main product is a replica of that blender drink, and it's called Vega Complete Whole Food Health Optimizer. It's been out in Canada for four years now and the U.S. for about three years. It's basically an all-in-one, is probably the best way to describe it. So it's protein, essential fats, fiber, greens, enzymes, probiotics, vitamins, minerals, something called maca which is a root vegetable and it's really good for helping to reduce cortisol levels. Aside just from Vega specifically, but reducing cortisol levels is something that I found is really, really important. When I was training huge; my first year of huge training volume was '97, and I was preparing to try and race pro the next year; I was training around 35-40 hours a week. It was strange because I was doing well for three or four months, but then I started to get really tired. But the more tired I got, the worse my quality of sleep got, which I thought was strange. I figured the more tired I'd be, I thought that I'd sleep better. But the reason for that was that cortisol, the stress hormone, was high from physical stress that the training places on the body. And I had pretty burned-out adrenal glands just from lots of training. I learned about maca and started adding that to my blender drink and it really helped. It didn't help instantly; it's not a quick fix. But it's something that can really help nourish your adrenals. It's high in trace minerals. It's a really good food. So that really helped bring down cortisol. Then I got back on track and was able to cut back on the amount of sleep I needed, and it was definitely a needed thing. So I think any athlete can benefit from that, so I added that to Vega. And chlorella, which is algae. That's from Japan. It's high in B vitamins, which are important for energy conversion, and B12 as well, which a lot of vegetarians don't get.

## The Triathlon Summit - Learn the Diet Secrets to Take Your Triathlon Performance to the Next Level

It's really neat too because it's almost 70 percent protein yet it's alkaline forming because it's an algae. So that was really cool too. That's basically what Vega has in it now in it's final commercial version.

**KERRY:** Awesome! Awesome! You talked a little bit about the results that you saw with adding those things into your diet. It didn't happen for you right away. So when you do things with a raw, natural diet, a more plant based diet, how long does it take for those results to start coming through and people really seeing a difference?

**BRENDAN:** It can actually take quite a while. That's why I think quite a few people don't stick with it, especially athletes. A lot of athletes are wanting quick results. If you drink coffee, you feel it immediately. If you eat sugary foods, you feel it right away. You've the stimulation which gives you energy now, and it stimulates your adrenals; but, over time, that fatigues the adrenals and stimulation always leads to fatigue. Sometimes, it's actually better when you don't feel energized right away after eating something. Like with good whole foods, it can take quite a while. In some cases, people will feel worse before they feel better because their body has to cleanse and detox. You may go through a stage where you actually feel pretty bad. You feel bloated and maybe a mild headache, flu-like symptoms, skin rash, or any kind of detox symptom for, sometimes, a few weeks. If people are older like someone in his 60s or so, if he or she is eating a standard American diet for 30 or 40 years and then tries this, it's going to take a while. So definitely be patient with it. I've seen so many athletes who went through a stage where they tried to eat better, they tried to eat a plant-based diet and they don't anymore because they just didn't feel good. I think that if people take it in small steps, don't try to do it overnight, don't try to completely change over right away, I think that's the way to do it. Any kind of change is stress even if it is a positive change, even if you are just switching over to a better healthier diet, your body still has to adapt to it. It's like running five kilometers. It's good, but if you can't run two kilometers it's actually going to do you more harm than good. Taking small steps is the best way to make it permanent.

**KERRY:** Yeah, definitely. OK. You also wrote a book called the "The Thrive Diet" and basically what is that all about? Is it about the plant-based diet that we're talking about right now?

**BRENDAN:** Yeah, it's kind of that. The general premise of it is reducing stress through better nutrition. I think that stress reduction is such a huge thing for athletes and for anyone really. If you trace it back far enough, any problem, any disease, any over-training, anything at all is a result of more stress than your body can handle. Through good nutrition, you can actually reduce stress which brings down Cortisol levels. Cortisol is very destructive when it gets high. I'm sure most people who have experienced over-training, which is probably a lot of listeners, have experienced high Cortisol levels. What happens is that it makes it very difficult to sleep. You don't get into a deep phase of sleep called Delta, which is a deep rejuvenating phase. Therefore, you wake up, you feel tired, you're not ready to get out of bed, you crave coffee and sugar, and these stimulating foods for the quick fix. If you drink pop, you eat sugar, it perpetuates the cycle and it just keeps going and going. You have to break that cycle by bringing down Cortisol.

