

HEALTHY LIVING REPORT

Focus on: Ideal Nutrition for Optimal Health

MYTH: There is no one way to eat that's best for everyone.

FACT: There are underlying principles to healthy eating that will work for everyone.

The way to discover these principles for ideal nutrition is to find places in the world where people have optimal health and find out what they eat.

Weston A. Price, DDS wanted to know why his younger patients were less healthy than their parents and grandparents. Intrigued by stories of remote populations that exhibited excellent health, he traveled to 14 such cultures. He found the inhabitants were strong, happy, robust and healthy with no dental caries (cavities), straight teeth, good bone structure and high resistance to disease. They did not suffer from the chronic illnesses of the modern world such as cancer, heart disease, arthritis, diabetes, infertility, difficult childbirth, impotence and mental illness.

People from all over the world were studied: sequestered Swiss villages, isolated Gaelic communities, Eskimos and Indians of N. America, natives of Melanesia and Polynesia, African tribes, Australian Aborigines, New Zealand Maori and South American Indians. Although they lived in many different climates and altitudes, they all had one thing in common – they ate traditionally. Traditional diets consisted of organic, nutrient dense foods.

MYTH: Modern agribusiness produces foods as healthy as the foods eaten in "traditional diets."

FACT: Most modern foods are nutrient deficient.

Dr. Price discovered that traditional societies following their traditional diets consumed four times the water-soluble vitamins, calcium and other minerals, and ten

times the fat-soluble vitamins than people consuming modern "civilized" diets.

Traditional diets were analyzed by Dr. Price and found to be much higher in healthy fats and oils (oils used by traditional societies included olive oil, chicken fat, coconut oil, whole milk, butter, eggs, cheese, meats, fish) than modern diets. Just as importantly, traditional diets did not include refined sugar, high fructose corn syrup, refined flour, margarine or vegetable oils such as corn, safflower, canola or soy, all of which cause inflammation and are linked to heart disease, cancer, diabetes and other chronic diseases. In addition, refined carbohydrates including sugar, high fructose corn syrup and white flour are devoid of nutrients and actually deplete the body of nutrients. Sugar is also associated with tumor growth. Of course, traditional people used no artificial sweeteners, no artificial flavors and colors, no genetically modified foods, and especially no pasteurized, homogenized or reduced fat milk or milk products.

MYTH: Genetically modified, refined and factory farmed foods provide adequate nutrition.

FACT: Factory foods, although they may fill us up, leave us deficient in nutrients.

Fruits and vegetables, unless grown using traditional, organic principles of soil renewal, are today largely grown in depleted soils and contain a fraction of the nutrients contained in fruits and vegetables grown on non-depleted, mineral rich soil.

Factory cows are fed corn and soy, kept in inhumane conditions and are often given antibiotics and hormones. They are not as healthy as cows permitted to graze on grass in the open air. Meat and dairy products from these animals are less health promoting, with less favorable omega 6:3 ratios. In addition, farmed



fish live in terribly crowded conditions, swim in their own waste, are fed unnatural foods and given drugs to stimulate growth. Farmed salmon is an unappetizing grey and is artificially colored pink to look like wild-caught salmon. As with cows fed foods they do not naturally eat, they have unhealthy omega 6:3 ratios. Chickens are often kept in crowded inhumane conditions and fed drugs to mature quicker and produce more eggs. Pesticides, found in most (non-organic) commercial juices, vegetables and fruits, are linked to many cancers.

Modern health is deteriorating due, in large part, to inadequate nutrition. We may have a lot to eat but the food has less nutritional value. We have to eat much more food to get the nutrients our ancestors did eating less. This is possibly one reason for the modern obesity epidemic – people have to eat more food to get the nutrition they need.

For thousands of years our ancestors thrived on the nutrient dense foods that nature provides including raw milk (non-pasteurized, non-homogenized, full fat) and its products: cream, butter, cheese, yogurt, kefir, etc. from grass-fed cows, goats and sheep. Other traditional nutrient dense foods are grass-fed beef; wild-caught seafood (today because of mercury and other toxins smaller deep-sea fish like cod, halibut, mackerel and sardines are safest); soup stocks and beef and chicken broths and lacto-fermented foods. Especially important for health are traditional fats and oils such as olive oil, chicken fat, lard, goose grease, duck fat, palm oil and coconut oil that have always been a part of a healthy humanity's diet.

MYTH: How healthy we are depends more on genetics and less on diet.

FACT: Genetic health is largely dependent on diet.

