

Nutrition – The Complete Picture (Part 3)

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In the June issue of the Rural Route Magazine our article was ‘Nutrition – The Complete Picture (Part 1)’. We talked about complementary protein, enzymes, extra virgin olive oil and apple cider vinegar, cleansing programs, and foods for your ‘cleanse days.’

In the last issue (July/August) of the Rural Route Magazine we were considering other exciting areas of nutrition. We looked at using herbal and nutritional supplements to help cleanse and detoxify bodily systems. We talked about the benefits of animal protein for colder climates and colder seasons of the year, versus grain and legume protein for hotter climates and the hotter seasons of the year. The benefits of the vegetarian diet for periodic cleansing of the body were discussed. We looked at the health value of cayenne and kelp, which are two super foods that are often overlooked. Nutrient absorption and cellular elimination were explained, and we talked about the importance of the right type and quantity of pure water for our nutrition program.

This article is the last in the three part series on ‘Nutrition – The Complete Picture’. Our goal has been to provide a very brief overview of nutrition, and to give you some interesting ideas to help you improve your health, and the health of your family. In this article we are going to offer some thoughts on oxygen, healthy fats, organic foods, blood sugar, fibre, two more super foods, allergies and the digestive process.

OXYGEN

Oxygen and water are often overlooked when we talk about nutrition, but they are essential to the life process. Several times throughout the day we should exercise our diaphragm, our abdominals and our lungs to maximize our ability to **oxygenate the body**. The diaphragm is located at the bottom of the rib cage, and reaches back to the spine supporting our lungs and our heart! The diaphragm is very important because it is the **main muscle for breathing**. With normal breathing the diaphragm moves less than an inch, but with vigorous exercise it moves up and down several inches! The following diaphragm exercise can be done standing, sitting or lying down. First, inhale as much as possible, allowing the lungs and abdominals to expand. Second, exhale as much as

possible while pulling in the abdominal muscles. Third, using the diaphragm muscle try to pull and lift the abdominals and diaphragm up under the rib cage. Hold for several seconds, and then relax and breathe in. If you have done it right you will hear the air rush into your lungs when your diaphragm relaxes. If you are comfortable, you can repeat this exercise about ten times in a row. This breathing exercise can be done several times throughout the day to bring a much higher level of **life-giving oxygen** to all the trillions of cells in the body. Other benefits include strengthening and cleansing the respiratory system, improving core and abdominal strength, and relaxing the body. Of course, try to do this exercise in a clean environment away from pollution.

HEALTHY FATS

Before we talk about healthy fats, let’s look at unhealthy fats. Hydrogenated fats are really a type of soft plastic, and should never be put in the body. The process of hydrogenation involves injecting hydrogen gas under pressure into liquid oils which turns the liquid into a soft plastic-type of material known as ‘margarine’ or ‘vegetable shortening’. This man-made product contains trans fats and free radicals and is not healthy. A healthy and natural type of solid fat that has been used for thousands of years is the fat from butter and lard.

Another unhealthy fat is homogenized fat. The homogenization process splits the fat molecules so they will stay in solution and not separate. The milk processing industry has been doing this for several decades so the cream (fat) will not rise to the top of the milk. Homogenized fat is unhealthy for the heart and the arteries. All commercial milk products are homogenized. Dairy farmers drinking their own milk are drinking non-homogenized milk which is healthy. Anyone growing up during the 1960’s or before, will remember drinking milk that was pasteurized to kill bacteria, but was **not homogenized** and the cream would rise to the top of the bottle. This cream was a healthy fat.

Extra virgin olive oil (EVOO) is another healthy fat, and is cleansing for the liver and gallbladder, and lubricates the digestive tract. Olive oil is a monounsaturated oil so it is stable at room temperature, and does not go rancid like polyunsaturated oils do. Olive oil

is a foundational part of the ‘**Mediterranean Diet**’, and is known to be healthy for the heart, the blood and the digestion. Organic flax oil is a healthy oil, but because it is polyunsaturated it has to be cold-pressed, packaged in a dark bottle, and stored in the refrigerator or it will quickly go rancid. Cod liver oil has been used for generations as a healthy food supplement, and more recently **omega-3 fish oil** supplements have been proven to offer significant health benefits. Essential fatty acids (EFA) from the omega-3 fats (EPA and DHA) are primarily found in smaller, cold-water fish.

Two other healthy fats to consider are evening primrose oil (in capsules), and organic coconut oil. One of the first fats consumed in human history was the natural fat found in non-homogenized dairy products, eggs, fish, poultry, and meat. Our bodies are used to this type of fat, and in moderation these are healthy fats. However, the concern nowadays is chemicals, toxins, drugs, and hormone residues that can be found in the fat of commercially raised livestock.

ORGANIC FOODS

This is rather a strange subject because since the beginning of time humans have always eaten organic foods. It is only in the last 60 to 70 years that the industrialized nations have gradually changed to non-organic agriculture. The chemical industry has been promoting toxic pesticides and chemical fertilizers to apparently increase food production and the profitability of agriculture during this time period. Hybrid seed, and more recently GMO (genetically modified organism) seed has also been promoted by the chemical industry for the above reasons, or so they say.

If possible, it is usually healthier to eat certified organic foods, but not always. There are other things to consider in making healthy food choices. For example, how fresh is this food? Where was it grown? How many thousands of miles has it travelled to get to me? Was it picked or processed before it was ripe? Can I trust the organic certification process in some third-world countries? What about locally grown foods that are produced without toxic chemicals, but are not certified as organic? These are some interesting questions to think about, and there is not

always an easy answer. Growing your own food is very safe, because you can control the growing and harvesting process!