The best way to do that is eating good, easily digestible, nutrient-dense, plant-based foods. That's the general premise of the book: keeping Cortisol low through good nutrition. It's actually been re-branded, that will come out in January. It's going to be called "Thrive" now. It's not going to be called "The Thrive Diet." The subtitle is "The Vegan Nutrition Guide to

## The Triathlon Summit - Learn the Diet Secrets to Take Your Triathlon Performance to the Next Level

Optimal Performance in Sports and Life."

**KERRY:** Awesome! Good stuff! A lot of people they hear about the vegan diet and they question how they're going to get certain nutrients. I guess the three big ones are: Protein, B12, and Iron. Why don't you go over how you can get each of those three. We'll start with protein and how you can get sufficient amounts of protein through a plant-based diet.

**BRENDAN:** Sure. It's definitely one of the questions I get the most. It's actually quite a lot easier than a lot of people might think. It's all about quality. It's not so much about quantity. I weigh about 165 pounds. I should, according to a lot of conventional source nutrition books, get way more protein than I do. I probably get around 70 grams of protein a day, which is less than half of what a lot of those books suggest I should have. Like I said, it has to do with quality. A big salad, for example, has a lot of protein in amino acid form. That's the key, is getting as much protein as you can in amino acid form. That will be in things like leafy green vegetables, anything that is sprouted as well. I talk about that in the book as well. Sprouting, things like buckwheat, or amaranth, quinoa are really good to sprout, because they are actually seeds. They're not grains--all those things--so they do sprout. Spinach for example, any dark leafy green vegetable, is going to be around 45 percent protein, which is very high. You have to eat a fair amount. You have to eat a pretty big salad to get a lot of protein, but when you start looking at a salad as a meal as opposed to just a side dish, you can really get a substantial amount from that. Like I say, you can cut back your protein intake by up to 50 percent if the quality is good.

If it's in an amino acid form, like in leafy greens and sprouted foods, your body doesn't have to convert it from protein to amino acids. Your body can't use protein. It has to break it into amino acids first. So if you get it in amino acid form, that's one less step for your body to do. That means you're going to have a higher net gain, as I call it in the book, from the foods because you just don't have to expend energy doing that extra step. That's a significant part.

I used to use soy protein when I first started making my blender drink, but I learned that soy protein is isolated; it's not a whole food and it is quite acid forming. So I switched over to hemp protein. Hemp is a whole food. It's complete. It is a complete protein. It's alkaline forming because it's green. That's because it's full of chlorophyll and chlorophyll is extremely alkaline forming. So hemp became the base of my blender drink, then I added yellow pea protein and brown rice protein to balance it out. Yellow pea protein is high in something called glutamic acid which helps convert carbohydrate to energy. Of course, that's really important for athletes.

The Atkins Diet got popular because people found that when they eat carbohydrate they tended to put on a lot of weight, but the main reason that they are putting on weight, one is they're eating refined carbohydrate but also because they didn't have enough glutamic acid rich foods in their diet. Things like lentils, legume, beans, or peas help convert carbohydrate into energy so you get more energy and it's not stored as body fat so you get leaner. You kill two birds with one stone when you get enough of those types of foods in your diet.

Then rice protein has tryptophan. That's a precursor to serotonin. It helps improve mood and mental clarity, and just helps you feel better in general. So I combine those three proteins: hemp, pea, and rice and that became my base in my blender drink. That's what the base of Vega is for that reason. I found with that and a big salad every day, I got plenty of protein. I was able to build muscle and maintain it even during lots of long, hard training. My strength actually increased. My weight did go down a little bit, eating less protein, but the main thing

## The Triathlon Summit - Learn the Diet Secrets to Take Your Triathlon Performance to the Next Level

was the strength stayed and even increased a bit. Then strength-to-weight ratio improved and as an endurance athlete, that's what it's all about. It's about being strong and light.

