

NUTRITION BASICS

By Elizabeth Lipski, PhD, CCN

CONFUSED ABOUT WHAT TO eat? You are not alone! Today more than ever before you really need to understand more about food and nutrition. Some people feel best if they eat a low carbohydrate diet while others feel best on a high fiber, high complex carbohydrate diet. Some people find they feel best on the Zone diet, while others feel best on the Blood Type Diet, a vegan diet, or macrobiotic diet. Still others have food allergies. So, the first rule of good nutrition is to pay attention to your own body and how you feel. This concept is called “biochemical individuality”. Just as each of us have a different face and body type, each of us also have unique biochemical needs which are represented by the foods and supplements which make us feel best. Your nutritionist or nutritionally oriented health professional can help you sort out what will work best for you.

Second, Americans for the most part eat really poorly. By government statistics we eat 18% of our calories each day as sugar, 18% as saturated fats, 17% in processed foods, and adults consume 3-10% of our calories each day in alcoholic beverages. When you add these up, we eat over half of our foods each day as high calorie, low nutrient density foods. So is it any wonder that over time we fall apart? All the major changes in our food supply have occurred since World War II. We transport foods differently. We grow foods from hybrid seeds. We use more pesticides and fungicides. We have microwave ovens and irradiated foods. We have frozen foods and more and more processed foods. Our food is different, but

our bodies are the same. So, what can we do to eat better?

First, clear out all the foods you don't want to eat: clean out your cabinets, refrigerator and freezer. Toss out any foods that contain hydrogenated vegetable oil, partially hydrogenated vegetable oil, or vegetable shortening. These re-structured “trans” fats are #1 on my hit list! Industry uses them because they are cheap, have a long shelf life and give a buttery texture to foods. While this enables manufacturers to produce products, which meet their needs, they don't meet yours. They've also been associated with atherosclerosis, some types of cancer and all inflammatory illnesses, like arthritis, eczema, irritable bowel syndrome and more. These fats play at least as large a role in heart disease as do saturated fats. You'll find them in most crackers, cookies, and packaged foods.

While you're at it, now get rid of the high sugar foods, highly processed foods including white flour products, and food that contain a lot of food additives including artificial colors and flavors, and preservatives. The average American consumes 135 pounds of sugar each and 14 pounds of food additives each year. Sugar tastes good, but is considered an empty calorie because it depletes us of nutrients like chromium and B-complex vitamins, which are necessary for its metabolism but missing from sugar itself. It also displaces more nutritious food. White flour has lost about 70% of the nutrients of whole wheat flour. And while food additives have been tested singly, no one really knows what effects they have on us long term in combination. In these

categories, less is better.

Rules for Healthful Eating

1. Eat 90% of your food to nourish your body and 10% just for fun. This is a major improvement over half for fun and half for health and it allows for the occasional chocolate chip cookie, glass of wine, or serving of steak. Your eating doesn't have to be perfect, just look for progress!
2. The life in foods gives us life. When possible eat local foods in season. They usually have the highest nutrient content and the greatest enzyme activity. Eat foods that will spoil. This insures that the food still has life in it! Food is fuel and food gives us energy. Because we really are what we eat, if we eat foods that have little enzyme activity, they don't "spark" our body to work correctly. Enzymes are to our body what spark plugs are to the engine of our car. Without those sparks, the car doesn't run right. Processed foods are devitalized of these "sparks".
3. Eat a rainbow of fruits and vegetables every day! Eat at least 5 servings, preferably up to 9 or 12 servings, of fruits and vegetables each day. Fresh fruits and vegetables are loaded with enzymes, vitamins, minerals, and important phytonutrients such as carotenoids and bioflavonoids that protect us from cancer, heart disease, and most other chronic degenerative illnesses. Fruits and vegetables also provide us with fiber. Each month we discover more about the marvels of produce.
4. Choose organically grown foods whenever possible. The average American eats a pound of herbicides and pesticides each year. Organically grown foods generally have higher levels of nutrients because organic farmers pay more attention to their animals' health and to their soils. Bob Smith, from Doctor's Data, has released a study, which analyzed organic versus commercially grown apples, pears, potatoes, wheat and wheat berries. He found that the mineral levels in organically grown food were twice as high, on average, as commercially grown foods. Animals raised without hormones and antibiotics can't pass them along to us! Research is more strongly linking them with breast and prostate cancer each year.
5. Increase high-fiber foods--if you can tolerate them. Americans eat 12 grams of fiber on average each day. Recommendations from the National Cancer Institute are to consume 20-30 grams of fiber daily--the same amount Americans ate in 1850. Richest sources are whole grains (brown rice, whole wheat, bulgur, millet, buckwheat, rye, barley, spelt, oats, quinoa), legumes, vegetables and fruits. Fiber protects our colon health, and reduces our risk of colon and breast cancer.
6. Eat adequate protein for your body type. We find protein in virtually all food. Protein is the main building block of our body--the matrix of bone, substance of muscle, our immune system, and many of our hormones. You can find excellent protein in fish, poultry, lean meats, legumes, low-fat dairy products, and eggs. Fruits, vegetables, and grains also have excellent protein but in a smaller ratio. Nuts and seeds provide protein, but watch out for the fat and calories--they add up really fast!
7. Eat high quality fats. Fats found in fish (salmon, mackerel, tuna, and sardines), nuts and seeds, and grains provide nutrients called essential fatty acids. Even though Americans eat a lot of fat, many of us are deficient in these protective oils. Make sure to get some every day.
8. Drink pure water. Find out about your water

quality. Use a filtering system of some type to remove chlorine and toxic substances.

These rules will work no matter which basic diet works best for you. You can change the way you feel simply by eating better quality foods. Remember to make changes one step at a time.

Foods That Help Lower Cholesterol

- Soluble Fibers all types of legumes/beans
- Oat bran, oatmeal, rice bran
- Green peppers, cucumber, sweet potatoes
- Cold Water Fish High in EPA/DHA Omega 3 fatty acids
 - Helps normalize serum cholesterol and triglycerides
 - Prevent platelet stickiness and relax blood vessels
 - Eat at least 2-3 times weekly
 - Best sources: tuna, salmon, sardines, herring, lake trout, swordfish, striped bass, halibut
- Yogurt 3 cups daily can lower cholesterol levels up to 10% per week
- Pectin found in: apples, pears, plums, grapefruit, blueberries
- Soy products Tofu, tempeh, miso, soy-ice cream
- Olive oil Can help drop cholesterol levels
- Nuts/Seeds almonds, walnuts, pecans, sunflowerseeds, pumpkin seeds
- Garlic, Onions Raw
- Supplements which may be helpful:
 - Niacin NAC (N-acetyl-cysteine)
 - Vitamin C Grapeseed extract/blueberry extract
 - Vitamin E Green Tea extract
 - B6, B12, folic acid Guguplex
 - Co-enzyme Q10 Carnitine
 - Garlic Psyllium
 - Chromium Ginseng
 - Lecithin

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