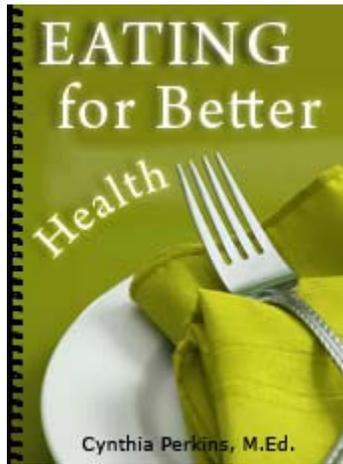


Eating for Better Health

Cynthia Perkins, M.Ed.



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Note:

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About the Author

Cynthia Perkins, M.Ed. is an author, holistic health counselor, adult sex educator and sobriety coach. She holds a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree counseling and has researched the role of diet, nutrition and environmental toxins on our mental and physical health for almost two decades.

Services from Cynthia

ALCAT Food Sensitivity and Food Intolerance Testing

<http://www.holistichelp.net/alcat-test.html>

Customized Nutritional Supplements

<http://www.holistichelp.net/customized-nutrition.html>

Analysis of Biochemical Pathways and Detoxification

<http://www.holistichelp.net/customized-nutrition.html>

Holistic Health Counseling

<http://www.holistichelp.net/counseling.html>

Alcoholism and Addiction Recovery Coaching

<http://www.alternatives-for-alcoholism.com/>

Other Books and Booklets by Cynthia

Candida Secrets

<http://www.holistichelp.net/candida-secrets.html>

Living Life to the Fullest - Creative Coping Strategies for Managing Chronic Illness

<http://www.holistichelp.net/excerpt.html>

Diet, Nutrition and Your Mental Health

<http://www.holistichelp.net/mentalhealth.html>

Get Sober Stay Sober - The Truth About Alcoholism

<http://www.alternatives-for-alcoholism.com/sober.html>

How to Break Your Sugar Addiction Today

<http://www.holistichelp.net/sugar-addiction-recovery.html>

You Are What You Eat

You are what you eat is one of those little clichés that carries an incredible amount of truth. Most of us enjoy eating so much that we often forget the whole purpose of eating is to nourish the body with nutrients. Nature in her infinite wisdom made eating pleasurable for us to ensure survival of the species. What you eat is broken down and assimilated into your body. If you are eating poisons and garbage, then that is what your body becomes. Eating healthy is one of the most important factors one can address for improved health and optimal functioning. Depending on your particular health condition, this may include incorporating new foods into your diet or eliminating some favorites.

The health of your body and mind is entirely dependent on the nutrients it receives. If you're eating food that is lacking in essential nutrients then your body becomes malnourished. A malnourished body leads to improper functioning of important systems and organs and a whole list of degenerative health conditions, diseases and mental health disorders.

What you eat has a profound impact on your physical and mental health. Regardless of what diagnosis you have, significant improvements in health and reduction in symptoms can almost always be achieved by making simple changes in the diet.

Unhealthy diets can be at the root of symptoms and conditions like depression, mood swings, irritability, hyperactivity, rage, criminal behavior, anxiety, paranoia, heart disease, diabetes, PMS, digestive disturbances, fatigue, cognitive dysfunction, loss of memory, nervousness, muscle and joint inflammation, heart palpitations, bowel disorders, headaches, arthritis, hypoglycemia, acne and many more.

A healthy diet is much more than just eating your veggies or reducing fat. The typical food supply of the average person is nutrient depleted and toxic. Our water and soil is polluted with toxic chemicals and it is depleted from any nutritional value. Food grown in this soil absorbs these toxins, and when we eat them, it is then absorbed into our bodies. If the soil does not contain any nutrients, then the food growing on it cannot have any nutritional value. Our meat supply is injected with hormones and antibiotics and fed food that is poisoned with pesticides.

Then as if this weren't bad enough once the food is harvested, it is then refined and stripped of any remaining nutrients and then pumped with additives and preservatives. All of which have adverse effects on our physical and mental health. By the time the food makes it to your plate, it really is not even food anymore.

At the very least you should be eliminating things such as sugar, caffeine, refined foods and unhealthy fats and replacing these with whole foods such as vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds, fruits and fresh or frozen meat and poultry that are free of hormones and antibiotics. Use nuts, nut butters and seeds for snacks and for something sweet try some dates, bananas, raisins or other dried fruits.

Preferably your diet should be organic and free of chemicals and toxins found in the average diet such as pesticides, herbicides, additives, dyes and preservatives and eating foods that are in their natural state as much as possible. Healing can't take place in a body fed with unhealthy foods and neither can optimal functioning.

Whenever possible try to avoid purchasing food that is in plastic or metal cans. The chemicals in plastic and metal leach into the food and when eaten are then transferred to our bodies. Use glass as much as possible. Use glass also for

storing your foods in the fridge or pantry. Drink water that is run through some type of filtration system to remove chlorine and other pollutants.

We're going to go into further detail later on in this booklet about more steps you can take to ensure you get the most nutritional value as possible from the food you eat, however, I at this time I want to call your attention to two key factors that may have an impact on your health right now.

Unfortunately, even if you're eating relatively healthy, research tells us that more than 80% of the population in the US is consuming less than the recommended dietary allowance in as many as 16 different crucial nutrients.

If you already have a health condition you are living with, chances are your detoxification system isn't working properly and your body may be deficient in a variety of key nutrients. Replenishing these nutrients to adequate levels through diet may not be possible. Many of you may already be aware of this and taking a multivitamin or other key supplements. However, many people are not aware that a customized nutritional supplement that is based on your biochemical individuality is much more effective.