**KERRY:** Yes. Good! Why don't you explain to us about B12 and how you get that in a plant-based diet.

**BRENDAN:** I get my B12 from chlorella. That's the algae I was talking about before from Japan that has a lot of B vitamins in it. It does have enough B12 if you get around two and a half grams of chlorella each day...you can probably get away with less than that. B12 is extremely important but you don't need a lot of it. It's the sort of thing where more is not better. If you have enough, then you're fine. Nutritional yeast--that's another one--I put that on some things. I use that in some recipes as well that are in my book. It's a good thing just to put on salad or put in some kind of raw soup. It just gives it a good flavor. Those two, chlorella and nutritional yeast, are the main sources of B12. Some seaweed has it too, and I eat quite a bit of seaweed so those three things.

**KERRY:** OK. The last of the three that I was talking about there, iron, where do you get that from?

**BRENDAN:** Iron was a bit tricky for me for a while. I became borderline anemic seven or eight years ago. The doctor suggested that I take supplements, but I really didn't want to do that. I found a really simple solution, pumpkin seeds. Raw pumpkin seeds have a lot of iron. If you soak them, they are easier to digest and you can get the iron out of them more easily--your body can digest it better. I put about a quarter cup of soaked pumpkin seeds on my salads each day, and then I had it with the citrus dressing because citrus has vitamin C in it. Vitamin C helps the absorption of iron. So I would do that maybe four or five times a week and then within about six months my iron was back really strong; and, I have never had a problem since. It's been really good ever since then. That's all I've done, just that. A really simple solution.

**KERRY:** OK. You talked a little bit about supplements there. Are you a believer in not taking any types of added supplements then?

**BRENDAN:** I used to take a lot. I took a whole bunch of supplements up until about four years ago. It was funny actually. One day my friend asked me if taking all those supplements actually worked. I didn't have an answer. I had to rethink things because I didn't know. I just had a blind faith that they were actually doing something. So I stopped taking them, and nothing bad happened. My energy stayed the same. My training stayed the same. My blood work stayed the same. So I just got off them. I know some people really like supplements. I think that's fine. I'm certainly not against them but I know that for people who want to try and do it without supplements, it can certainly be done. Like I said, I haven't taken supplements for around four years. I just eat really well, have a serving of Vega a day. That's it and I feel good. I know that you can go that route if want it.

**KERRY:** OK. Cool! Where can people get this Vega Drink and get your book? Where is a good resource to do that? Is it your website?

**BRENDAN:** You can't actually order Vega on the website just yet, but you can get it in Whole Foods or in any health food store. The book, as of January, will be in all Barnes & Noble, Borders, and it's on Amazon now. It can be pre-ordered on Amazon.com. People can check on my website too. There's links to all of those thing. My website is [Brendanbrazier.com](http://Brendanbrazier.com) as well as [Thrivediet.com](http://Thrivediet.com), and then there's [Myvega.com](http://Myvega.com) as well.

## The Triathlon Summit - Learn the Diet Secrets to Take Your Triathlon Performance to the Next Level

**KERRY:** Cool! All right. Now in terms of when you are actually training and you're out on the road or you're out running and you need extra calories, in terms of a sports drink or whatever, what do you suggest? Because a lot of people out there, they have a hard time taking in something, for instance, such as Gatorade or some of the other products out there. What do you do to keep it natural and keep yourself going when you're training?

**BRENDAN:** I tried to come up with something for a while. I wasn't doing so well with Gatorade and some of the artificial type drinks so I just made up my own. They're really simple. All a sport drink really is, is sugar and electrolytes. A really good one is coconut water. You can buy coconut water in pretty much any health food store either in the coconuts and crack them open or in packs. I have a recipe in the book for a sport drink with coconut water. It's really simple. You just take coconut water, squeeze in a little lemon juice, a little lime juice, and that's about it. If you want a little more to it, you can blend in a date which gives it more sugar and a little more staying power. That's about it. It's really basic. For our energy gels too, I take some of agave nectar and blend it in with the date. Put lemon and lime juice again, and it's really good. Put that in a gel flask. It's simple. It's good quick, clean energy. It works really well. It's, of course, natural too. Your body can digest that way easier than a lot of those artificial ones.

