Image Awareness Wellness Institute

Searching for Nutrition (Part 2)

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Fish

Few would argue about the inherent health properties of fish. Maynard Murray discusses a study of sperm whales which took place in Peru between 1942 and 1945. The researchers found not a single incidence of malignancy, arteriosclerosis or arthritis after examining 900-1,000 animals. A similar examination of about 3,000 seals off the Aleutian Islands of Alaska also failed to reveal any pathology of the arteries or joints.

The health of these animals resulted from their consumption of highly nutritious fish. Fish are not only rich in omega-3 fatty acids, but also vitamins, minerals, and amino acids.

Weston Price noted a similar achievement of optimal health (as evidenced by lack of dental abnormalities) among primitive peoples living "very largely on dairy products and marine life."

Unfortunately, we do not live in a time which can be compared in any way to the manner in which people lived in the past. This newsletter will discuss why the quality of the food we eat matters.

We live in a time of unprecedented pollution. Many of these pollutants find their way into our food supply. The potential for contamination of even the most healthy foods leaves us no option but to discuss this issue.

The consumption of fish has been encouraged while dairy products and meats have been attacked. The benefit of fish oil has been demonstrated by repeated research studies.

Fish should come from waters which are not contaminated which can be a challenge today. Fish spoils rapidly and is best consumed as fresh as possible. Fish has the advantage of requiring very little cooking compared to other meats. Since fish is usually cooked at a lower temperature than other meats there is less destruction of the amino acids.

The fish of best nutritional value are those which live in the coldest waters for they have the highest concentration of the beneficial omega-3 fatty acids.

Many people assume that fish is fish and that all fish or fish oil supplements are the same. Research, however, suggests that freedom from contamination is important if one wishes to derive full benefit from the addition of fish or fish oil supplements to the diet.

Researchers fed mice farmed Atlantic salmon with high levels of persistent organic pollutants and farmed salmon with low levels of pollutants. The pollutants measured included PCBs and dioxins. Animals exposed to the pollutants demonstrated greater insulin resistance, obesity and intolerance to glucose. All of these are indicators of diabetic risk. The fatty tissue of animals exposed to the pollutants also exhibited chronic-low grade inflammation. The researchers wrote,

"Our data indicate that intake of farmed salmon fillet contributes to several metabolic disorders linked to type 2 diabetes and obesity, and suggest a role of POPs in these deleterious effects. Overall, these findings may participate to improve nutritional strategies for the prevention and therapy of insulin resistance."

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Fermentation

Any competent botanist can point out that plants have developed a wide variety of defensive measures with which to protect themselves. These defensive strategies include enzyme

inhibitors, cyanide containing compounds, anti-nutrients, carcinogens, neurotoxins, and allergens.

Beans are loaded with digestive inhibitors which is why they are notorious for creating flatulence or gas. The phytate in cereal fiber "has been found consistently to depress absorption and retention of calcium, magnesium and zinc, and usually to depress absorption of iron."

Fermentation and sprouting are two simple strategies which can be used to reduce the potentially toxic substances in plants, improve nutrient availability, and improve the ability to digest plant foods.

Early cultures routinely sprouted cereal grains when making bread because the technology to crush the kernels easily did not exist. Cereal grains were also fermented.

I was surprised when I travelled to Germany. I routinely experience difficulty when trying to eat bread in the United States. I ate bread without a problem in Germany. I think the difference was the sourdough cultures developed in Germany and Switzerland over hundreds of years.

Failure to process grain in the traditional manner may explain the widespread gluten intolerance today. Gluten intolerance appears to be much more common today than in the past.

Poor Turkish families in the 1960's experienced an epidemic of dwarfism among their children. Researchers eventually traced the problem to the consumption of unleavened bread. The phytates in the wheat were robbing the children of zinc which is essential for growth. Yeasts in sourdough break down phytates releasing the minerals in the grains.

Soybeans, along with a number of other foods, also contain nutrient antagonists including goitrogens which interfere with thyroid function and phytoestrogens which can disrupt sex hormone function.

