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About Nutrition

by Raymond Francis

Malnutrition is the number one health problem in America. While it may seem incredible, there is a compelling need to teach everyone how to make better nutritional choices. The vast majority of Americans underestimate the degree to which almost all of us are malnourished. Few appear to appreciate the vast difference that better nutrition could make in their lives.

Quite simply, we are what we eat. If you build a house out of low quality materials, you will end up with a poorly constructed house. That house will not age well. The same is true of your body. Abundant amounts of high quality nutrients are essential to build a healthy body and to maintain it, free of disease. Babies and children need extra amounts of nutrients because they are building rather than just maintaining their bodies.

After fifteen years of researching health and disease, it is abundantly clear to me that malnutrition is the leading cause of disease and death in America. Numerous studies have concluded that almost all Americans are not getting the RDA of a number of essential nutrients on a daily basis. In 1971, the eminent biochemist, Dr. Roger Williams, wrote: "But the most basic weapons in the fight against disease are those most ignored by modern medicine: the numerous nutrients that the cells of our bodies need. If our body cells are ailing—as they must in disease—the chances are excellent that it is because they are being inadequately provisioned". If all your cells are functioning at optimal levels, you cannot be sick. Cells must malfunction for disease to manifest, and cells will malfunction when inadequately provisioned. When a large enough number of cells are no longer doing the jobs they were designed to do, the whole body begins to fail.

If nutrition is so important, why are we not paying attention to it? One reason is the training our physicians receive. They learn little about nutrition, and end up assuming that almost all diseases have virtually no connection to nutrition. Their inadequate training leaves them completely unprepared to recognize and address our leading cause of disease—malnutrition. This is why they are so ineffective in preventing or healing the chronic diseases that plague our society.

Dr. Jay M. Hoffman, the author of *Hunza* said: "There is no reason in the world why over 75% of the American people should be suffering from degenerative and deficiency diseases...disease never comes without a cause. If a person is sick and ailing it is because he has been doing something wrong. He needs an education in how to live a healthy life. To educate yourself on how to live a healthy life, two things must be kept in mind. One is that a chronic shortage of even one nutrient will cause disease. This is why it is so critical to get all the nutrients we need on a regular basis. Second is that every person's need for nutrients is different from every other person. This is called biochemical individuality, and it is an extremely important concept for each of us to understand.

While everyone needs nutrients, no two people need exactly the same amount of nutrients. One person may require five times as much calcium as another, twenty times as much vitamin C, or even forty times as much vitamin A. Given that a shortage of even one nutrient will cause disease, those with higher needs are more likely to get sick. Two people could live in the same house, eating the same diet, and one will be adequately provisioned and the other deficient. Yet we presently have no way of knowing who needs what. Any given individual can be vastly different than the hypothetical 'average person'.

Because of biochemical individuality and our inability to know what we need, everyone must strive to maximize their nutritional intake at every stage of their life. We cannot afford to eat foods that are not rich in nutrients, yet this is what most people eat on a daily basis. One quarter of the average person's calories come from eating sugar—a toxic, empty-calorie food that is devoid of nutrients. It is only by eating nutrient rich foods that we can be assured of being disease free, especially in old age. We have all been misinformed about old age. We are told that disease is a natural part of the aging process. This is absolute nonsense. Disease does not come without a cause. It often takes decades of less than optimal nutrition to make it happen. Disease is not the result of aging. Inadequate nutrition, over a long period of time, is the major cause of disease. Historically healthy societies lived well into their hundreds, disease free. Health is what is natural, and it comes from eating a good diet.

All living cells are remarkably similar in the way they function. There are certain parts of cell machinery that are the same regardless of the organism. All cells need raw materials to operate. It is because plant and animal cells have similar needs that we can obtain the raw materials we need when we eat them. If the plants and animals received all the raw materials they needed, then their cells will contain lots of nutrients. When we eat them, the chances are excellent that our cells will get all the things they need if we consume a variety of these foods. The problem today is the plants and animals we consume did not get what they needed. They were nutritionally deficient themselves. This makes it difficult for us to get what we need.

Modern agricultural practices produce nutritionally inferior foods. Farming with artificial fertilizers depletes soils of essential minerals. Both the harvesting of crops before they are ripe to prevent spoilage and the time spent in transit before reaching the consumer, rob foods of their nutritional content. As a result, we eat foods that are inadequate to supply our cells with what they need. If you buy your food in a standard supermarket, you are almost guaranteed to get sick. There is no high quality food sold there. More than half of the average diet consists of processed foods. Processing substantially reduces the nutritional value of food. These foods cannot support healthy human life. Is it any wonder that more than 75% of us have a diagnosable chronic disease?

Is there anything we can do? Yes. We can educate ourselves on what constitutes a healthy diet and then make that diet a normal part of our life. Given both the lower nutritional content of our foods plus our increased need for nutrients, due to our toxic environment, nutritional supplementation is a must. But here again, few know how to make an effective supplement or are willing to spend the money to do it. That is why after fifteen years of searching for the best vitamin supplements in the world I am still taking Beyond Health Supplements. I have yet to find anything better and nothing that even comes close.

Beyond supplements, real food is our best source of nutrition. The problem is finding any real food. Our first priority should be to eliminate all the unhealthy foods in our diet. This means eliminating sugar, white flour, white rice, processed oils and dairy. This is no easy task. These are the ingredients of most processed foods. That is why all processed food should be eliminated. A processed food is anything that comes out of a factory, including breakfast cereals, canned goods, frozen foods, margarine, milk, cheese, ice cream, pasta, and bread.

Without growing your own food, the closest we can come to real food is to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables from organic farmers at a local farmer's market. Beyond that, buy organically produced food at a good health food store. Food needs to be grown in healthy, fertile soils without exposure to toxic agricultural chemicals. It should be harvested when it is ripe, not before, and quickly taken to market and consumed within a short period of time. Nutrients are rapidly lost with time.

The key to better health is to consistently concentrate on healthy foods and to avoid unhealthy foods. Eating a large variety of foods is important because all foods have different kinds and amounts of nutrients. Only by eating a variety can we be assured of getting what we need. A variety is also a good idea from another perspective. All foods contain toxins. This is how they protect themselves from insects and other infections. Eating too much of one kind of food will not only be nutritionally inadequate, you may also be getting too much of a single toxin. Some foods are especially high in toxins, such as nightshades (tomatoes, potatoes, eggplant, and bell peppers). These need to be consumed only in small quantities or not at all if you already have a chronic disease problem.

It is important to remember that all nutrients act as a team. If even one team member is absent or in short supply, the entire team will not work well. Different individuals require widely different amounts of nutrients, especially vitamins A, C, and E. Since these are harmless in reasonable quantities, I supplement with generous amounts to assure getting enough. Yet another factor is exercise. Eating a good diet and taking supplements is a good start, but delivering those nutrients to cells that need them is quite another thing. Exercise helps to deliver nutrients to cells and remove metabolic waste products. That's why regular exercise is essential to good health. Almost anyone can improve the quality of their life by delivering better nutrition to their cells.

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