**KERRY:** Cool! All right. Good deal! We actually get a lot of people who are on the webcast as well. That's where most of our callers are this evening, our listeners. They're asking a bunch of questions here. Do you want to try answering a few?

**BRENDAN:** Sure.

**KERRY:** OK. Cool! All right. We're going to start with Don from Alabama. He's saying here, "We always hear that a glass or two of wine is good for the body and soul. Is any alcohol at all good for that, please?"

**BRENDAN:** I personally don't drink, not for reasons because I think it will hurt my performance, but I just never really got too into it. I don't think it's bad. I think there's a few things to look at. It is somewhat acid-forming so you wouldn't want to drink a lot each day. Some people respond better to it than others. So know yourself; know if your body reacts OK to it; and of course, make sure you are well hydrated before and after. It will take fluid out of your body. If you can stay well-hydrated and just do it once in a while, I definitely don't think that it's going to hurt your performance.

**KERRY:** OK. Good deal! Another person here. We've got Cathy from Chester. She wants to know what are the best foods to prevent inflammation with?

**BRENDAN:** Yeah, that's a good question. That was something I was looking into a while ago. The best overall one is anything that is alkaline, anything that is green, anything with chlorophyll in it which is basically the green pigment in plants. Green's drinks are really good, like chlorella. I sometimes mix that into water and will have that after a workout to help to keep alkaline which is going to reduce inflammation. Also things like ginger are really good for reducing inflammation. Turmeric is another one. Sometimes turmeric though has got a pretty strong taste. I sometimes put that into my blender drink and it was just a bit too much. I make a really good Ginger Pear Smoothie for after workout if I'm feeling a bit inflamed and feel as though I have soft tissue injuries. It's basically a tablespoon of fresh ginger, a ripe pear, a banana, and a scoop or two of natural flavored Vega or if you didn't have that you could just use some hemp protein and some flax. Blend that up with some ice. It tastes really good. That will definitely

## The Triathlon Summit - Learn the Diet Secrets to Take Your Triathlon Performance to the Next Level

help reduce inflammation.

**KERRY:** Good deal! All right. Let me ask you another question that we got here. It's on organic foods versus non-organic foods. What's your take on that?

**BRENDAN:** I think if you can get foods grown without herbicides and pesticides, that's really important. Obviously, it's just going to be an extra stress on your body having to deal with toxins and therefore that's going to bring up cortisol. You're going to trigger a whole bunch of problems. I think people need to also just be aware that sometimes non-organic is actually OK as long as it's grown without herbicides and pesticides. It's just that organic certification is really expensive and a lot of small farmers can't actually afford that. I've been to some farmers markets where the farmers are there with their local food that's grown 50 miles away. They just can't afford certification but it's still great food that doesn't have herbicides or pesticides. I have seen at farmers markets where people would go ask the farmer if it's local or organic. They'd say it's local and organic but I don't have certification. So then, the people looking for certified organic will leave and maybe buy at WalMart where it's grown in China. It's certified organic but not really the best solution because it's been out of the ground for a long time so that it will lose nutrients. You've got to look at those different factors too. I think that when you can get organic, great, but if you can't, just try and get stuff that is grown without herbicides and pesticides and is local as well, if possible.

**KERRY:** All right. Good deal! We've got Don from Baltimore and he's asking, "Do you subscribe to a Zone Diet type approach to nutrition: balancing carbs with protein? What about the Glycemic Index?" I guess we'll just start with the first one on that and talking about the Zone Diet and balancing carbs with protein. The Zone Diet is mostly protein I believe. Right?

**BRENDAN:** Yeah, I did experiment with that a bit back in '96 or so. It was really quite a bit higher in protein than I felt worked well for me. I definitely eat a lot more carbohydrate than it was suggested that I eat, mostly sugary carbohydrates which is kind of against what it says to. I know with myself, I like to get most of my carbohydrates from simple carbohydrates--so fruit, lots of fruit--as opposed to starchy foods that your body has to break down and convert into sugar. Your body can't use complex carbohydrates. It has to first convert it to sugar. If you are given sugar in the form of healthy fruit, you will be able to burn it more efficiently and not have to spend energy converting it.

