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## GENERAL NUTRITION

### THE COSTS OF DISEASE CARE

The cost of treating disease today is tremendous. In today's dollars, the care for the average Alzheimer's patient is \$100,000 per year. Understand that this cost is not to cure or heal the Alzheimer's patient but rather just to provide for their daily care needs. Many Alzheimer's patients will live on for decades requiring around the clock care.

Estimates suggest over 18% of baby boomers will succumb to this dreaded disease. At a cost of over a trillion dollars a year, experts predict that the costs associated with the care of Alzheimer's patients alone will bankrupt the nation. C. Everett Koop, the former U.S. Surgeon General, was quoted as saying "preventive care is the most cost effective treatment and is mostly ignored by medicine".

Much of our nation's current health crisis stems from our preoccupation with television and targeted indoctrination by the popular media. Wall Street streams a never ending barrage of conflicting information designed to influence our behavior - often to our detriment. Many viewers feel compelled to wait for some talking head, some expert, to tell them what to do next. Television programming often enlists the expert commentary of dieticians or nutritionists catering to the "healthiest" of the product lines offered by the mega-huge, multinational food conglomerates.

With the bulk of food research dollars geared towards economy and shelf life, the nutritive value of the foods must, necessarily, take a back seat. In many ways these “foods” do not provide any useful benefits to us at all and may, in fact, cause us great harm. In spite of extending the shelf life of some foods well into the next century, these same foods may have a decidedly opposite effect on our own shelf life.

Name brand vitamins taken by millions often contain artificial colors, preservatives and flavor enhancers. Why, other than for marketing purposes and extended shelf life, should such additives be included in a vitamin product when no known health benefits are to be associated? Perhaps some vitamin company’s overriding concern is not, as one might hope, quality control but, rather, the sales revenues from an uninformed public.

We are sometimes encouraged by television cartoon characters to take medications with side effects including death or suicide in order to ward off health conditions that are totally lifestyle related. In some instances, dubious pharmaceutical solutions are offered up for questionable, new conditions. And just in case your family doctor isn’t on board this train, a toll free number is often provided. If you’re wondering what kind of an effect this type advertising might have on a doctor’s prescriptive habits might be, you’re not alone. Research shows it is huge.

We simply must start doing a better job of getting and staying well.

Nutrition appears to be "*the*" most promising preventive strategy - our knight in shining armor riding to our rescue. Unfortunately, nutrition has needlessly become a complicated, often confusing mess.

## **CONFLICTING HEALTH INFORMATION**

One day drinking coffee is OK, and another day it is bad.(Studies show caffeine stimulates that part of our nervous system which has to do with our fight or flight response – can you say STRESS?) Decaffeinated choices were once touted as the answer of the moment but then the moment changed. (The decaffeination process often involves the use of the very same chemical astringents utilized in the dry cleaning process. There are concerns about lingering residues and their effects on our bodies.)

Yesterday red meat was bad and fish was good. (Some studies have linked eating red meat to an increased cancer risk not to mention Mad Cow disease.) Today we're warned to limit our consumption of tuna fish. (Too much mercury in tuna now you know.) Even wild caught fish from the Pacific Ocean is now suspected of radioactive contamination from the ongoing Fukushima nuclear melt down in 2011.

With Mad Cow disease fears only barely subsiding, the lowly chicken has earned a preferred place at the dinner table. But this may not be the safest of food choices either. After decades of allowing farmers to add arsenic to these birds feed, the FDA finally ordered the practice discontinued. Apparently adding a little arsenic in the chicken feed made the chickens eat more and this helped to get the birds to market quicker and fatter.

I'm sure you have been told that salt is bad for you. And so is sugar. But did you know that now corn is bad too?

I know, I probably just lost most of my readers with that last one about corn but, based on the latest information, it is unhealthy to eat corn and anything made with corn. Here's the deal. Corn is not only certainly genetically modified and high in sugar but also contains something called arachadonic acid. When eaten, arachadonic acid (and sugar) causes massive inflammation in our bodies.