Each of us has unique nutritional needs based on our individual biochemical and metabolic make up. Taking standard supplements that are designed for the average person is not going to target the areas where you may need help the most. You may not be getting enough of a specific nutrient or you may be getting too much of a particular nutrient, which is not good either. Additionally, different illnesses, conditions or diseases have different nutritional requirements and each responds to diet and nutrition uniquely

To ensure that your key metabolic processes are getting the support they need, you need a direct and accurate biochemical evaluation of them. I recommend a

simple and affordable test you can take at home called the PrivaTest® and a supplement called Custom Essentials®.

The PrivaTest® is an accurate, scientific way to take a snapshot of the most critical metabolic markers in your body's natural waste fluids to determine the status of your nutritional health and your body's natural ability to detoxify itself. A scientific window into your personal biochemistry. The PrivaTest® analyzes your biochemical needs by age, gender and three important urinary biomarkers.

Laboratory analysis at a world renowned lab of an overnight urine sample can examine key biochemical pathways and determine if you have the nutritional support you need to protect your tissues against cellular damage from uncontrolled free radicals, eliminate harmful toxins in your body, and keep your immune, vascular and nervous systems in balance.

Then the results of this test are used to create a custom vitamin formula designed personally for you and your needs to facilitate healing and maintain optimal functioning in the biochemical pathways where you have a problem. It takes all the confusion out of personal supplementation once and for all. You no longer have to guess which nutrients you need from a bewildering array of "in-vogue" or "one-size-fits-all" supplements.

If you'd like to learn more about PrivaTest® and Custom Essentials®, click the link below to visit this page at my site:

<http://www.holistichelp.net/customized-nutrition.html>

Another crucial factor when it comes to eating healthy is that there is not a one size fits all diet. Yes, the basics that I mentioned above like removing sugar and refined food, eating organic etc. apply to all of us, but many parts of a healthy diet are very individualized. That old saying about "one man's meat is another's man poison" is also full of wisdom.

Some people thrive on a macrobiotic diet, while others may not be able to function at all with that many carbohydrates. A vegetarian diet is perfect for some body types and yet it can leave other body types in a heap on the floor. Some people function most optimally on a high meat diet while others do better with mostly vegetables.

You do not want to follow a diet plan that was created for someone else. A diet that was made for someone who suffers with asthma may not be good for someone who suffers with ulcers. Some individuals may have a metabolic disorder such as hypoglycemia or diabetes and therefore would need to follow a diet regimen and supplementation plan that helps keep their blood sugar in balance.

One person may be allergic to peanuts, dairy, and eggs and therefore would need to eliminate these items from their diet, while another person without these allergies could thrive and benefit from the vitamins and minerals present in these particular foods.

Another person may have many different issues going on at the same time. Perhaps they have numerous food allergies, hypoglycemia or diabetes and several nutritional deficiencies. So they would have a very different nutritional plan from someone who has none of these issues.

Much of the population has undiagnosed food allergies or what's even more common is food "sensitivity." Many people are not aware that food allergies or food sensitivity can also be at the root of many common health conditions and debilitating symptoms that our society struggles with so often.

Food allergies can be identified rather easily with testing from a physician, however food sensitivity is rarely addressed because it exists without IgE antibodies and is not detected in standard allergy testing. Food sensitivity occurs

when the naturally occurring chemical composition of the food eaten has a direct effect on the brain or body.

About 5% of the population has IgE mediated "true allergy:", while 80% of the population has "food sensitivity".

Undiagnosed food allergies or food sensitivity can result in a host of physical and psychological symptoms that may include some of the following and many more:

ADHD, irritability, mood swings, depression (mild to severe) (can even create feelings of suicide), irritable bowel, fibromyalgia, anxiety (mild or that seen in anxiety attacks), aggression, violence, autism, euphoria, anger or rage, hyperactivity, headaches (mild to migraine, extreme fatigue and sleepiness (even narcolepsy), inability to remember and concentrate, listlessness, muscle pain, weight gain, edema, asthma, itchy eyes, aching legs, arthritis pain, myalgias, palpitations, irregular heartbeats, indigestion, heartburn, irritable bowel syndrome, diarrhea, constipation, coughing, breathing difficulties, rashes, itching, indigestion, stomach aches, earaches, sinus infections/irritations/congestion, shaking, restlessness, recurring ear aches restless leg syndrome, eczema and weight gain.

By identify hidden food allergies or food sensitivities drastic improvements in health can be made. If you haven't been tested for food allergies, I suggest you find a good holistic medical doctor who can do some testing on you. Then in addition to that I recommend the ALCAT test to identify food sensitivities. You can find some doctors who perform the ALCAT test, but you will pay a very high price in their office. I can offer this test for you in the privacy of your own home at a very significant discount of between \$50 to \$200 off the standard retail price depending on which package you choose, and a free 30 minute phone consultation to discuss your results and help you design a diet that will manage your sensitivities.

With a simple at home kit, you can be tested for up to 200 different foods, 20 food additives, preservatives and dyes, 20 molds, 10 environmental chemicals, 10 antibiotics and anti-inflammatories and 10 pharmocoactive ingredients. You'll receive a detailed, yet user friendly lab report with 24 page results guide book, explaining your test results, a rotation meal plan and nutritional information.

If you'd like to learn more about ALCAT testing, click the link below to visit this page on my site: <http://www.holistichelp.net/alcat-test.html>

Keep in mind, that if you visit the ALCAT website personally, to be sure to come back to my site to make your purchase, so you can take advantage of the deep discount in price and the free phone consultation.

Now, once you've addressed nutritional supplementation and food sensitivities there are a variety of steps you can take to enhance the nutritional value you receive from your diet, and we'll talk about those now.