Everywhere in the world when traditional peoples adopted a so-called modern diet their health deteriorated; they began to manifest the physical and mental illnesses known as "diseases of civilization." However, their relatives or fellow tribe, clan or society members who continued to eat traditionally did not suffer from these new diseases. A healthy diet will improve genetic expression, permitting you to maximize your physical and emotional potential; an unhealthy diet will adversely affect genetic expression and you will limit your ability to reach your full potential.

MYTH: Current research is just beginning to help us understand how extensively a pregnant woman's diet affects the health of her baby.

FACT: A pregnant woman's diet has always been known to affect the health of her baby.

For thousands of years traditional cultures ensured a healthy future generation by giving both the mother and father-to-be special nutrient dense foods. Dr. Price studied some of these groups of people just as they were being introduced to modern foods. Perhaps the most tragic finding of his work was that the children born to parents eating modern foods were less healthy. These children showed dental deformities, severe narrowing of the face, buck teeth, crowded teeth (such as impacted wisdom teeth), weak jaws and crooked teeth – all signs of poor nutrition. This was a reflection of nutritional deficiencies of the entire body and it comes from poor pre-natal as well as poor childhood nutrition. It was observed that the children suffered mentally as well as physically from the lack of essential nutrients necessary for optimal brain and nervous system growth.

MYTH: Artificial colors and flavors are approved for use and are therefore safe.

FACT: Artificial flavors and colors, often found in "junk" food, are linked to various cancers.

Cancer was once a rare disease but now affects as much as one-third of the population. Modern societies have seen a terrific rise in cancer as the use of artificial colors and flavors, MSG, aspartame, unhealthy vegetable oils, processed foods and additives were added to the diet. In addition to the "junk" in our diet, the deficiency in healthy fats, fat soluble vitamins, cholesterol, essential fatty acids and other nutrient dense foods has led to cancer's rise.

MYTH: Soy is a healthy food source.

FACT: No culture has ever used soy as a food source.

Except for fermented soy (tempeh, miso, natto, tamari and soy sauce), used mostly as a spice, soy is nowhere used as a food source. Unfermented soy, including tofu, soybeans, soymilk, soybean oil, soy lecithin, soy protein and other soy derivatives, contains anti-thyroid agents linked to hypothyroidism, thyroid cancer, weight gain, lethargy, dementia and constipation.

Soy also contains female hormones (phytoestrogens) that are linked to reproductive problems, infertility and decreased sex drive. Soy was eaten by Buddhist monks to reduce libido. Couples wishing to conceive a healthy child should avoid soy.

MYTH: Infant soy formula is a healthy alternative to breastfeeding.

FACT: Infant soy formula should be avoided as it is unhealthy and unnatural for infants.

Infants fed soy formula have 13,000 to 22,000 times more estrogen compounds in their blood than controls. This is the estrogen equivalent of 5 birth control pills/day. [Setchell KD et al. Isoflavone content of infant formulas and the metabolic fate of these early phytoestrogens in early life. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. 1998; Supplement:1453S-1461S.] Researchers believe that is why girls are showing signs of puberty as early as age 5 or 6 (other environmental estrogen-mimickers are PCBs and DDE). [Freni-Titulaer LW et al. Premature thelarche in Puerto Rico. A search for environmental factors. *Am J of Dis Child*. 1986;140(12):1263-1267.] Animal studies have linked soy to retarded or disturbed sexual development in male offspring suggesting that pregnant women should avoid soy in their diets. [Wisniewski AB et al. Exposure to genistein during gestation and lactation demasculinizes the reproductive system in rats. *Journal of Urology*. 2003;169:1582-1586.]

MYTH: Soy prevents cancer.

FACT: Soy may be a contributing factor to some cancers.

Two chemicals in soy (genistein and daidzein) are linked to childhood leukemia and breast cancer. [de Lemos ML. Effects of soy phytoestrogens genistein and daidzein on breast cancer growth. *Ann Pharmacother*. 2001;35(9):1118-1121.] In addition, genistein is linked to uterine cancer. [Newbold R et al. Increased uterine cancer seen in mice injected with genistein, a soy estrogen, as newborns. *Cancer Research*. 2002;61(11):4325-4328.] Soy has also been linked to pancreatic cancer [Liener IE. Letter to the editor: Soybean protease inhibitors and pancreatic carcinogenesis. *J. Nutr*. 1996; 126:582-583.] and leukemia. [Abe T. Infantile leukemia and soybeans – a hypothesis [editorial]. *Leukemia*. 1999;13:317-320.]

MYTH: Low cholesterol and low fat diets are healthy.

