

# HEALTH CORNER



## COVID-19 OVERREACTION HAS PUSHED US TO THE TIPPING POINT

By Gerard Lucyshyn  
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Caught between a rock and a hard place. This best sums up the position that Alberta's United Conservative Party government found itself in as it announced new, stricter lockdown measures for Christmas.

The government is attempting to bend the rising curve of COVID-19 infections. Premier Jason Kenney and his most trusted ministers lined up to deliver the horrible news to Albertans.

They reassured Albertans that they didn't reach that decision lightly and that they wholeheartedly preferred not to impose such measures, however, they believed it was necessary.

This was quite a bold announcement, especially when many Albertans were looking forward to some respite during Christmas following the past shock-and-awe year; not to mention the UCP's dwindling poll number placing them behind the NDP.

Since Christmas, the government has extended the harsh measures.

The premier and each minister have clearly articulated the enormous effort, debate and struggle they went through in making such heavy-handed decisions. However, one would have thought they would realize, individually or collaboratively, that harsh measures usually have consequences and are not the way to go, regardless of the unrelenting pressure tactics from social and mainstream media.

History has taught many leaders that alarming the population leads to recursive bad public policies and nonsensical rules. Overzealous government reactionary measures cause confusion, which turns into fear and

then into anger.

One example of such a lesson surrounds a quickly written book in 1968 by American biologist Paul Ehrlich. In his book, *The Population Bomb*, Ehrlich predicted mass world starvation and resource depletion due to overpopulation. This prediction sent well-intentioned politicians clamouring around the world to solve the impending crisis.

By the end of the 1960s, many countries around the world were experiencing large increases in life expectancy and rising fertility rates. Population growth rates were starkly increasing, feeding into the fear that an imminent population explosion would lead to resource depletion and worldwide starvation. The fear quickly manifested into government action: a global population control program. The mission for governments around the world was to institute measures they believed were best to bend the sharp population growth curve and prevent imminent threat to mankind. Some measures to curb population growth included fines, deductions from salaries, withdrawal of maternity leave, one child per family laws and sterilization incentives.

Not unlike our political elite today, the politicians of the past were trying to keep everyone safe. The effort to bend the population growth rates appear to have paid off and have been decreasing ever since. Unfortunately, it turns out that such well-intentioned public policy measures have played a central role in a new crisis many countries now face: declining fertility rates.

Declining fertility rates and aging populations drive the fear that in the near future there will not be enough workers to pay taxes to support governments, pensions and health-care systems.

Politicians are now adopting population growth incentives such as baby bonuses, child tax incentives, monthly welfare or nutritional allowances, priority housing, education, medical care, and expanded maternity benefits. Sounds a tad recursive.

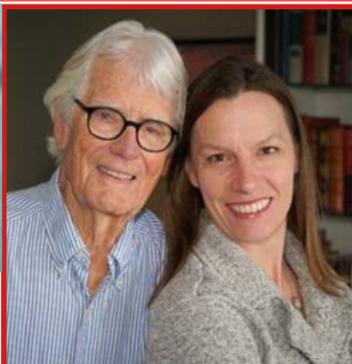
The responses to the COVID-19 pandemic saw all countries engage in similar strategy: massive spending to fight COVID-19 and the closing down of the economy. These measures have drastically reduced economic activity and tax revenues, ending 2020 with massive debt levels, record levels of unemployment and economic systems in shambles.

It's expected that developed countries will have a median increase of their debt-to-gross-domestic-product ratio around 17.5 per cent while developing countries will increase their debt-to-GDP ratios by approximately 12 per cent, and low income countries by eight per cent. These increases in debt levels will push most countries beyond what economists refer to as the tipping point.

The tipping point is where a country's debt-to-GDP ratio is at such a level that it negatively affects annual real growth. That point is estimated around 77 per cent debt-to-GDP.

It appears Canada is already past the tipping point with debt-to-GDP expected to rise from the 2019 level of 88.3 to 131.5 per cent by 2022.

Now consider the Canadian demographic projections between now and 2068. Canadians reaching the age of 65 and older will make up between 21.4 and 29.5 per cent of the population by 2068 (compared to 18 per cent in 2020). The working population, age 15 to 64, will diminish to around 57.9 to 61.4 per cent (compared to 67 per cent in 2020).



## The Doctor Game QUESTIONS ABOUT THE KETOGENIC DIET

W. Gifford-Jones, M.D. and Diana Gifford-Jones

What is a ketogenic diet? How does it differ and is it more effective than other diets? Apart from the hype surrounding this diet, what are the medical concerns about it? Recent marketing of the ketogenic diet suggests it's a new one. But a report from the University of California says it's been used for years to treat medical problems

such as epilepsy in children.

But what is it about the ketogenic diet that causes weight loss? A major factor is that it's low in carbohydrates and high in fats.