How to Eat Healthy on a Budget

Everyone knows that it's more expensive to eat healthy foods than junk foods. A limited budget contributes to poor eating habits in many ways. Junk food costs less at the grocery store than healthier choices. Even when you're dining out, it's cheaper to dash through a greasy hamburger joint than it is to go to a restaurant that offers fresher, healthier options.

Your budget crunch doesn't have to put a complete lid on healthy eating goals. You'll just need to pursue some creative solutions and think outside the grocery bag.

Budget Friendly Tips for Healthy Eating

Tip #1 – Farmer's Markets

You can usually find a local farmer's market in the summer time and, if you live in a larger city, you can find them operating year round. You're going to find the best seasonal deals and you'll often stumble upon amazing items at prices that are easy on your pocket.

If you're not sure where to look for a farmer's market, try calling your local chamber of commerce. Many farmer's market carry a variety of organic foods that are much more affordable than the grocery store.

Tip #2 – Grocery Store Newspaper Circulars

You can find deals on fresh produce if you're willing to visit a different store for sales. You can rely on some stores to consistently deliver better prices for some types of foods, but you never know who might be having a killer sale, so shop around.

Many of the mainstream grocery stores that carry their own line of organic foods are now offering coupons on those products as well. Additionally, the health food stores often have coupons and special offers in their flyers and magazine racks found in the front of the store.

Tip #3 – Cut Your Own Veggies

Don't be tempted by convenience. Anything you buy that is "ready to eat" will be more expensive than those in their original state. Those 'baby cut' carrots aren't as good for you as a carrot that you clean and cut fresh at home anyways and items like pre-mixed salads often carry a variety of unhealthy bacteria. You'll get more of the nutrients you're looking for when you're willing to do more preparation on your own.

Tip #4 – Cook from Scratch More Often

A homemade soup is healthier than a store bought canned soup. The same is true for a savory rice dish made from scratch. Prepared foods usually have more salt and fat and again you're paying for the convenience. Learn how to cook your own rice and tackle a couple of basic soup recipes and you'll have a foundation to build on that will feed your family week after week for less.

The underlying theme here is that you can spend extra time or end up spending extra money. The good news is that time spent in the kitchen, as a family, will do more than just save money and contribute to a healthier lifestyle; it will contribute to better relationships as well.

Why Eat Organic?

Many people are very concerned about the growing levels of chemicals in our fresh foods and they should be. Pesticides and chemical fertilizers that are used in farming end up in and on the foods that we buy at our local grocery store as well as in the foods we're eating while dining out.

Surely we wash our produce well – but that isn't enough? Pesticides, herbicides, chemical fertilizers etc. are absorbed deep in the body of the produce. If you read any book about detoxification, you'll find recommendations that you choose organic foods whenever possible. It is also believed that organic foods have higher nutritional values than the same foods grown with pesticides. Organic milk contains 90 percent more antioxidants, organic fruit and vegetables contains up to 40 percent more antioxidants and higher levels of minerals like zinc and iron.

Pesticides and herbicides contribute to a wide variety of health conditions. They alter and deteriorate the immune, nervous and endocrine systems and impair healthy functioning of the liver and other organs and systems involved in the detoxification process. It's impossible to maintain optimal health or achieve any type of healing if you consume toxins such as these on a regular basis.

Additionally, organic foods are also free of hormones and antibiotics, which is also another crucial need for anyone concerned about protecting or improving their health. Antibiotics in the food supply contribute to Candida overgrowth and resistant forms of bacteria, while hormones alter and interfere in the functioning and production of the hormones in our body.

What does Organic mean?

When a food claims to be organic, they are saying that it has been grown free of pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, growth hormones (where animals are concerned)

and other genetically engineered substances. In order to claim that foods are organic, a food grower has to submit to a certification process.

Some foods are being labeled 'Certified Naturally Grown' but this is not the same as being certified as organic. In the US, look for the 'USDA Certified Organic' label. There are also cases where foods are labeled 'Made with Organic Ingredients,' which means not all the ingredients are organic, so be sure to read the small print to learn exactly what they are saying.

Organic foods are generally more expensive and can take a quick toll on the family food budget, but prices have come down recently. Those who pursue a more natural diet feel that the extra costs are well worth the associated benefits and better long-term health.

Where can you find Organic foods?

Most grocery stores now have an Organic area in their produce departments. Even large chains like Wal-Mart are on board with offering Organic choices, however Wal-Mart has also been in trouble for violating the standards of organic certification, so you have to be careful. You will likely find the best deals on organic foods at your local farmer's market. Of course, the place with the most choices in organic food would be your local health food store. There are also a variety of online stores that will deliver to your doorstep, but they will be more expensive.

If you can't find organic foods, or you find you aren't able to make them fit into your food budget, wash all of your produce just before serving with hot water and peroxide and scrub the skin gently to remove dirt or residue. Use a vegetable brush if needed. Be sure to also wash melons and bananas – though you won't eat the skin, it is easy to transfer germs from the outside to the inside during

preparation and eating. By the way – the same is true for organic produce.

Always wash before you eat!

You can also peel the skin off produce like potatoes, cucumbers, zucchinis and the like, however you lose some of the valuable nutrients this way. Root vegetables absorb a lot more pesticides than other vegetables. If you can only afford a certain number of organic foods, here are a few facts to use as a guide.

Foods that are highest in pesticide and herbicide residue include the following, so you should always try to buy these foods as organics:

- Butter, Yogurt, Cheese and all Dairy
- Red Meat and Poultry
- Apples
- Celery
- Peaches
- Cherries
- Sweet bell peppers
- Lettuce
- Nectarines
- Strawberries
- Spinach
- Grapes (imported)
- Potatoes
- Pears

The following foods have been found to have the lowest amount of pesticide residue, so if you must buy some foods that aren't organic, it's safer to stick with these ones. However, you want to make sure you're not buying genetically modified foods.