So, I mean, I do find that when I am doing lots of long easy training, I will eat less fruits and I will eat more protein and more fat, but I'll get my protein from plant-based sources, hemp, pea proteins, rice proteins, lentils, legumes, and the carbohydrates from pseudo-grains that I talked a bit about before like the amaranth, quinoa, buckwheat, wild rice, and things like that. And then the fats from avocado, hemp oil, flax oil. It's pretty balanced, but it's definitely lower in protein but higher in quality of proteins than the Zone Diet.

**KERRY:** OK, and he also asked about the glycemic index.

**BRENDAN:** I think that during exercise, you actually want really high glycemic foods. Your body will burn it right away. So dates, for example, are extremely high glycemic, but I think they're really good. I think during especially shorter, harder workouts where you're going to be burning sugar, that's what you want. If you're going to be doing a long, easy bike ride, you know... 5 or 6 hours, you're training for Ironman, then yeah, you'd want to combine sugary foods with foods that have fiber, essential fats, and proteins, which is going to lower the

## The Triathlon Summit - Learn the Diet Secrets to Take Your Triathlon Performance to the Next Level

glycemic index. So, energy bars that I make, and the recipes are in the book are date-based yet they're quite low glycemic because they're combined with hemp and flax and things that have essential fats, fiber, and proteins to slow down that glycemic index. It depends on what you're doing, too, and in the book, I have a chart that basically bases the glycemic index on the activity level. So, if you're doing short, intense workouts, then you want higher glycemic before and during, and then if you're doing longer easier stuff depending on your training, then you'd have lower glycemic index.

**KERRY:** All right, good deal. Yeah, I'm a big fan of dates when I train, too. I love them. I think they're great. So, I just wanted to throw that in there. All right, and then what about... we got someone right here asking... Grant from BC, Canada, wants to know what blood type are you? And, he's read that Type A's do the best with the vegan diet. Do you agree?

**BRENDAN:** I'm actually Type O. I do know a bit about the blood type diet and I know that O is supposed to be the carnivore, so obviously it doesn't really hold true for me. But, I do find that if I don't eat much protein, I don't feel as good. So, maybe if you want to look at the blood type diet and think well maybe it doesn't just mean to eat more meat if you're O Type, but to eat more protein. And, I find that if I eat foods that are really low in good quality protein and I just eat fruit, then I don't feel as good and I don't have as much energy. So, some people say there's nothing to the blood type diet, but then, some people do. So, it just depends on your taste on that. Like I say, for me, it doesn't really hold true.

**KERRY:** OK, and that's good. We've got Lewis Tharp from West Point, and he wants to know what's your opinion on Omega-3, 6, 9 versus just taking Omega-3? "I've heard that body has a lot of 6 and 9 already, and you can take too much, but you can never have enough Omega-3." Good question.

**BRENDAN:** Yeah. Yeah. And that's something that I'm hearing more and more of because it's true. Most North Americans get too much Omega-6 and Omega-9 just because it's in a lot of fried foods and refined foods, fries and things like that. A lot of that. So what's been happening is that people have been suggesting that people have more things like fish oil and flax oil that have more Omega-3 to balance that out. But my take on that is that if you're getting way too much of those other foods that have too much Omega-6 and Omega-9, then just cut back on that. And don't try and balance it out by taking a whole bunch of Omega-3. The World Health Organization brought out a report a while ago that said that the optimal amount is about four times Omega-6 to Omega-3. So, we definitely need more Omega-6 than Omega-3, but I think it's just best to try and balance it out through good healthy diet as opposed to taking an Omega-3 supplement.

**KERRY:** OK, good deal. Don in Baltimore chimed in here with another question. He wants to know what's your take on human growth hormone. "I came across HGH precursor drinks in the past and I've also heard lately that they're a hoax." So, what's your take on that?

