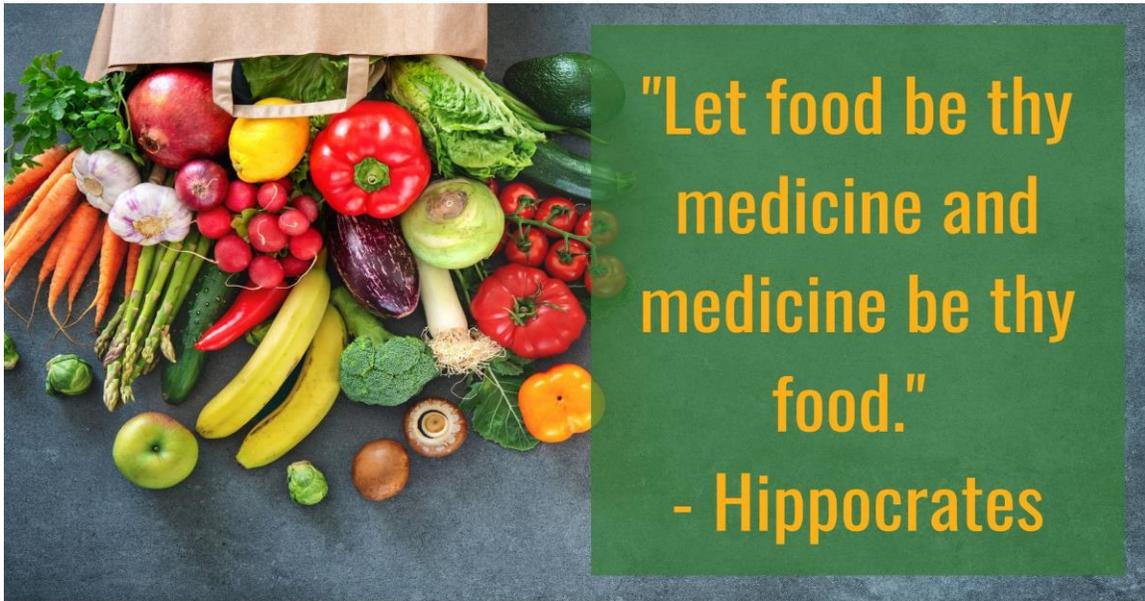


What Should You Eat?

How to eat a nutrient dense whole foods diet



Hippocrates made this comment some 2000 years ago – and we could not agree more. While most people know that quality food is important, it can be difficult to navigate conflicting information and sometimes even *misinformation*.

Proper nutrition is the foundation of optimal wellness and for that reason we have [nutritionists](#) on staff to help guide you in this process. Although general guidelines are helpful, an individualized program developed for you and your family takes into account your specific concerns, health conditions, dietary preferences and goals.

A “one-size-fits-all” exercise program is not going to work for everyone. A personal trainer helps you design an exercise program based on where you are, where you want to be, your physical limitations, available exercise equipment and time restraints. In much the same way as a personal trainer develops a customized exercise program, a personalized nutrition consult helps you and your family move in the direction towards optimal health.

Let's Talk About What Everyone Can Agree On

Whether you are a strict vegetarian or a proponent of the Paleo diet, vegetables should be the mainstay of your diet! We encourage all of our patients to (whenever possible) eat organic, seasonal vegetables with a variety of color.

Another issue we can all agree on is - sugar is bad! That includes any foods that are converted to sugar rapidly in the body, such as bread, rice, pasta, and potatoes. Foods rapidly converted to sugar in the body have a high “glycemic index.” Foods with a high glycemic index raise your insulin level, predispose you to diabetes, and accelerate the development of other age-related disorders such as cardiovascular disease by promoting cellular inflammation.

So, we can all agree that vegetables are good for you and sugar is bad.

What About Fat?



We need to get away from the notion that fat is public enemy number one when it turns out sugar is our main nemesis. [We don't get fat from eating fat.](#) We get fat from excessive carbohydrate consumption. Most of our blood fats (cholesterol, triglycerides) come from eating carbohydrates not from eating fat. Simply stated, sugar and refined carbohydrates contribute the most to obesity and raising our lipids.

Eggs have been demonized in the past, however, more recent studies show that eggs do not have the impact on cholesterol we used to think. The egg yolk contains many vital vitamins and minerals that we can all use. The egg white contains proteins that have a very high biological value.

The bottom line is we need “good fats.” These include quality fats from olive oil, avocados, coconut oil, seeds and nuts (with the exception of peanuts). Peanuts are actually a legume.