- Broccoli
- Eggplant
- Cabbage
- Banana
- Kiwi
- Asparagus
- Sweet peas (frozen)
- Mango
- Pineapple
- Sweet corn (frozen)
- Avocado
- Onion

You also want to be careful how you prepare your foods. Stainless steel, glass and cast iron should be used for cooking, not aluminum or Teflon coated pans. You'll contaminate your clean and healthy food with toxic particles from aluminum and Teflon coating that has been linked to a variety of health conditions.

Eating fresh foods is always the preferred form, because they contain more nutritional value than any others. Frozen food would be the second choice and canned food should always be the last choice. However, sometimes frozen can actually be more nutritious because fresh food loses its nutritional value the longer it sits on the shelf. Frozen food has the nutrients locked in when it is frozen.

Additionally, vegetables should be steamed instead of boiled because steaming helps the vegetable to retain its nutrient value, while boiling pulls it out.

7 Quick Tips to Cut Sugar

There are obvious reasons to reduce sugar consumption, the first of which is to avoid tooth decay, as your dentist will remind you about often. However, other not so commonly known reasons include, to help better manage behavior and moods, to prevent addiction to drugs and alcohol or maintain sobriety, to prevent or improve depression, anxiety and hyperactivity, to overcome obesity, prevent type 2 diabetes, nutritional deficiencies and heart disease, and to improve your overall health.

Consuming sugar causes a rush of energy in our body as the sugars hit the blood stream all at once and an increase in neurotransmitters in the reward pathway of the brain, which results in euphoria, increased alertness and physical activity. Unfortunately, the blast of energy doesn't last and we quickly drop into a crash, often feeling drained, easily irritated and depressed.

This cycle is destructive to the neurotransmitters in the brain and the adrenal glands, which can lead to health conditions like depression, anxiety, adhd, hyperactivity, addiction to drugs and alcohol, chronic fatigue, anti-social behavior and allergies. This cycle is the exact same thing that happens in the brain of someone addicted to drugs and alcohol. Sugar is an addictive drug; its molecular structure is almost identical to alcohol and sugar addiction is one of the most common addictions in our society.

There are good medical reasons to cut your sugar intake as well. The body responds to sugar by increasing insulin levels. Over time high insulin levels can lead to insulin resistance and that leads to Type 2 Diabetes. Sugar also depletes your immune system, adrenal glands and vitamin and mineral levels. It also encourages Candida overgrowth, hypoglycemia and higher levels of cholesterol.

Here are seven easy ways to cut your sugar intake:

1. Avoid sweetened breakfast cereals.

Traditional store bought cereals like Frosted Flakes and the like contain something like fourteen grams of sugar. If you feel you must eat grains, then have oatmeal or unsweetened shredded wheat and sweeten it with stevia or a piece of whole grain bread with nut butter. However, a healthier choice for breakfast would be eggs, baked chicken breasts, steak, buffalo burgers and steamed vegetables. Alternatively, it could include nuts, seeds and fruit, if you handle carbohydrates okay and don't have any sugar related conditions like hypoglycemia, adrenal fatigue, depression, anxiety, hyperactivity, hormonal imbalances, candida overgrowth, sugar addiction or compulsive overeating.

2. Kick the soda habit.

Soda pop is loaded with sugar. You could choose a diet soda and eliminate the sugar, but studies have shown that our bodies still respond very negatively to the artificial sweeteners. Try moving over to water flavored with a touch of lime or lemon, herbal tea and up your water intake. If you must have something sweet, then have a 100% fruit juice drink or juice spritzer.

3. Choose foods that do not have added sugars.

Foods like jelly and peanut butter are typically loaded with added sugars but are also available without 'added sugars'. They're still sweet and taste great but do not raise your sugar level as much as their highly sweetened counterparts. Look for 'all fruit' spreads and 'no sugar added' peanut butter.

4. Choose whole grains.

Simple carbohydrates turn into sugar in your body. Complex carbohydrates take more effort for the body to use up. Although I personally believe that most of us are not supposed to eat grains, if you're going to eat grains, then whole grains are healthier than refined grains. A good rule of thumb is to choose brown bread, brown rice, and brown pasta whenever possible.

5. Sweeten naturally.

It will help you break the sugar habit if you start to turn to naturally sweet alternatives in place of sugar. Do you know that you can make deliciously sweet lemonade by juicing two plump apples with a half of a lemon? Pour the fresh juice over ice and enjoy without any added sugar at all.

You can sweeten your tea with agave or stevia and use applesauce or xylitol to replace the sugar called for in your cake mix. Every little bit helps.

6. Out of sight out of mind.

Keep sugar and all sugar products out of the house, so you won't be tempted and give in during times of stress and hunger.

7. Keep healthy snacks on hand.

Use alternative whole foods snacks such as fruit, dates, nuts, seeds, yogurt and whole grain crackers in place of sweets.

Removing sugar from your diet is one of the most important steps you can take for improving or protecting your health. If you find that getting sugar out of your diet is next to impossible because of cravings and you feel addicted, you may want to take a look at my book, *How to Break Your Sugar Addiction Today*, found at this link: <http://www.holistichelp.net/sugar-addiction-recovery.html>

5 Ways to Cut Fat

Whether you are trying to shed a few extra pounds or bring about a drop in cholesterol numbers, you're going to find that a lot of the unhealthy fat in your diet has to go. It's easier to block the fat from coming into your body than it is to burn it off later.

Here are some simple ways to reduce the amount of fat in your daily menu.