**BRENDAN:** Yeah, I've read a bit about those, and I think that anything like that is going to stimulate growth hormones, without really knowing specifically what that one's about, I would be a little bit skeptical and probably steer clear of that. There's two really good ways to release growth hormones. One is when you go to sleep, if you haven't had a sugary snack within a couple hours before, your body will release human growth hormone. And also, exercise, intense exercise, releases growth hormone as well. So even if you're an endurance athlete and you're training for Ironman, you still want a few workouts in there where you do really short,

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quick, intense bursts and some weight training too where you lift heavier weights. That's going to release growth hormones as well. So, those two things are key and of course, if you can have a nap. I know that's hard for a lot of people, but when I was training full-time, I was really diligent enough taking a nap each day, and that would be because then obviously you get another boost of growth hormone release. I know some athletes who set their alarms so that they would wake up several times throughout the night just so that they could fall back to sleep and then have another release of that growth hormone. Of course, that only works if you can fall asleep easily, but yeah, sleep and intense exercise are good ways to release that.

**KERRY:** OK, Gretchen wants to know, "Do you eat honey?"

**BRENDAN:** No, I don't eat honey. I found that agave nectar is really good... similar to honey in terms of consistency, but it's a little bit better in that it's lower glycemic index, and I've just never really bought into honey. And of course, you know, being from bees too, it can't really be considered vegan.

**KERRY:** OK. I think a lot of people they like to ask this question. When you were training heavily, doing Ironman and things like that, what did a day look like in terms of what you consumed in one day... types of meals, how many times a day, type of deal?

**BRENDAN:** Well, I got into grazing pretty early in my career. I felt that when I ate big meals, I didn't feel as good. I would just feel that there's so much blood in the stomach after eating a big meal that it can't be in other parts of your body clearing out waste products and delivering oxygen. And I found out that my recovery was way better when I ate smaller meals and just ate them throughout the day. So I aimed to try and never get really hungry and never get really full. So just always be feeling just about right.

So after swim workout in the morning, I would usually have a smoothie. That would be the first thing that I was telling you about that had a fruit base and then it was blended in with all of the different things I put in it. And then throughout the day, I would graze, mostly on fruit and energy bars that I would make for myself. The recipes are in the book. They're really simple to make. They're raw. You make them in the food processor and you can make a big batch that will last three or four months. It only takes about an hour to make. I would do that, and they're cheap, too. You can get the ingredients for really cheap in the bulk section. So I would graze on those, and then, a big salad every night for sure with lots of sprouts and avocado and I make my own dressing. And yeah, that would be kind of my main meal. But, other than that, it would be, not even really a sit-down meal. Just kind of eating as I'm going.

**KERRY:** Mm-hmm. I know people who have been on the raw diet, and do raw type stuff and they intake a quite a lot of fat not knowingly through lots of nuts and seeds and things like that. I just wanted to know your take on that and if you think it affects performance and what it does to people.

**BRENDAN:** Yeah, I think some of the highest fat diets out there are the raw diets. I know that it's really easy to kind of let nuts and seeds get away on you and just taking way too much fat. And coconut, too. Not coconut water but coconut milk and coconut meat have a lot of fat in it. So, I've definitely found that through eating some raw desserts and different things, it was basically all fat. And I felt it too. I didn't digest it well. And I stay away from that.

I think sprouting makes a big difference if you soak nuts and seeds and the pseudo-grains and

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any sprouts, and that really helps with digestibility. And also will help you fill you up quicker so you don't have that desire to eat so many, and then feel bloated and take in too much fat. But, yeah, I think also, too, I know some people who try and be 100 percent raw, and they do, when they get really hungry, eat a bunch of nut-based things. I think at that point -- because I don't eat 100 percent raw. If I had to give a percentage, I'd probably say 85 percent or so. I would rather go and eat some brown rice with an avocado and some sea salt as opposed to just eating more nuts and things like that, or a sweet potato, something like that. That's just a good whole food but is cooked. So, yeah, I think it's important, too, to not get caught up in any certain way of eating like raw food for example. Several raw food people I know, I think fat becomes a challenge itself of just staying raw. Whereas, my main thing is performance and feeling good, and I want that to determine how I eat not how I eat to determine how I feel. So I make sure I'm feeling good as opposed to trying to eat a certain way regardless of how I feel.