What About Protein?

Protein is one of our three macronutrients (the other two being carbohydrates and fat) that we all need. Carbohydrates and fats are the major fuel or energy sources for our bodies. The building blocks of proteins, referred to as amino acids, provide structure for our bodies and serve as the foundation for chemical messengers referred to as neurotransmitters.

Quality protein can help with appetite control, muscle synthesis, and creation of neurotransmitters, which control our mood and emotions. Quality protein sources include grass fed, free range, humanely raised animals and wild fish.

What About the Vegetarian/ Vegan Diet?

For those of you who might choose a vegetarian diet for ethical, moral or religious reasons, that is a personal choice. I respect this and appreciate individuals making intentional food choices. Just be aware that strictly vegetarian diets may lack vitamin B12 and other vital nutrients. And, for those of you who are vegetarians I would strongly encourage you to have a personal nutritional consult to make sure there are no significant nutrient deficiencies in your diet.

The China Study, published in 2006 by T. Colin Campbell is often cited by advocates of the vegetarian diet as the final word on why we should avoid all animal protein. His conclusions have been criticized by other nutritional scientists who felt that he selectively chose and cherry picked data to support his conclusions that animal protein from any source increases diseases such as cancer. Just do an Internet search on the China Study reviews before you jump on the China Study bandwagon.

The problem with nutrition research is that investigator bias and broad generalizations often don't hold up to more in-depth scrutiny. You can't just read the headlines without reading between the lines.

Consider that eating a fast food burger is not the same as eating a burger that comes from a pasture-raised cow. This needs to be kept in mind when we are making generalizations regarding animal protein. My personal view is that we wouldn't have incisor and canine teeth if we weren't designed to be omnivores.

What About Grains and Beans?

Some experts, particularly those in the Paleo diet camp, would suggest no grains and beans. Grains and beans both have a relatively high glycemic index which can increase your blood sugar and insulin level. This is an issue if you are trying to lose weight or are diabetic.

Also, grains and beans may contain "anti-nutrients" which may cause inflammation and impair mineral absorption. The anti-nutrients in grains (grains being the seeds of grasses) make the grains resistant to digestion. The idea is that if a bird were to eat one of these seeds, it would pass undigested. Then, at the time of elimination somewhere in the distance, the undigested seed could sprout and create a new plant. The same can be said for beans.

Soaking or sprouting can help mitigate the adverse effects of these anti-nutrients

and make them more digestible and palatable. When sprouted, the grain or bean actually creates a shoot and in essence you are eating a small plant. Also, at that point you have unlocked a virtual treasure chest of vitamins and minerals within the grain or bean. My view is that grains and beans should be eaten in moderation, non-GMO and preferably soaked and/or sprouted.

The exception would be gluten containing grains such as wheat, rye and barley. [The gluten protein](#) in these grains can incite various forms of immunological reactions which cause gut inflammation or [leaky gut](#). There are various forms of gluten related disorders which go well beyond the worst form of gluten reaction, which is celiac disease.

What About Dairy?

Both Paleo and vegetarian proponents admonish dairy. Many people are intolerant to dairy for a variety of reasons. They may have lactose intolerance, which is a deficiency in the enzyme lactase, which leads to gas, bloating and diarrhea. Others may react by creating antibodies to the various proteins in dairy, including whey and casein. There are various mechanisms which underlie food intolerances. Excessive dairy can contribute to acne, allergic rhinitis, asthma, obesity, diabetes and may actually increase the risk of osteoporosis. I would limit dairy, if you have any at all, to occasional fermented products such as quality cheese and yogurt.

What About My Wallet?

Eating a “clean diet” with organic fruits and vegetables, grass fed beef, free-range chicken, and wild fish is going to be more expensive. Realize that the average American wastes about 25-30% of their food budget. It’s like throwing money down the drain. Through proper grocery shopping, meal planning, food storage and repurposing of leftovers, these costs can be greatly decreased.

As a culture, we need to get back to meal preparation and [cooking at home](#). We can save a lot of money by not eating so much in restaurants and fast food establishments. We can reconnect our families through the social interaction of cooking and enjoying meals together. Cooking and meal preparation is becoming a lost art. It is really simple once you understand the basics, which starts with nutrient dense whole foods.



The food costs associated with eating a healthier diet pale in comparison to the increasing healthcare costs associated with poor dietary habits. We are here to help you and your family on this journey!