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Eating a Good Diet

by Raymond Francis

Malnutrition is our leading cause of disease and death. That's why eating a good diet is so essential to health, but our busy lifestyles leave little time for preparing quality foods, and modern agricultural practices make it very difficult to purchase real food, even in a health food store! Nutritional education is more essential than ever. *Beyond Health News* has been educating America about diet and its relation to disease for years. America is slowly beginning to wake up. Even journals like Newsweek are now publishing articles about the relation between cancer and diet.

While there is no single diet that is appropriate for everyone, the facts are these: disease can be both prevented and reversed by giving cells everything they need on a daily basis and by not giving them things they don't need. To do this, every calorie we consume must be loaded with nutrients and free of toxic contaminants. Unfortunately, modern diets consist mostly of foods that are deficient in nutrients and loaded with toxins.

In order to lead a healthy life, our bodies must be nourished and healthy at the cellular level. This means giving our cells all the raw materials they need every day. Multiple interactions between nutrients form the basis of all biological function—one or two nutrients don't act alone. We need a precise mixture of at least 59 essential nutrients on a daily basis to maintain health. A chronic shortage of even one nutrient will result in a cascade of events impairing function and causing disease. When you stop to consider that most Americans are chronically deficient in calcium, zinc, folic acid, magnesium, chromium, essential fatty acids, and vitamins A, E, C, and B6, it's no wonder disease-care costs are projected to *double* in the next 10 years, as we spend more time each year in hospitals.

The image of the well-nourished American is essentially a myth. A study at the University of California at Irvine placed rats on two different diets. One was an approximation of the average American diet with white bread, sugar, milk, ground beef, potatoes, coffee, etc. The other diet was Purina Rat Chow, which contained unrefined whole grains and fish meal fortified with vitamins and minerals. Guess which diet made the rats sick? This study proved that the *average American diet is nutritionally unfit for rats*. The authors concluded that it must be equally *unsatisfactory in meeting human needs*. Why are we trying to support human life with a diet that experiments prove won't even support rats, and then trying to fix the resulting health problems with toxic drugs and surgery? *We are trying to do the impossible, and it's not working!*

Chemist Linus Pauling believed that the mostly vegetarian diet of our ancestors contained several times the RDAs for a number of vitamins and minerals. He also maintained that our *modern diets are incapable of supplying these nutrient quantities, even if we make good food choices*. This is why we must make informed food choices every day and why supplements are essential. Modern foods are produced with artificial fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, fumigants, and other chemicals. Produce is often harvested before it is ripe, taken relatively long distances to markets, often stored for long periods, and may be processed to give them longer shelf life. All this decreases the nutritional quality of the food. The net effect is to supply foods with poor nutrition and lots of toxic residues.

There are simply no historical precedents for our current agricultural and dietary practices. We are all "guinea pigs" in a huge experiment. If many of the things we eat in a standard diet will not support animal life, how are we supposed to live on it? Dr. Roger Williams, perhaps the greatest biochemist of the 20th century, fed enriched white bread to rats, and within 90 days two-thirds of them were dead, and the

others sick. Almost all packaged breakfast cereals will produce similar results. Pasteurized milk—what we buy in the store—will kill calves, and calves are supposed to live on milk! These so-called "foods" will not support animal life. So what do we do? We feed bread, breakfast cereal, and milk to our children! Then we sit around and wonder why cancer has become the leading cause of death for children, why childhood asthma is an out-of-control epidemic, why children get so many infections, why they have Attention Deficit Disorder, and why children exhibit early signs of heart disease?

If you buy your food in a supermarket, don't expect to be healthy. Why? Well, remember that disease is caused by deficiency and toxicity. Remember, you have to get all the nutrients you need for good health within the number of calories you normally consume. The problem is, it's impossible to do this with supermarket foods. Most of the foods in a supermarket are highly processed, manufactured foods. These foods are low in nutrition and high in toxins, such as food additives, pesticides, fungicides, and herbicide residues. Even fresh foods in the produce section are low in nutrients and high in toxins. That's why supermarket foods contribute to deficiency and toxicity, which are the two causes of disease.