1. Cut the cheese.

Cheese is available in low-fat and fat free varieties, but most cheese fans would rather reduce the amount of cheese on their plate than give up the full flavor. You will find that a cheese slice made with 2% milk is still tasty.

2. Trim meats.

Read your meat packages and choose meats with lower percentages of fat. If the labels are confusing, ask someone in the meat department to help you. When preparing your steak, roast, chicken or turkey, trim excess fat before cooking. Remove all skin.

3. Hold the margarine.

Many years ago margarine was heralded as the dieter's choice over butter but experts today tell us it is much less healthy for you than butter. In either case, both butter and margarine run high in fat and should be used sparingly.

4. Say good-bye to deep fry.

Deep-frying adds a lot of fat to your food in the preparation process and so does pan-frying. Baking or broiling without oils is best. When you do fry, use a healthy oil like olive oil.

5. Redesign desserts.

Ice cream, donuts, cakes and pies are usually quite high in fat. Not only that, they are high in sugar. Try redesigning your favorite desserts around low fat basics. You can substitute applesauce for some of the vegetable oil called for in your baking recipes and cut a lot of fat that way. (If a recipe calls for a whole cup of oil, use a half-cup of applesauce and just two tablespoons of oil.) Eat alternative ice cream that is made with nuts or brown rice.

Again, if you stick with whole food deserts like fruit, dates and nuts, you'll avoid those unhealthy fats naturally.

On the other hand, making sure you consume healthy fats and adequate protein is just as important as cutting out the unhealthy fats. Many health problems are the result of not having enough healthy fat or protein in the diet. We've become so consumed with removing fat from our diet, that in the process we've also removed protein and healthy fat.

Healthy fats and adequate protein intake is essential for the production of important neurotransmitters in the brain that regulate our mood and for the healthy functioning of the immune, nervous and cardiovascular systems and our bones and joints. Healthy fats can be found in nuts, avocados, olive oil, walnut oil, safflower oil, sunflower oil and fish.

Eating lean meat cooked as I described above and eggs as a source of protein is not going to make you fat, increase your cholesterol or raise your blood pressure when eaten in balance with other healthy foods like vegetables, fruits and complex carbohydrates. It is sugar and junk food that is responsible for those health conditions.

There is a whole food industry built around 'reduced fat' and 'no fat' options for fat conscience shoppers. It's easier today to cut fat and still enjoy many of the

foods you've come to love. You'll want to become an avid label-reader and be smart about what you find hidden in the small print. Many foods that are marketed as fat-free are quite high in calories and sugar. Your body will just take that extra sugar and convert it to fat in the long run.

Fat is a big part of what makes foods taste good and it is important to our bodies so it can't be cut out completely. A healthy approach will be one of balance.

Why We Cut Carbs

There are a lot of good reasons to control your carbohydrate intake. Weight loss, managing or preventing diabetes, improving energy levels and mood, overcoming anxiety and depression and reducing Candida overgrowth rank high among reasons that we look to reduce the number of high carb foods we eat.

Carbohydrates are converted to sugar in the body, and as we discussed previously, sugar has a variety of detrimental effects on mental and physical health. All simple or refined carbohydrates such as candy, cookies, ice cream, white bread, chips and other junk foods must go completely, but complex carbohydrates should be minimized.

Here are five areas to start with to reduce carbohydrates in your diet:

1. Breads. Yes, sadly, most bread is high in carbs.
2. Pastas. Tragic isn't it?
3. Sweets. This is a given. Anything high in sugar is high in carbs.
4. Fruits. Although natural sugars are always better than table sugar, they're still high in carbs and should be limited. Stick to fruits that are lower in sugar, like berries, peaches, and apples, rather than bananas, dates and raisins. Dried fruit is especially high in sugar. High sugar fruit can be eaten, but it should be reserved for special occasions.
5. Starchy vegetables like potatoes, sweet potato and winter squash. Corn is actually a grain and should be reduced or removed.

Will choosing whole grains be better for a low-carb lifestyle? Well, on the front of things, yes. The less fooled around with a grain is, the longer it takes for our body to digest it and that means it has less of an impact on the levels of sugar in our blood. If it is your goal to avoid spikes in blood sugar levels, you'll want to

choose specially made low carb bread with high fiber content. If you include grains in your diet, they should always be whole grain products.

However, it is my opinion that all of our complex carbohydrates should come from vegetables and fruit, not grains, beans or dairy. The diet that promotes the most optimal health is one that our caveman ancestors ate, called the caveman diet or the Paleolithic diet. This diet consists of unprocessed meats, fish, eggs, vegetables, fruits, nuts and seeds. That's it. All food should be organic and it doesn't include grains, legumes-beans, or dairy. You can learn more about the Paleolithic diet by visiting this page on my site:

<http://www.holistichelp.net/paleolithic-diet.html>

Cutting carbs across the board will result in an unsatisfying and highly restrictive diet that most find difficult to adhere to. It's more fruitful in the long term to learn more about how our bodies respond to different foods based on the 'glycemic index'. This involves taking a look at how quickly our bodies can turn a food into sugar.

If a food is quickly digested and turned into sugar it has a higher glycemic index than another food that digests slowly, putting low steady amounts of sugar into the blood stream. Some foods are so hard to digest that they create little or no sugar for the body to deal with. We want to stick with the foods that digest slower and keep the blood sugar stable. Eating your complex carbohydrate with a protein will also help it digest slower and have less impact on upsetting your sugar levels. Balance your carbohydrates with protein and eat low carb foods like green vegetables freely.

We used to think that it was as simple as separating the simple carbohydrates from the complex but now with the glycemic index, we can look deeper and make even smarter choices. There are many books on the subject available at your local library or you can do a web search on the term to learn more right now.