**KERRY:** Can you give an example of some of the cooked things you do eat, as most of your diet is pretty much raw?

**BRENDAN:** Yeah. Well, like I say, once in a while, sweet potatoes I think are good, and brown rice once in a while. Sometimes sprouted bread I think is pretty good too. Also there's a pea protein and a rice protein that's in Vega. It's not technically raw. It's not cooked. But when it's milled, the temperature of the milling goes up to around 130. And I think the cut-off for raw is about 110. So, I make sure that I tell like pure raw foodists that it's not technically raw for that reason. But, also things like coconut water when you buy it in a pack, it's been pasteurized, so not technically raw. So small things like that.

**KERRY:** All right. Good deal. And do you take anything in terms of your fats, in terms of oils, in terms of olive oil or flax seed oil, or anything like that. Or do you just take it in whole forms, such as nuts and seeds and avocado?

**BRENDAN:** Mostly the whole form. Although for salads and salad dressing I definitely do like oil, oil and vinegar, and there's actually Vega oil now. It's called Vega Antioxidant EFA oil that came out last year. So it's just basically a blend of the oils that I like which is hemp and flax. And then there's antioxidant oils in there too like pomegranate seed oil, black cumin seed oil, green tea seed oil. All these different seed oils that are really high in antioxidants and also pumpkin seed oil which is high in chlorophyll, so the oil is actually green. So it's also alkaline-forming, it really gets reducing inflammation too.

**KERRY:** Good deal. And you can get that stuff at Whole Food, you were saying?

**BRENDAN:** Yeah. Any Whole Foods, or most other health food stores have it too. And the website is [myvega.com](http://myvega.com).

**KERRY:** All right. Good deal. And your new book, like you said, is coming out. And that's going to be at Barnes and Noble, right?

**BRENDAN:** Yeah, it will be in pretty much all of the big bookstores, and of course, Amazon.com has it as well.

**KERRY:** Good deal. So it's definitely accessible if you guys are looking for some more info on that. One of the other questions a lot of athletes ask nutritionists and everything like that, is

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everyone saw Michael Phelps on the Olympics. And everyone saw and heard the rumor that he eats 15,000 calories a day. He eats McDonald's and tons of pizza and everything like that. And he's ripped. Everyone's like, "If he can do it, so why shouldn't I do it?" When you're a top athlete, can you just eat whatever? What's your take on that? Can you just take in anything you want? Any calories or is it important to get high quality foods, and what are some of the pluses and minuses to that?

**BRENDAN:** Well, yeah, of course, I do remember reading about that, Michael Phelps' diet. Yeah, obviously he's doing great on it. But I think also he's young. I think if he did do that for the next eight years or so, or for the rest of his life, it'd probably catch up with him. But I do think, too, that what he was eating and that meal plan he gave to one of those reporters, I think maybe about once or twice, I don't think he eats that every day. I think that that's a little extreme. When I was training 35 to 40 hours a week, I probably eat 7,000 or 8,000, maybe 8,000 calories a day, tops. And I think 15,000 calories a day, maybe one day here and one day there, but every day, I don't believe that. I think that's a bit of an exaggeration or he was playing a joke on the reporter or something. But I think to eat that much consistently, I just can't see that happen.

**KERRY:** All right. Good deal. Dawn from Westbridge wants to know, "Sorry to ask the obvious, maybe. But what is actually wrong with beef? We have a lot of beef up here in Alberta, and I like it a lot." It's Dawn from AB; that's Alberta, not Alabama. That's my fault. So, what's your take on that?

**BRENDAN:** Well, one thing with meat and it's not just beef, but any meat, is it's highly acidic. So it's going to promote inflammation. It's going to be hard on bone health. And it's going to be harder to digest, too. Your body has to break it down, and by doing that it has to build digestive enzymes and work harder, and that takes energy. Like I was saying before, it's something that I would call a low-net gain food, meaning your body has to spend a lot of energy to get little in return. And there's just definitely better protein sources that your body can use more easily. And I suggest to people if they're really interested in improving performance, just give it try. And it may not take, like I say, it may not happen overnight. But swap out the beef for some other things and just see how you go, and just see how your body responds and give it time. And if you're really dedicated to trying to improve performance as much as you can then, yeah, be patient with it and just see how your body goes on it.