The Chinese and Japanese traditionally soaked, rinsed, and fermented soybeans resulting in products like traditional tofu, miso, natto, and other products. The anti-nutrients and hormone disrupting compounds are removed by these processes.

Vegetables were also fermented traditionally. Two common examples are pickles and sauerkraut. The body has no enzyme to break down cellulose and release the nutrients which are locked in the cell walls of plants. This is why thorough chewing of plant foods is a valuable exercise. Fermentation of plant foods is one means of releasing these nutrients and making them more available to the digestive tract. Not only does the fermentation of vegetables release the nutrients in the foods, but the bacterial cultures which ferment the food produce their own nutrients which are readily usable by the human body.

Some of the beneficial bacteria which multiply in fermented foods can also take up habitation in our own digestive tracts protecting us from harmful bacteria. Beneficial bacteria are often supplemented in the form of probiotics.

Shanahan describes how to ferment vegetables, "Shred a cabbage in the food processor. Mix with a full teaspoon of salt and a little liquid from a jar of Bubbies brand pickles (or other fermented vegetable product) and pack into a lightproof containiner with something heavy, like a jar full of water, sitting on top to keep the cabbage under the liquid. Cover with a towel to keep the bugs off. Wait a week or so, and eat."

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Sprouting

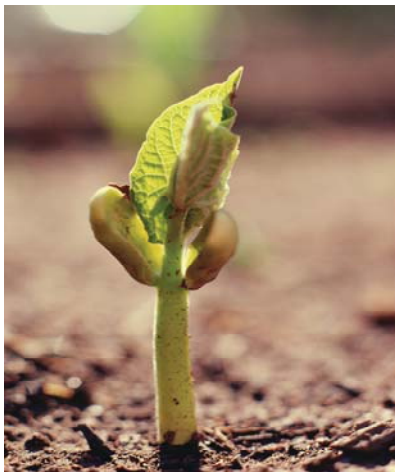
Shanahan explains why sprouting improves the nutritional value of foods, "Seeds are designed to greedily hold on to their stored proteins, fats, and minerals over extended periods of time. To that end, the plant sheaths them in a hard, nearly impenetrable carapace and locks down nutrients with chemical binders that digestive enzymes can't loosen. Moistening the seeds for a few days activates the plant's own enzymes—including phytase, which digests phytates—to soften the seed, free up bound nutrients, and even create new ones by converting stored starch and fatty acids into proteins and vitamins."

References:

Shanahan, Catherine, and Shanahan, Luke, *Deep Nutrition Why Your Genes Need Traditional Food*, www.DrCate.com, 2009, 149.

Raw Foods

Fruits and vegetables are very rich in antioxidants. Many of these antioxidants are destroyed by exposure to heat or oxygen. Fresh raw fully ripe fruits and vegetables are at the peak of their antioxidant potency. Many antioxidants deteriorate with long term



storage or processing of foods.

Raw foods are also filled with enzymes. Enzymes are readily destroyed by cooking. These enzymes can aid in predigesting foods in the upper part of the stomach, a benefit which is lost when we cook all of our food.

John Douglass, M.D., from the Department of Internal Medicine of the Southern California Permanente Medical Group and Kaiser Foundation Hospital found raw foods invaluable in his treatment of diabetes mellitus. He wrote in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, "In the cases reported here one patient had his insulin requirement reduced from 60 units per day to 15 units per day by dietary management alone, and another had his insulin requirement reduced from 70 units per day to oral agents alone. Both of these changes were accomplished by increasing the percentage of raw food in their diets."

The amazing thing about this reduction in insulin requirements is that Douglass did not eliminate but only limited sugars in the diet of these diabetic patients. They were encouraged to consume vegetables, seeds, nuts, berries, melons, fruits, egg yolks, honey, oils, and goat's milk. Fruits, melons, and honey were to be limited.

Douglass did not know whether the enzymes in the raw foods played a role in this improvement or whether the faster transit time of the foods due to higher fiber content played a role.

Douglass clarified his observations in *The Lancet* a year later. He shared a story of a diabetic whose blood sugars were in the 300 range. He went on an 80% raw food diet but experienced no benefit because he was eating 18 bananas per day. Sugar intake can be a problem even in a raw form.