Blood sugar (glucose) is normally the body's main source of energy. But when blood sugar is diminished by eating less carbohydrates, the body is unable to maintain needed levels. To compensate, the body must start burning fat for energy. It also obtains more energy by converting some amino acids from protein in foods. And if this does not suffice, it gets energy from muscles.

The breakdown of fat, and to a lesser extent, protein, creates a condition called "ketosis" which is also used for energy. Hopefully none of us will ever be in a situation where we're starving. But if that happens, we develop ketosis. It also occurs in uncontrolled diabetes.

Ketosis starts within a few days after carbohydrates are decreased to between 20 and 50 grams a day. This is not much carbohydrate, as two one-ounce slices of bread contain 28 grams of carbs!

How does a ketogenic diet compare with a normal diet? The average North American gets 50-55% of energy from carbohydrates, 30-35% from fats, and 15-20% from protein. The ketogenic diet obtains 5-10% from carbohydrates, 70-75% from fats, and 20% from protein.

A ketogenic diet contains full-fat dairy, eggs, fish, poultry, meat, nuts, non-starchy vegetables and butter. You are allowed to eat as many of these foods until you are full. It eliminates starchy vegetables, most fruits, grains, and sweets.

The British Journal of Nutrition analyzed 13 diet studies and reported that most, but not all, found that patients on a ketogenic diet lost more weight than those on other diets. They also ended up with lower blood pressure and blood triglycerides. And it helped those with type 2 diabetes. The negative of this diet is that it also increases bad cholesterol because of its high content of saturated fat.

Another negative is that the low carbohydrate content makes it hard for people to stick to it. Also, by eliminating most fruits, many vegetables, whole grains, and fiber, constipation is more likely to be a problem. Moreover, it removes ingredients essential for good health. No one should start a ketogenic diet without the help of your trusted family doctor.

It's unfortunate that most diets wouldn't be needed if people would follow a sound lifestyle. The first error is not having a bathroom scale that you step on every day. Scales tell it the way it is. Focus on losing any gained weight the same day the scale reports an increase.

This means saying no to high calorie desserts, eating smaller portions on smaller plates, and declining any offered second portions. Healthy weight loss also means an increase in daily exercise. Loss of excess weight and common-sense healthy living significantly reduces the risks associated with the epidemics of obesity, heart disease, and Type 2 diabetes. A sustained commitment can add years of longevity.



## Direct Answers from Wayne & Tamara Love's Beggar

Q I am 20. Five months ago I started dating a coworker, 29. We work in separate departments, so we are not on top of each other every day. When we started dating, I told him I was looking for a relationship. He said he had just gotten out of a two year relationship four months before.

We talk on the phone every day and see each other at least twice a week. I thought we were on our way to making it official as a couple—at least until two days ago. That's when he confessed this new girl at work wants to get back together with him. That was a shocker.

Before we started dating he dated her for a month, but she broke it off because he was moving too fast. Now he says he is stuck in the middle because he has feelings for both of us and doesn't want to hurt either of us. I told him he was too late because he is already hurting me by leaving me to get together with her. I said I was beginning to fall in love with him, which is true, and if he cared as much as he said he did, he would stay with me. Well, he told me he wanted to be with me and he would tell her his decision. And he did. Problem solved, right? Wrong! While I was on the phone with him, she shows up at his house, and they have a long talk. He tells me she said he is confused, and now he doesn't want to talk about it anymore because he's stuck in the middle of a situation he doesn't want to be in. I hurt so much when I realize I could lose him, because I have strong feelings for him. I want to be with him, and I already told him how I feel. What else am I to do? **Shauna**

A Shauna, some stories stick with us because they condense a truth in an unforgettable way. For us, one such story was a news item about a pilot guiding a large ship into port. When the ship collided with the pillar of a bridge, gravely damaging both the bridge and the vessel, the first words out of the pilot's mouth were, "Don't tell anybody." People aren't honest naturally. We are animalistic. Our self-preservation mechanism is still so strong that a lie is the first thing which tries to come to our lips. Only our good character can stop it. Your boyfriend is weak and a coward. When you jumped up and down, arguing with him, he didn't have the courage to say he doesn't want to be with you. Instead, he threw his hands in the air and said, "I'm confused." But he doesn't love you. He can't explain why he doesn't, he just doesn't.

No man can tell any woman exactly why he loves her. Love is an unmeasured quality, beyond factors and reasons. With a man who cares about you, you don't have to beg. But when you beg, you know for sure you are not loved. Arguing will not change that.

You think you have to make this relationship work because you are hungry for love. That is the first misstep in falling down a long staircase. When you find yourself tripping on the first step, you must grab the rail so you don't fall all the way down the stairs. What railing are we talking about? The railing of reality. Grab hold of reality and say I've dated him five months, I told him how I feel, he doesn't love me, and I'm not going to beg any man to be with me.

Treat yourself as a person of value. Prize yourself, as the one who loves you will prize you. You need to be some man's first choice, his right choice.

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