The activist film is produced by Kip Anderson, who also produced “Cowspiracy.” The film premiered on March 7, 2017 in New York City and is now available on Netflix. It argues meat, dairy, fish, poultry and eggs are allegedly causing chronic illnesses such as heart disease, obesity and cancers. For a summary, read our Movie Alert.

This resource debunks some of the main claims from the film.

Main Claims
Main claims from the documentary include:

- **Processed meats cause cancer**
  - Fact: The U.S. National Toxicology Program (NTP), which is considered the "gold standard" in determining whether substances cause cancer, completed a multi-year study in which rats and mice were fed high levels of sodium nitrite. The study found that nitrite was not associated with cancer. NTP maintains a list of chemicals found to be carcinogenic. Sodium nitrite is not on that list.
    - [https://ntp.niehs.nih.gov/pubhealth/roc/index-1.html](https://ntp.niehs.nih.gov/pubhealth/roc/index-1.html)

- **Sugar and carbohydrates don’t cause diabetes, instead it is caused by eating meat**
  - Fact: According to the American Diabetes Association (ADA), type 2 Diabetes is caused by genetics and lifestyle factors. Starchy foods can be part of a healthy meal plan, but portion size is key. Being overweight does increase your risk for developing type 2 diabetes, and a diet high in calories from any source contributes to weight gain. Research has shown that drinking sugary drinks is linked to type 2 diabetes. The ADA recommends that people should avoid intake of sugar-sweetened beverages to help prevent diabetes.
    - [http://bjsm.bmj.com/content/50/8/496.short](http://bjsm.bmj.com/content/50/8/496.short)

- **“Poultry is not better than any other meat” when it comes to healthfulness**
  - Fact: According to a National Institute of Health study, “Epidemiological studies conducted across various parts of the world, in highly diverse populations, with different food preferences and nutritional habits, provide solid information on the association between diet and health. Several prospective studies support the association between poultry consumption, within a balanced diet, and a reduction in the risk of developing cardiovascular (CV) diseases and their risk factors, such as overweight and insulin resistance, and tumors.”
    - [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4462824/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4462824/)
  - Fact: All types of meat have nutritional value and have a role in a healthy, balanced diet.
- **Meat causes cardiovascular disease**
  - Fact: Several recent studies have shown that saturated fat consumption does not increase the risk of death from heart disease or stroke.
    - [http://ajcn.nutrition.org/content/early/2010/01/13/ajcn.2009.27725.abstract](http://ajcn.nutrition.org/content/early/2010/01/13/ajcn.2009.27725.abstract)

- **Chicken is the number one source of dietary cholesterol in America**
  - Fact: According to the National Cancer Institute, eggs and egg mixed dishes rank number one in the top food sources of cholesterol among the U.S. population. One 3.5-ounce serving of skinless, boneless chicken breast contains 85mg of cholesterol while one egg has about 187mg of cholesterol. Dietary cholesterol has only minimal effects on blood cholesterol. More importantly, it has absolutely no link with the risk of heart disease.
    - [https://authoritynutrition.com/7-healthy-high-cholesterol-foods/](https://authoritynutrition.com/7-healthy-high-cholesterol-foods/)
    - [https://ajcn.nutrition.org/content/early/2015/06/24/ajcn.114.100305.short](https://ajcn.nutrition.org/content/early/2015/06/24/ajcn.114.100305.short)

- **Dairy is the number one source of saturated fat**
  - Fact: According to the American Heart Association, saturated fats occur naturally in many foods with the majority coming from animal sources including meat and dairy products. But there is no evidence that eating saturated fat causes heart disease and eating saturated fat raises blood levels of HDL (the good cholesterol) which can lower risk of heart disease. Several studies also show that saturated fat consumption is associated with a reduced risk of stroke.
    - [https://authoritynutrition.com/top-8-reasons-not-to-fear-saturated-fats/](https://authoritynutrition.com/top-8-reasons-not-to-fear-saturated-fats/)
    - [http://ajcn.nutrition.org/content/77/5/1146.short](http://ajcn.nutrition.org/content/77/5/1146.short)
    - [https://healthyforgood.heart.org/Eat-smart/Articles/Saturated-Fats](https://healthyforgood.heart.org/Eat-smart/Articles/Saturated-Fats)

- **Eating one egg is the same as smoking five cigarettes**
  - Fact: Eating one egg a day reduces risk of stroke by 12 percent.
  - Fact: The 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend three healthy eating patterns, all of which include eggs.
    - [https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/](https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/)
    - [http://ajcn.nutrition.org/content/101/4/705.short](http://ajcn.nutrition.org/content/101/4/705.short)
    - [http://www.mdpi.com/2072-6643/7/1/706/htm](http://www.mdpi.com/2072-6643/7/1/706/htm)