This inflammation is the beginning of many of the diseases that plagues our modern civilization - diabetes, heart and cardiovascular disease, cancer, autoimmune disorders, and dementia to name a few. In fact, the inflammation levels in our bodies serve as a better gauge for heart attack or stroke than do cholesterol levels.

So exactly what the heck is it we are supposed to eat? How could ancient man have survived to modern times if he didn't know all this stuff? How could he have waded through all this minutia? How could he have handled this complicated quagmire?

## **ANCIENT MAN'S MODERN DIET**

Actually, the archeological evidence suggests our prehistoric ancestor's diets were very simple. (Read *The Paleo Diet* by Loren Cordain, PhD.) Prior to the discovery of fire, our forbearers ate everything raw. Today many eat 100% of their food cooked. Cooking a food kills the biologic activity of that food. This is an extreme alteration of our ancient diet. Health practitioners after the turn of the last century called many of our modern

maladies “cooked food disease”. Enzyme rich foods include most raw vegetables and fruits, cultured (fermented) vegetables or dairy products.

In "Grain Brain", David Perlmutter, MD explains how 70% of our ancient diet was composed of animal fat while another 20% was protein. The balance (only 5%) was carbohydrates (fruit, vegetables, honey, etc.). Apparently, our cells can be powered by the calories found in plant based foods (carbohydrates) or those calories contained in animal based fats. Surprisingly, our cells actually run better and cleaner on fat than on plant based carbohydrates. Think of burning carbohydrates as fuel in our bodies like you might think of an electric power plant burning coal to produce electricity.

This is the exact opposite of what we have been taught for over 60 years. We have been brain washed into believing that plants and grains should be the foundation of a healthy diet. In " The Obesity Code ", Jason Fung, MD explains that the US Government published "Dietary Goals for the United States" in 1977. The stated goals included:

- raising dietary carbohydrate consumption to 55-60% of calories
- decreasing dietary fat consumption to 30%, of which only 1/3 can be from saturated fat

## GOOD FAT vs BAD FAT

Another major alteration in our dietary acumen is the ratio of good fats to bad fats. There are many types of dietary fats both good and bad (Read Good Fats Bad Fats by Udo Erasmus). For our discussion we want to keep it simple and consider those most important to us – omega 6's and omega 3's. These particular fats are often referred to as essential fatty acids or EFA's.

Scientists refer to certain fats as "*essential*" because our bodies cannot manufacture these particular fats – we must obtain them through our diets.

Prehistoric man's ratio of omega-6 EFA's to omega-3 EFA's is thought to have been one omega-6 to each one omega-3 (1:1). In the early 1900's the ratio was approximately four omega-6's to each one omega-3 (4:1). The average dietary ratio today is a startling twenty-five omega-6's to every one omega -3 (25:1). The more extreme the imbalance between omega-6's to omega-3's the more inflammation we will have in our bodies.

The more inflammation we have in our bodies, the more health problems we will have. Problems such as diabetes, auto-immune disorders, chronic pain syndromes, cancer, schizophrenia, etc. \* *Some schizophrenics have an incredible seventy-five omega-6's to every one omega-3(75:1).*

Achieving a good balance between omega-6 EFA's and omega-3 EFA's usually requires decreasing our omega 6 intake while increasing our omega 3 intake.

Decreasing omega-6 intake is partly accomplished by avoiding vegetable cooking oils. Any cooking oils suitable for frying are unfit for human consumption. According to Weiners Pain Management a Practical Guide for Clinicians, Americans went from eating 2 lbs of vegetable oil per year in 1909 to 25 lbs per year in 1985. These vegetable oils, packed with omega-6 EFA's, are in virtually all fried foods and many processed foods.

To screen them from our diet requires us to avoid most fried foods and to read the food labels printed on all packaged foods. For many, the time spent reading food labels would be a major inconvenience. For me, cancer would be a major inconvenience.