**KERRY:** All right. Good deal. All right. And another question people ask about meat sometimes too, what about sushi? Is it good? You hear a lot of times, obviously with fruits and vegetables it's best if you can eat them uncooked, or as least cooked as possible. People have asked me about sushi before, and I didn't really have an answer for that. I'm just wondering if you could shed some light on that if you could.

**BRENDAN:** Yeah. It's pretty hard to digest as well, even though it is raw, because it's a meat. It's harder for the body to actually make use of. And one of the big concerns, of course, about not just sushi, but any fish, is pollution these days. I'm from Vancouver originally and on the west coast there, the salmon come back to spawn each year, and salmon are a huge industry there, catching the salmon. But salmon is born there and then it swims basically around the whole pacific rim, so all around Alaska and Japan. And the odds of it swimming through polluted water at some point in its life are pretty much 100 percent. So that's a concern. Of course, mercury is one of the big fears of fish, and for good reason too. It's something that is pretty serious, if you get too much of that. And also there's, of course, farm fish, but the nutrition is

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way, way lower in those too. So, I actually remember a while ago there was some farm fish that broke out of their pen between Vancouver Island and the mainland, and the seals wouldn't even eat them. The seals didn't actually recognize them as food, which kind of alarmed a lot of the fish farmers there, and they realized that it wasn't the most nutritious food, and they should probably do something. So I think they started feeding them differently, but it still wasn't -- it just didn't get the nutrients they needed.

**KERRY:** All right. Is there anything else that you think people should know about what we've been talking about here tonight, or anything else you would like to add?

**BRENDAN:** I think we've pretty much covered it. Yeah, of course, if people want more info, they're welcome to go to my website and sign up for the newsletter there. I haven't for a while, but I do want to get out some monthly newsletters with different articles that I have written. I write for a few different magazines, so just keep people in the loop on different things that I'm learning and writing about. That's on [Brendanbrazier.com](http://Brendanbrazier.com). They can sign up for that. I think that pretty much covers it. I also write for a magazine called "Get Fresh." It's a British magazine that's now in the United States. It's sold in Whole Foods. I have a column in each issue of that if people are into checking that out.

**KERRY:** Good deal! That's our call for tonight with BRENDAN Brazier. You can find any of his stuff, it's pretty accessible in most health food stores and if you want to look at some of his Vega products online. His new book is going to be coming out in the beginning of the New Year here. You can find that at any big bookstore, and Amazon as well. Right?

**BRENDAN:** Right. I should probably mention too that in Canada I also have a new book coming out that I just finished writing. It's called "Thrive Fitness: Mental and Physical Strength for Life". It's more of a training book as opposed to the other book which is more of a nutrition book. This does have some nutrition in it, but also it has a lot to do with training and putting together a good program. That will be out in January in Canada, and will come out later in the U.S. I think it's October for the U.S. Of course, if people want it, they can order it on [Amazon.ca](http://Amazon.ca).

**KERRY:** Is that just triathlon training and endurance training, or is that more basic training for weight training and things like that?

**BRENDAN:** Yeah, it's more general. It's more for people who are wanting to improve performance but some of them are starting at a really low level; and, yes it's getting them active and getting them into a routine and into a program--more a lifestyle than a program, really. It also has a bunch of tips and suggestions for people who already are accomplished athletes. Other things too like how to improve at anything if you're fitter. When you're fitter, you're going to be better at really anything that you do. It's a base for a good quality of life.

**KERRY:** Good deal! Brendan, thanks for coming on and talking with all of us. We will have the next call at the same time, same place next week. That will be with Cliff English. I will shoot you guys more info on that. Hope you guys all enjoyed the call! We'll talk to you later. Brendan, thanks again.

**BRENDAN:** All right. Thank you.

**KERRY:** Everyone have a great night! Thank you.