Juicing and Raw Foods for Health

You've probably heard some buzz about the value of eating raw foods. There is an unfortunate impression held by some that raw foods are for vegans and vegetarians only, but that is not true. The diet does not have to consist of only raw foods to be nutritious, but it should contain at least some if possible. You can make raw foods a part of your diet with a few simple changes.

It is no secret that we need to eat more fresh vegetables, fruits, nuts and seeds. Raw foods contain enzymes that help our bodies with digestion. When we cook them, these enzymes begin to break down and they aren't as beneficial to our bodies in that way and our bodies have to pick up the slack, providing our own enzymes for the digestion process. The closer we come to eating fresh food straight from the ground, vine or tree – the greater the nutritional value

If you consume more raw foods, your body can benefit from the full nutritional value and live enzymes. The food is digested sooner, delivering more energy and letting the body use its important resources for needed repairs rather than working so hard at the digestion process.

However, some research suggests that cooking vegetables that are high in fat-soluble vitamins like A, D, E and K can actually double the nutritional value. Only foods that are high in water-soluble vitamins lose their nutritional value with cooking.

Some foods that are high in fat-soluble vitamins include tomatoes, carrots, broccoli, asparagus, onions, spinach, apples, celery and apricots. So eat plenty of these.

However, the manner in which you cook them is what's important. DON'T BOIL. Boiling allows the nutrients to escape. The best method for cooking is steaming.

Steamed vegetables do not lose their alkalizing abilities and retain most of their nutritional value. Alternatively you can also bake them wrapped inside foil or a small dish with a lid. For example, a baked onion is very nutritious and baked pears or apples with a dash of cinnamon are delicious and packed with nutrients.

If it's possible, you want to steam "lightly". Meaning they should contain a slight amount of crisp to them when they are finished. If that's not possible because of a digestion issue, just leave them as crisp as possible.

Another good practice is to drink the water in the bottom of the pan after you steam them. This water has all the nutrients that were steamed out.

Juicing can be a great way to consume raw fruits and vegetables. You will still have to buy and clean fresh fruits and vegetables, but beyond that there is little need for further preparation.

To get started, buy a good juicer. It is worth the cost to spend a little more than the minimum, as you'll be putting this kitchen appliance through a daily or even twice daily work out. Look for a unit that cleans easily.

Find a good local farmer's market and plan to pick up fresh ingredients a couple of times a week. Always choose organic produce. Always wash all ingredients very well before juicing.

Look online for 'juicing recipes'. Start out with some simple fruit and vegetable combinations and slowly build up to consuming more green combinations with fewer fruits for the best results.

Eating raw foods should include your nuts and seeds as well. So when you buy nuts or nut butters always look for the raw version. Soaking nuts in water for about 12 hours and then rinsing them is a popular method of enhancing their

enzymes. There are a variety of raw food choices in the health food store these days. Usually you can find them in the deli area. There are even a couple lines of delicious raw food deserts. So take a look around your store and see what you can find.

You don't have to become a true "raw foodist" to incorporate many of the health benefits that raw foods provide. Just a few here and there will be of great value. A combination of cooked and raw will serve you well. I encourage you to try and get a few servings a week of something raw.

Part of designing a diet that works for you is about reconciling what is "ideal" with what is "realistic" because of health conditions we may face, sensitivities, the integrity of the gut, limits, circumstances of life, finances etc. We usually have to find a balance between the two. We often have conflicting needs and must compromise to meet them the best we can.

How to Eat Healthy When Dining Out

Have you ever wondered why the foods we eat in restaurants often taste so much yummiier than the foods we make at home? Can it be true that food tastes better when you don't have to do the dishes afterwards? That may be, but we can more likely attribute the delicious flavor to a high fat content and a variety of synthetic food additives designed to artificially enhance the flavor. Unless a restaurant is particularly devoted to delivering healthy meals, they are generally using full fat ingredients and a variety of chemicals that deliver the savoriest flavors.

Restaurants today know that there are more people pursuing a healthy lifestyle and that there is a large market of potential customers who are trying to lose weight. Because of that, many restaurants are providing menu choices that offer low fat options. Weight conscious may be surprised by the different tastes offered in these dishes – lose the fat and you may lose the flavor.

One dieter who tried low fat meals at her favorite restaurant said “I never realized just how much fat and calories had to be in my favorite meals until I tasted something they called ‘low fat’. I have to admit, I miss the flavor that comes with all the fat.”

Learning to eat healthy will mean developing new tastes and enjoying more of the natural flavors in food without adding fats. It takes time for your taste buds to adjust, but they do. Some basic changes you can embrace include:

- Avoid condiments and dips or choose ones that are naturally low fat or fat free. Mayo and creamy dressings are very high in fat. Ketchup, mustard and some honey-mustard dressings are fat free. However some of these have added sugar as well.

- Ask them to hold the cheese. You can cut quite a lot of fat just by leaving the cheese out of your dish or ask for low fat cheese.
- Choose fresh steamed or roasted vegetables and baked potato instead of french-fries or onion rings.
- Stick with whole cuts of meat like a steak, chicken breast or sliced turkey, rather than buffalo wings or chicken fingers.
- Be careful about restaurant salads. There are many popular salads that have as much fat in them as a juicy cheeseburger. Choose a grilled chicken salad over a breaded chicken option.
- Sip on a glass of water for at least five minutes before deciding on dessert. Let your meal begin to reach your blood stream first. Then you'll have a better indicator if you want anything else to eat. Choose a fruit salad or cottage cheese and fruit instead of pie and cake.
- Avoid sodas, coffee and milkshakes. Most places usually carry something like lemon or lime flavored Perrier, which is a great choice. You could also ask for 100 percent orange or apple juice.