## **COMPROMISING WITH DIETARY POISONS**

In addition to screening packaged foods for vegetable oils, we should also read these labels to minimize as many man-made chemicals as possible. Most chemical food additives are used for the purpose of extending the shelf life or to enhance the appearance or the taste of a food. Many flavor enhancing additives are glutamate based and known to be harmful to man. (Read Excitotoxins, the Taste That Kills by Russel Blalock)

## **FISH FOOD (aka OMEGA-3's)**

Now that we have a strategy for minimizing our dietary intake of omega-6 EFA's, we most develop our tactics for increasing our dietary omega-3 intake. The simplest

method is to begin taking quality fish oil supplements daily. Fish oils are rich in the anti-inflammation molecules eicosopentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA). These inflammation fighting molecules are second to none. Without the EPA and DHA found in the fish oils from those fish caught in the deep, cold ocean, achieving a healthy balance between pro and anti-inflammatory constituents in our modern diets is almost impossible. We should always use molecular distilled (sometimes called "steam distilled") or, even better, pharmaceutical grade fish oils to minimize both mercury and PCB exposure. Up until recently Krill oil has been considered a distant second choice to high quality fish oils due to its low levels of EPA and DHA as well as its higher cost. More recent research has shown Krill oil to be more easily assimilated and may have an edge over the best fish oils.

Getting omega-3 EFA's from eating the actual fish has always been healthy advice. Many of the healthiest cultures on our planet eat fish daily. These cultures are sometimes referred to as *Blue Zones* (Read *The Blue Zone* by Andrew Gross). It is common for people in these blue zones to live out a 100 plus year, productive lifespan. Unfortunately, for most of us today, eating the fish is no longer a viable strategy.

Almost all fish is now chock full of mercury and PBC's (see newspaper article *Mercury-tainted fish are pervasive, study says* by Dina Cappiello, August 20, 2009, *Associated Press* and *Diagnosis: Mercury, Money, Politics, and Poison* by Jane Hightower). While this is especially true of farm raised fish, neither farmed nor freshwater fish have any significant amounts of omega-3 EFA's.

Today, anchovies and sardines are about the only, really, safe fish to eat that contain appreciable amounts of omega-3's. Wild caught salmon is still considered by most to be acceptable if eaten occasionally and in small portions. But as mentioned previously, any



fish caught in the northern Pacific Ocean is now suspected of radioactive contamination from Japan's ongoing Fukushima nuclear disaster.

## **VEGETARIAN CONSIDERATIONS**

Strict vegetarians embrace a deep seated philosophical, spiritual and emotional perspective concerning the killing and consumption of animals and/or fish. Many vegetarians seem to enjoy an extremely high level of health. Their altruistic philosophy is commendable and worthy of admiration.

Many vegans will balk at any notion that one cannot obtain sufficient dietary intake of the long chain essential fatty acids EPA and DHA without consumption of fish or fish oils. Many will opt for flax seed oil instead. However, there are no adequate plant sources of either EPA or DHA, the beneficial components in the omega-3's fish oils. In spite of claims that the short chain alpha-linolenic acid (ALA) in flax seed oil and other seed oils can be converted to longer-chain fatty acids EPA and DHA, research proves this conversion is woefully insufficient to reap the benefits of the high doses of molecular distilled or pharmaceutical grade fish oils.

Dr. Barry Sears, in his excellent book, *The Omega Rx Zone*, shows that it would take almost 30 grams of ALA to make 0.1 gram of DHA. This conversion of ALA to DHA is just too inefficient. The conversion of ALA to EPA is only slightly better. There simply are no current substitutes for the long chain essential fatty acids DHA and EPA found in omega-3 fish oils.

## OUR PLAN

Now that we've settled on how to get some bad things out of our diets and some good things in, we must focus on undoing some problems we created before we knew better.

Stripping out the arteriosclerotic plaque in our arterial system would be a great and worthy accomplishment. Arteriosclerotic plaque contributes to hardening of our arteries and increases our blood pressure and risk of stroke, amongst other things.

According to a study published in June 2004, in the journal *Clinical Nutrition*, an 8 ounce serving of 100% pomegranate juice can strip out 35% of arterial plaque in nine months. Other prestigious journals such as *The American Journal of Cardiology* and the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* have come to complimentary conclusions. This is nothing short of amazing.