FACT: Your body needs good fats and oils and that includes cholesterol.

Cholesterol, mostly made by your liver, with only about 5% coming from dietary sources, is a necessary

component of your cells and is a vital nutrient. Low cholesterol, low-fat diets are linked to cancer, heart disease, depression and shorter life span. Fat is essential for health. Just make sure the sources of fat are traditional fats and oils and not commercial (hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated) fats and oils that are full of trans fats.

Hydrogenated fats from vegetable oils have been linked to sexual dysfunction, cancer, atherosclerosis, diabetes, obesity, immune system dysfunction, low-birth-weight babies, birth defects, decreased visual acuity, sterility, difficulty in lactation and problems with bones and tendons.

[Enig MG. *Trans Fatty Acids in the Food Supply: A Comprehensive Report Covering 60 Years of Research*, 2nd Edition. Silver Spring, MD: Enig Associates, Inc, 1995]



MYTH: Artificial sweeteners such as aspartame (NutraSweet™), sucralose and others are a safe alternative to sugar that help with weight loss.

FACT: Aspartame and other artificial sweeteners are worse than refined sugar.

They are linked to brain tumors, birth defects, diabetes, epilepsy, seizures, aggression, anxiety, depression, fatigue and memory loss, eye and ear problems, kidney problems, heart palpitations as well as many other conditions. Plus, they cause weight gain.

MYTH: We should limit our salt intake.

FACT: Salt is necessary for life and health.

However, that depends on what we refer to as salt. If we consider the refined or table salt available in most food stores then the above myth makes more sense. Table salt – pure sodium chloride (NaCl with sodium ferrocyanide and ferric ammonium citrate added as anti-caking agents and sodium carbonate added to preserve color) – is unhealthy.

Your body needs real, naturally produced salt. Traditional cultures have used sea salt which contains

84 elements vital to life – sodium, magnesium, silicone, chloride, calcium, titanium, manganese, iron, copper, zinc, selenium, zirconium, silver, iodine, platinum, gold and many more – the elements found in the ocean where life originated.

[www.himalayanlivingsalt.com]

[Ferreira P, Hendel B. *Water and Salt: the Essence of Life*. NY: Natural Resources, 2003.]

MYTH: The only symptom of dehydration is thirst.

FACT: Dehydration is very common and thirst isn't always the most obvious symptom.

The symptoms of dehydration may include depression, disc problems, hypertension, digestion and elimination problems, weight gain, heart disease, fatigue, asthma, allergies and many other health problems. Water is a vital nutrient that is essential for the optimal functioning of every cell and organ.

MYTH: Juices, coffee, tea and other liquids are just as good as water.

FACT: Not all liquids are alike in their ability to rehydrate.

When we try to quench our thirst with tea, coffee, juices, beer, soda and alcohol instead of water we risk dehydration. Distilled and reverse osmosis filtered water are often too pure and cannot be properly utilized by the body. Avoid fluoridated and chlorinated water – fluoride and chlorine have both been linked to thyroid damage and chlorine has been linked to bladder cancer.

General rules for ideal nutrition and optimal health:

- ✓ Eat organic, nutrient dense foods.
- ✓ Eat the foods that were eaten traditionally where you or your ancestors came from.
- ✓ Avoid refined and processed foods, fast food and fad foods.
- ✓ Drink enough water to stay hydrated.
- ✓ Enjoy sunlight – just don't burn.
- ✓ Employ physical (and mental) detox regularly.

Web sites for more information:

www.westonaprice.org

www.ppnf.org

Recommended Reading

Nourishing Traditions by Sally Fallon. Washington, DC: New Trends Publishing, 2001. An excellent cookbook and nutrition guide.

Nutrition and Physical Degeneration 7th Edition by Weston A. Price, DDS. La Mesa, CA: Price Pottenger Nutrition Foundation, 2008. Dr. Price's research and story of his travels has inspired generations of scientists and non-professionals. It is replete with fascinating photos documenting the effects nutrition has on health.

The Untold Story of Milk by Ron Schmid, ND. Foreword by Sally Fallon Morell. The history, politics and science of nature's perfect food: raw milk from pasture-fed cows. Washington, DC: New Trends Publishing, 2009.

The Whole Soy Story by Kaayla T. Daniel, PhD, CCN. The dark side of America's favorite health food. Washington, DC: New Trends Publishing, 2005.

Your Body's Many Cries for Water by F. Batmanghelidj, MD. Don't treat thirst with medications. Falls Church, VA: Global Health Solutions, Inc., 1992.

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