If you want to maximize your nutrient intake and minimize your toxic load, where should you buy your foods? Ideally, we should grow our own and eat it fresh from the garden. But that isn't practical for most of us. The next best choice is a local farmer's market, purchasing from the organic farmers. Organic foods have more nutrition and don't contain added toxins. In one experiment, the vitamin C content of an organic tomato was measured at ten times the supermarket variety.

The next best choice is organic foods in a health food store, but these are often older and harvested before ripening. Another experiment measured the phytochemicals in tomatoes, finding that while there were no phytochemicals in a supermarket tomato, there were also none in the organic, health food store tomato. A tomato picked ripe from the vine was loaded with phytochemicals. The last 24 to 48 hours of ripening is critical to the full nutritional development of the food, and harvesting the produce before it is ripe, to prevent spoilage in shipping, creates food devoid of many nutrients we need for good health.

Food processing and refining are the largest single destroyers of the nutrient value of foods. Since more than half of the average person's diet consists of processed foods, this is a serious impediment to obtaining the essential assortment of nutrients. We have even gone beyond processed foods to where we have created totally new artificial foods. Many of us no longer eat at home. We eat in cafeterias, restaurants, and fast-food chains where prepared and processed foods are the norm. Without intending to do so, the food processing industry has been responsible for an enormous reduction in the nutrient content of our foods. At the same time it has introduced thousands of chemical additives, such as preservatives, artificial colors, enhancers, and stabilizers, whose cumulative toxic effects are unknown, but are most likely substantial. More and more we are eating fabricated and imitation foods, so essentially we are eating more and more of less and less. This means that fewer nutrients and more toxins are reaching our cells.

Processing not only depletes the nutritional quality of the food, it can also change the molecular structure of food making it, in some cases, toxic. Consider milk: the pasteurization process changes the entire physicochemical state of the milk, deactivating key enzymes, reducing the bioavailability of its minerals, and even changing the structure of proteins. Pasteurized milk will kill a calf! No calf has survived more than eight weeks on pasteurized milk. Breakfast cereals made of puffed grains are another example. Whole grains are "puffed" by subjecting them to high heat and pressure. This process creates toxins that will kill laboratory animals after only two weeks on a puffed grain diet. Meat that is fried, grilled or barbecued forms powerful carcinogens called heterocyclic aromatic amines. Contributing to heart disease are chemicals called oxysterols. Damage to arteries is directly proportional to oxysterol concentration. Guess what? Processed foods which have been exposed to high heat and oxygen have lots of oxysterols in them. Processed foods like powdered egg yolk, powdered milk or gelatin all have oxysterols and these are added to hundreds of processed food products.

After all of that information, here are some simple guidelines:

Fresh

Eat foods that are just as fresh as they can be. Ask where the food is coming from and when it was harvested. Try to eat produce that is not more than a couple of days old.

Organic

Organic foods will help to increase your nutrient intake while minimizing your toxic exposure.

Variety

All foods contain different nutrients. Eating a wide variety of foods is essential to getting all the needed nutrients.

Unprocessed

Food should be as unprocessed as possible. Processing is anything you do to a food after harvesting, including freezing. Avoid all packaged foods and foods made with artificial colors, flavors, preservatives, white flour, sugar, dairy, and hydrogenated oils.

Raw

All animals are designed to eat raw foods. Cooking destroys nutrients and creates toxins. Try to eat at least three-quarters of your food raw.

Fruits and Vegetables

Increase your intake of fresh fruits and vegetables. These are the foundation of a good diet! Freshly made vegetable juice is a far better choice for the kids than milk or soda pop.

Essential Fatty Acids

These are so lacking in our diet that daily supplementation is a necessity.

Supplements

Because our need for nutrients is actually up at the same time that our supply is down, vitamin and mineral supplements are essential for good health. But, supplements vary widely in purity, effectiveness, and safety. Stick with BHN approved products like The Beyond Health brand.

Health is a choice, and it's a choice only you can make. Choosing a good diet is the first step.

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