Be choosy about which restaurants you dine at. Most of us know that the local McDonalds or Burger King is not the healthiest place to eat, but you can also make better choices in the full service restaurants. Many places offer a variety of healthier choices. Shop around and find restaurants that have taken the initiative to include at least some healthier foods on the menu.

Many areas now have organic health food restaurants or cafes and these, of course, are always preferred over traditional restaurants. Check your local phone book or do a Google search for your area.

Try to limit the amount of times you eat out as well as it will save you money.

Choosing Healthier Beverages

Equally important as the food we eat is the liquid we drink. Our bodies need a steady flow of liquids to be healthy, which should be in the form of at least eight tall glasses per day or approximately 64 ounces of water. The very best beverage a body can enjoy is definitely crystal clean water.

We can survive about a month without food, but we can only survive a few days without water. The body consists of 70% water and replenishing that water is essential for every function in the body.

Here are just some of the functions of water:

- Regulating the body temperature
- Carrying nutrients and oxygen to all cells in our body
- Protects and cushions vital organs
- Helps convert food into energy
- Helps our body absorb nutrients
- Removes wastes, toxins, and poisons
- Cushions joints
- Our blood is 92% water
- Our bones are 22% water
- Muscles are 75% water
- Brain is 75% water
- Aids in digestion
- Purifying the blood
- Moistens lungs to assist intake of oxygen and expulsion of carbon dioxide
- Water is a natural appetite suppressant
- Prevents urinary tract infections
- Cleansing of cells

- Aids in carrying nutrients to the blood stream

If we don't replenish our water, the bodies' organs won't function adequately and dehydration can occur. It is estimated that 75% of the population is dehydrated and unaware. Dehydration can create symptoms such as chronic pains, allergies, dyspepsia, joint pain, low backache, chest pain, headaches, constipation, crankiness, fatigue, dry skin and fuzzy brain or short-term memory problems.

Some experts feel that even the recommended 6 to 8 glasses is not adequate and suggest that we should actually have 1 quart of water for every 50 pounds of body weight.

When you're exercising or if you live in a dry climate, and during hot seasons, you will need more water.

What we often think is hunger pangs can sometimes actually be a signal that we need more water. When you feel hungry, try drinking a glass of water and see if your hunger goes away.

An easy way to gage your water intake is to examine the color of your urine; dark colored urine is an indicator that you aren't ingesting enough water.

Water should be consumed in small amounts spread out over the day. The body can't process more than one glass of water per hour, therefore, if you drink too much at one time, it won't be used, and it will be eliminated.

There are some who say that they don't enjoy water and indeed many who live entirely on a diet of coffee, soda pop and other sweet drinks. This is not good for the body for several reasons.

Caffeine acts as both a short-term stimulant and a diuretic, which means that it robs the body of water instead of providing it. Caffeine is addictive. Drinking too much of it contributes to anxiety, depression, tension and headaches and can lead to or perpetuate addiction to alcohol and drugs as it stimulates the same areas of the brain involved in these addictions.

Drinking caffeine or alcohol dehydrates the body, so even if you drink adequate amounts of water and have a couple cups of coffee, cola or alcohol, this will undo the effects of the water, and you need extra water. For each cup of caffeinated or alcoholic beverage you drink you need to add one cup of water.

Beverages with high sugar content give you short term bursts of energy but it soon leads to feeling tired as the sugar burns out in your body. You then crave more sugary drinks and the cycle repeats. We already discussed the numerous devastating effects sugar has on the body in the previous chapter on cutting sugar, so sugar drinks should be avoided.

You will enjoy more steady energy and vitality if you work on replacing high caffeine and sugar content drinks with water or herbal teas. If you want something sweet it should be 100 percent natural juices or smoothies. However, juices and smoothies should be restricted, because they are high in natural sugar content. You can add a dash of lemon or lime juice to your water for a little flavor.

Giving up caffeine and sugar is hard work. If you go cold turkey you can probably expect a severe headache and a period of feeling quite grumpy. Your body will demand the substances it has grown to be dependant upon and you'll have to stand strong and refuse to give in.

Introduce yourself to herbal teas in small quantities. The taste may be acquired so keep trying. The same can be said for water. If you don't enjoy drinking water, try drinking an ice cold four ounce glass several times a day. It's not so

much that you would dread it, but enough to be food for your body. You should find within a few weeks that you are enjoying it more than you thought you would.

Not only should we drink six to eight glasses of water a day, but it's also vitally important that this water be pure. Finding clean water to drink is becoming increasingly difficult to find and the ingestion of polluted water is creating havoc on our health.

Our water supply is contaminated with carcinogens, toxins and pharmaceuticals that cause neurological damage. Landfills, chemical spills, and agricultural run-off are leaching toxic chemicals such as: pesticides, arsenic, lead, herbicides, fertilizers, trichlorethylene, benzene etc. into our water supply. One of the most toxic components in our water is put there intentionally by the use of chlorination for disinfecting.

“Scientific studies have linked chlorine and chlorination by-products to cancer of the bladder, liver, rectum and colon, as well as heart disease, arteriosclerosis, anemia, high blood pressure and allergic reactions. There is also evidence that shows that chlorine can destroy protein in our body and cause adverse effects on skin and hair.” (Kemysts Laboratory, Dr. Riddle, Ph.D.)

Not only is the ingestion of toxic water destroying health, but inhalation through the lungs and absorption through our skin of toxic vapors when showering or bathing is just as damaging, if not more so. Warm water opens your pores and allows chemicals to be absorbed into your body.