- **Pregnant women who eat meat, milk and eggs are introducing toxins to their child**
  - Fact: According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, a pregnant woman should eat lean red meat, poultry, fish, dried beans and peas to obtain the daily recommended dose of iron during pregnancy of 27mg.
    - [https://www.acog.org/-/media/For%20Patients/faq001.pdf?dmc=1&ts=20130422T1202590495](https://www.acog.org/-/media/For%20Patients/faq001.pdf?dmc=1&ts=20130422T1202590495)
    - [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3639110/#b3-ijwh-5-193](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3639110/#b3-ijwh-5-193)

- **There is a strong link between dairy foods and autoimmune diseases like asthma and type 1 diabetes along with multiple sclerosis**
  - Fact: According to the National Institute of Health, the exact cause of asthma is unknown, but researchers believe some genetic and environmental factors interact to cause asthma, including: atopy, parents who have asthma, certain respiratory infections during childhood and contact with some airborne allergens or exposure to some viral infections in infancy or in early childhood when the immune system is developing.
• Milk contains pus
  o Fact: Somatic cell count (SCC) is a measurement of how many white blood cells are present in the milk. According to a dairy farmer from Wisconsin, “White blood cells are the infection fighters in our body and so an elevated white blood cell presence or on a dairy farm an elevated SCC is a signal that there may be an infection that the cow is fighting. Dairy farmers are paid more money for milk that has a low SCC, if our cell count raises above normal levels they will dock the amount we get paid for our milk, if it raises even higher they stop taking our milk and we can’t sell it. So not only do we not want our cows to be sick, it would cost us a lot of money and could cost us our farms if we were to ignore a high SCC. While the current US regulation is that milk must have a cell count under 750, dairy coops and companies generally require under 400 and most dairy farms aim for a SCC under 200. So, does this mean that we are allowing some pus into your milk? No. All milk is going to have some white blood cells in it, that’s the nature of a product that comes from an animal, cells happen.”
  ▪  http://www.dairycarrie.com/is-there-pus-in-milk/
  ▪  https://www.uaex.edu/publications/PDF/FSA-4002.pdf
  ▪  https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13594-014-0176-3

• Raising animals for food produces more greenhouse gases than the entire transportation sector
  o Fact: According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the transportation sector accounts for 27 percent of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions while agriculture (crop and livestock) only accounts for 9 percent.
  ▪  https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions

• A plant-based diet can cure and prevent type 2 diabetes and cure and reverse heart disease and cancer
  o Fact: A vegan diet is not the cure for anything. According to the 2015 Dietary Guidelines, a healthy eating pattern includes: A variety of vegetables from all of the subgroups—dark green, red and orange, legumes (beans and peas); Fruits, especially whole fruits; Grains, at least half of which are whole grains; Fat-free or low-fat dairy, including milk, yogurt, cheese, and/or fortified soy beverages; A variety of protein foods, including seafood, lean meats and poultry, eggs, legumes (beans and peas), and nuts, seeds, and soy products; and oils.
  ▪  https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/chapter-1/key-recommendations/

• We receive our dietary recommendations from the industries that are killing us
  ▪  https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/committee/

• You don’t have to eat meat and dairy to get complete protein or Vitamin B12
  o Fact: According to the National Institute of Health, Vitamin B12 is naturally found in animal products, including fish, meat, poultry, eggs, milk, and milk products. Vitamin B12 is generally not present in plant foods, but fortified breakfast cereals are a readily available source of vitamin B12 with high bioavailability for vegetarians. Some nutritional

https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/asthma/causes
Fact: According to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, scientists think type 1 diabetes is caused by genes and environmental factors, such as viruses, that might trigger the disease.
  ▪  https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes/overview/symptoms-causes
Fact: According to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, “Growing evidence suggests that vitamin D plays an important role. People who live closer to the equator are exposed to greater amounts of sunlight year-round. As a result, they tend to have higher levels of naturally-produced vitamin D, which is thought to support immune function and may help protect against immune-mediated diseases like MS. The possible relationship between MS and sunlight exposure is currently being looked at in a Society-funded epidemiological study in Australia.”
  ▪  http://www.nationalmssociety.org/What-is-MS/What-Causes-MS#section-2
yeast products also contain vitamin B12. Fortified foods vary in formulation, so it is important to read product labels to determine which added nutrients they contain.


- Fact: A “complete protein” is one that contains an adequate proportion of all nine of the essential amino acids. According to a study published in the Journal of Sports and Medicine, “Proteins from animal sources (i.e. eggs, milk, meat, fish and poultry) provide the highest quality rating of food sources. This is primarily due to the ‘completeness’ of proteins from these sources. Proteins from vegetable sources are incomplete in that they are generally lacking one or two essential amino acids. Thus, someone who desires to get their protein from vegetable sources (i.e. vegetarian) will need to consume a variety of vegetables, fruits, grains, and legumes to ensure consumption of all essential amino acids. As such, individuals are able to achieve necessary protein requirements without consuming beef, poultry, or dairy.”
  - [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3905294/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3905294/)