Douglass also reported in his update two instances of diabetics who were able to discontinue medication after adopting a 90-100% raw diet.

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Fresh Foods

Robert S. Ford, founder of Magnolia Laboratory, published *Stale Food -vs-. Fresh Food The Cause and Cure of Choked Arteries and Related Problems* in 1969. The premise of the book is that consumption of stale food and lack of fresh food is the primary cause of heart disease. The book must have been a threat to someone in the medical community because Administrative Law Judge E.S. Bernstein issued a mail stop order in 1982 to prevent the interstate shipment of the book.

Ford's message was simple: "By feeding experiments with animals and human beings consuming nearly a quarter million dollars in labor and materials over a period of seven years I finally determined that the true cause of arteriosclerosis is simple: STALE FOOD." Ford took special note of the damage that oxidized fats could do to the circulatory system and general vitality.

One of the motivations for Ford's research was the early death of both parents from heart disease. Another observation he made was that the arteries of children as young as three years of age show damage while the arteries of wild animals and primitive humans "are perfect and clean as a pearl button."

Ford was a strong believer in the ability of fresh, good quality food to regenerate those suffering from the debilitation which accompanies a poor diet. He wrote, "Some say our people have become degenerate, that our morals are undermined, and our civilization is becoming inefficient and decadent. The truth is that the people are weakened and debiliated by our food, with many of them so unhappy and miserable that they vent their frustration and fury in senseless ways, not knowing where the real hurt lies. But our old bloodlines are unchanged, our natural heritage of high intelligence, physical strength, and courage yet remain, and will quickly once more find their full flower as in olden times when food deficiencies are corrected. We are **not** degenerate, only deteriorated."

Ford built his argument for the value of fresh food upon an understanding of cellular nutrition. He wrote, "cells are constantly wearing out a few at a time, dying and being replaced by new cells, utilizing mostly new material taken in from our food."

Ford provided examples of a number of dramatic reversals of health when individuals were supplied with fresh food and fresh raw milk. One case involved a three-year-old child who was very thin and wretched. She had a twisted jaw and a wizened face. She was given an unlimited supply of new raw milk from cows eating fresh grass. "On tasting the milk, this child refused all other food and drink for several days and drank milk by the quart." In the next few weeks the girl

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grew so rapidly she needed a new wardrobe. She became "ruddy, happy and robust." Her jaw straightened and she no longer spent her time cradled in her mother's arms.

Francis M. Pottenger, Jr., the noted nutrition pioneer, also commented on the superior quality of fresh food for achievement of optimal health. His efforts to standardize adrenal extracts for therapeutic purposes revealed that the adrenals of cattle fed rapidly growing range grasses in Denver were far superior to those of cattle from Los Angeles fed "dry feed consisting of molasses, cotton seed meal, beet pulp, orange pulp, grape pulp and other industrial by-products, field-dried alfalfa and grain."

Pottenger also noted that cats fed raw milk from dry feed cows developed nutrient deficiencies similar to animals fed pasteurized milk. Cats given the milk from animals grazing on fresh grass did much better. Food is only as valuable as the nutrients in the soil for plants and the quality of the diet of animals whose products we consume.

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Antioxidant Rich Foods

The most effective means of obtaining a rich supply of antioxidants is consumption of richly colored fruits and vegetables. The most potent fat soluble antioxidants in these foods are called carotenoids. The water soluble antioxidants in fruits and vegetables include polyphenols and flavonoids. Juicing fruits to obtain these nutrients can lead to excessive sugar intake.

Carotenoids are colored yellow, orange, and red. Leafy green foods provide a rich supply of carotenoids although the color is masked by chlorophyl.

The carotenoids are tightly bound to the fiber in foods. Cooking carotenoid rich foods frees the carotenoids while a little oil can improve absorption of these nutrients. Thus tomato sauce provides more absorption of carotenoids than eating tomatoes. Carotenoids are readily destroyed by light and heat. This is why apricots turn black when sun dried.

Both carotenoids and polyphenols have been studied extensively and shown to reduce risk of cancer and a number of degenerative diseases.

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