“A professor of Water Chemistry at the University of Pittsburgh claims that exposure to vaporized chemicals in the water supplies through showering, bathing and inhalation is 100 times greater than through drinking water. (The Nader Report-Troubled Waters on Tap-Center for Study of Responsive Law

The National Academy of Science estimate that 200 to 1000 people die in the US each year from cancers caused by ingesting the contaminants in the water. The major health threat posed by these pollutants is far more likely to be from their inhalations as air pollutants. The reason that emissions are high is that because water droplets dispersed by the shower head have a larger surface-to value ratio than water streaming into the bath.” (Science News, Vol 130)-Janet Raloff)

Another problem is that your water travels miles through pipes, which are unclean, and the pipes, solder and brass fixtures leach heavy metals into the water.

To protect yourself, don't drink tap water. Buy yourself a good quality carbon filter or reverse osmosis system or get your water from a water filtration machine that has three levels of treatment; ultraviolet, reverse osmosis and carbon. You can also purchase a good clean source of bottled water such as Mountain Valley or Gerolsteiner. Beware of the bottled water in your local grocery store; it sometimes is nothing more than tap water.

If you drink bottled water or store your filtered water, you should always use glass bottles or hard clear plastic made from polyethylene. Don't use soft plastic with PVC, the ones that have a cloudy look, because this plastic leaches toxic chemicals into the water as well.

To protect yourself there are several options to choose from.

- Carbon Filtration
- Reverse Osmosis
- Distillation
- Bottled Water
- Ultraviolet light

Each of these methods has pluses and minuses. You need to be careful and choosey when purchasing bottled water. Carbon filtration removes chlorine and other toxic chemicals, but not bacteria. Distillation helps the body detoxify but is missing minerals, ultraviolet light alone only kills bacteria.

There is a lot of debate over which of the above processes is the best. This is a decision you will need to make for yourself and you should do some research. Not all units are equal even though they do the same function. At the very least you should have a good quality carbon filter for your drinking water and a carbon or KDF filter on your shower. If it's at all possible, a whole house filter is best, so that all water you come in contact with is cleaner. In my opinion, the best system uses a combination of carbon, RO, and ultraviolet.

Many health conscious individuals fail to consider the importance of their beverage choices and the impact it can have on their goals, but you won't be one of them any more.

Change is a Process - Not an Event

Making a decision to eat a healthier diet is great. Learning all that you can about making healthy choices, cutting fat and sugar, dropping your caffeine intake, avoiding artificial additives, getting enough water and eating organics will contribute to a longer life, one with less disease and physical restrictions and better mental health.

However, one can't help but think about an elderly relative like Grandpa (we all know of one) that lived to a ripe and even active old age of 92 even though they enjoyed eggs and bacon every morning and a good cigar after dinner. The point to keep in mind is that generations before us were not eating all the refined garbage food we eat today and they were not exposed to the onslaught of environmental toxins we are exposed to today. Therefore, their bodies and minds had stronger constitutions than those being born today. However, it is those unhealthy behaviors that have been passed down generation after generation that has resulted in bodies being born that are nutrient deficient right off the bat and vulnerable to disease and malfunctioning health.

On the other hand, health is not all about what we eat. It is also about physical activity, environmental issues and an individual's state of mind among other things. Grandpa's 'bad habits' were perhaps balanced by a life of strenuous physical activity and a happy and whole family. Generations before us were much more active physically. They were working hard labor. Nowadays, there cannot be any level of health if the diet is not as clean and healthy as possible.

With that being said, a happy and healthy life is one of balance. Nobody is going to die early because they enjoyed a piece of birthday cake now and then. You're also not going to slip into ill health over an occasional chocolate bar or a visit to Taco Bell once or twice a year. Trouble arises when these treats become a regular guest on the menu. However, when you do indulge in these delicacies,

try to make them as healthy as possible. There are a variety of different organic chocolate bars out there and many organic healthy cake recipes made with evaporated cane juice.

Although I am a radical when it comes to eating organic and I am usually extremely self-disciplined, even I enjoy a visit to Taco Bell once or twice a year for my favorite quesadilla. There's nothing wrong with that, but it shouldn't be a regular occurrence. Any other time I eat out, it's at my local organic cafe.

Many “lose it and gain it again” dieters know that part of their downfall is trying to ‘be good’ all of the time.’ They feel like they have to say no to everything and end up losing grip and falling into a binge. Once they give in one time, they throw in the towel and go back to their old habits.

Lifelong changes are better approached gradually. When you fall down and give in to your temptations don't beat yourself up for it. Forgive yourself and let it go immediately. Just start over again. No harm done. To criticize will only be self-defeating. Don't let the weak moment become a reason to stay off the restrictions for a longer period of time or to give up. Just pick yourself up and begin again. Don't think of it as failure, but rather as a minor setback. Change happens slowly and usually involves many setbacks. It is a process.

Give yourself the freedom to enjoy a favorite treat every so often and you'll enjoy more of the life you're living – which will contribute a great deal to your health all on its own. Find alternatives to replace your restrictions. If you can't eat wheat, then get products made with alternative grains. If you can't eat chocolate, then try some tasty carob. If you can't have dairy, there are numerous delicious dairy alternatives that can satisfy your craving for ice cream or cheese. Use sugar replacements like dates, bananas, agave, raisins, maple syrup, barley malt, brown rice syrup, or stevia. It is essential to find alternatives, so that you will not

feel deprived. If you are feeling deprived, you will be more likely to make unhealthy choices.

Reframe your thinking. For me it is simple to avoid unhealthy foods, because I simply do not desire to eat poison. I don't want to do that to myself. So try to reframe your thinking about the unhealthy foods that you desire. Try to think of your unhealthy foods as "poisons" instead of "delicious forbidden treats."

Concentrate more on what you can add to your life to make it healthier than on what you will have to cut out and banish.