BLOOD SUGAR

We have a big problem with blood sugar in the Western world. Some people consume unhealthy amounts of 'junk foods' that are high in fat, salt, and sugar. It is quite common to see children drinking soft drinks, eating chocolates, candies, and high calorie desserts. This habit continues into adulthood, and it is not surprising that we have an epidemic of people with hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar), and hyperglycaemia (high blood sugar). Unfortunately, more and more children are becoming diabetic as well. Most of these problems can be prevented with common sense, but it is easy for us to get addicted to the sugar 'high'. Remember, even natural sweeteners like honey, maple syrup, blackstrap molasses, and barley malt are still highly concentrated sweeteners and have to be used conservatively, or they can become a problem too.

Ripe, raw fruit provides a healthy source of sweetener, and of course the complex carbohydrates from grains and legumes are converted into glucose (blood sugar), but that happens slowly through the gradual process of digestion so the blood sugar is not quickly elevated.

Exercising, or doing manual labour after eating is helpful for blood sugar problems. For adult-onset diabetes (Type 2), the combination of eating a natural diet that is low in sugars, and moderate but regular exercise can be very helpful for blood sugar regulation.

FIBRE

Such a simple, and yet important part of our diet, but often forgotten about. They say most of us need at least **30 grams of fibre** per day, but many people get less than 15 grams. The result is poor digestion, poor nutrient absorption, poor bowel function, a toxic digestive tract, and that all results in a toxic blood supply. The good news is that it is easy to change all that.

For people eating grain and legume protein combinations they will often be getting more than half of their daily fibre needs met. (For an explanation of grain and legume protein read the first article in this series, 'Nutrition – The Complete Picture (Part 1)' in the June issue of the Rural Route Magazine.) The remaining portion of our daily fibre needs can be received from eating several servings of cooked and raw vegetables each day. Remember, the more fibre we consume the more water we need to

drink, so that everything moves through the digestive tract properly. Increase fibre slowly to prevent gas and cramping. Including grains, legumes and vegetables in our diet will give us a balance of **soluble and insoluble fibre**, which is good.

TWO MORE SUPER FOODS

Directly connected with our need for adequate fibre each day, are the super foods of organic **flax seed meal**, and organic **pumpkin seed meal**. Purchase the flax seeds whole, and grind them to a powder in a coffee grinder, blender, or use a mortar and pestle. The pumpkin seeds should be the dark, larger seeds from Europe, rather than the green pumpkin seeds in the stores that are often from China. Grind them to a powder just like the flax seeds for maximum nutrient absorption. An excellent fibre supplement is a combination of flax seed meal, pumpkin seed meal and psyllium. Mix about a tablespoon of each with 250 ml of water or juice, and drink it before it thickens. Flax seed and pumpkin seed meal can also be used in grain or legume dishes, salads, soups, 'smoothies', sauces, toppings, or wherever.

ALLERGIES

There is an increasing concern with allergies every year as more and more people are suffering from a toxic overload on their bodily systems. Constant exposure to a substance or food can produce an irritation in the body, and an allergy can develop which wouldn't otherwise have developed. It is interesting that once we become allergic, we can also become addicted to the allergen! Some of the most common food allergies include: dairy products, wheat, eggs, oranges, peanuts, yeast, corn and soy. It is a good idea NOT to eat the same foods all of the time. A '**rotation diet**' where foods are rotated throughout the week is helpful in both preventing and overcoming allergies.

A simple way to test for food allergies is to cleanse and detoxify the body with the '**elimination diet**'. This involves choosing one food and not consuming it for a period of one to three weeks. When a person stops consuming that food they might experience temporary symptoms of withdrawal, which is normal. They should pay attention to their level of health, and any health concerns they have to see if there is a change. After one to three weeks without that food, they start eating it again. Often at that point a person notices a change in their health. If their symptoms improved when they weren't eating the food, and then their health

concerns returned when they started eating that food again, they can see that their body is reacting negatively.

DIGESTIVE PROCESS

This is the last subject in the 3 part series on nutrition, but in many ways is the most important subject. Everything related to the physical health of our bodies seems to begin and end with how well our complex digestive system is functioning. In natural health care the first concern is how to prevent disease, whereas the focus in the medical field is how to treat the symptoms of the disease condition. In natural health care the focus is treating the cause of disease, not just the symptoms, and the cause of disease often starts in the digestive tract. Consider 30 feet of small and large intestine curled up in the abdominal area of our body. One of the problems with that amount of 'plumbing' is the residue of food wastes that are not completely eliminated each day in our bowel function. Over a period of years this toxic, fermenting residue of old food wastes can pollute our blood supply and overburden the liver. Along with about 500 other important functions in the body, the liver must detoxify the blood which has absorbed nutrients from the digestive tract.

Periodic 'cleanse days' are a necessity to help clean out the digestive tract so that it can function up to its potential. To understand 'cleansing programs' refer to 'Nutrition – The Complete Picture (Part 1)' in the June issue of the Rural Route Magazine.

It can be helpful to study all three of these articles on nutrition at the same time. As was explained in the first article, it is only a brief overview, but many important subjects were introduced, and hopefully it has provided some food for thought.

Next month in the Rural Route Magazine we are going to look at one of the most serious health concerns of the 21st century, and yet it is rarely talked about! Don't miss it. ✨



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