A more recent study found that taking less than 8 ounces of pomegranate juice a day was not sufficient to obtain any measurable health benefits. (*There are no studies available to confirm any health benefits attributable to pomegranate juice "pills", though such studies may eventually be produced and published.*)

There are currently no medications available that can claim such remarkable health benefits as pomegranate juice.

In addition to the plaque removal, pomegranate juice consumption also helps to rid our bodies of mercury. Drinking pomegranate juice increases our body's production of a super antioxidant called glutathione. The glutathione can then bind to the mercury or

other heavy metals and be expelled from our bodies. In his book, *Glutathione, Key To Your Health* by Jimmy Gutman, MD, Gutman shows that the link between glutathione and all the major causes of death is profound. Glutathione is pivotal for optimal function of our body's immune system function, our detoxification and our antioxidation. While glutathione can be rubbed on the skin or injected, it cannot be taken by mouth.

The only drawback to drinking pomegranate juice is all the sugar in it.

For diabetics considering the pros and cons of pomegranate juice, the glycemic issue is of critical importance. Some prefer to dilute the juice with water and sip it over the course of the day. Others may feel more comfortable taking the pills.

## **SUGAR IS BAD NEWS**

That brings us to another important inflammation reduction tactic – reducing our sugar intake. Maybe you've noticed that sugar is in all your favorite things? Aside from the obvious, it's also in fruits, veggies, breads, rice, pasta, beer, wine, etc. No wonder we are struggling with an epidemic of obesity.

The most reliable test to gauge your long term sugar intake is known as the gut to butt ratio. If the measurement around your waist is bigger than the measurement around your buttocks you are at high risk for diabetes, cancer and dementia. For men, it should be, at most, a one to one ratio with no measurement greater than thirty-nine inches. For women, the waist should be much smaller than the hips

The more sugar we eat the more insulin we force our pancreas to produce, the bigger our waistlines become, the more inflammation we produce, the more insulin resistant we become, and the sicker we get.

Did you know that 150 years ago the average American ate only about one and a half pounds of refined sugar a year but today eats over 160? And what's really scary is that some of us are probably eating only ten or twenty pounds a year. There are many eating way more than the average.

## **SAFE FOODS**

By now you may really be starting to ask yourself, "just what in the heck can I eat". When I was first trying to learn how or what to eat, it was tough. After each nutritional conference, symposium or seminar, I'd return home and throw out everything in my cupboards and refrigerator.

I hardly knew where to start. I think anyone undertaking such a jumbo sized task could feel thoroughly overwhelmed. For those so inclined I offer to you the wise words of some ancient sage regarding the easiest way to eat an elephant. And that is to simply take one bite at a time.

If it isn't enough to have to learn what to eat (or what not to eat) we must also understand just how toxic the world is that we live in today. There are toxic chemicals seemingly everywhere. While our bodies are capable of eliminating toxins it is a slow process. To get well or to stay well we must try to reduce the ingestion of harmful toxic chemicals. By reducing dietary toxins to levels that our bodies' can throw off we have a

real chance to return to good health. Over time, this new way of life should become more innate or even normal.

## **VITAMINS, FREE RADICALS, DRINKING AT MEALTIME AND PREMATURE AGING**

Studies show supplementing with Vitamin D3 (not the D2 in most fortified foods and most multivitamins) will increase the ability of our immune systems to ward off colds and flu. This is a good thing to know as not only do the highly touted flu vaccines have such a poor record of preventing the year's anticipated flu virus, these vaccines also still contain mercury, a known danger to our health picture.

Everyone should take a multivitamin/multimineral every day. Studies show that taking multivitamin/multiminerals can repair the microscopic damage done to our DNA by free radicals.

The longer we live, the more free radical and chronic inflammation damage is done to our DNA and the attached strands called telomeres. This damage shortens the telomere strands. The shorter the telomere strands the older our biological age. The younger our biological age, the more vigorous will be our immune response to age-related chronic disease. Pretty cool, huh?

We should be eating fresh raw vegetables and fruits every day. However, as most fruits and many vegetables are high in sugars that can cause a spike in our insulin production, we should try to eat more low carb veggies than fruit. Fruit was, at best, a

seasonal treat for ancient people and many plants were toxic. For this reason carbohydrates (fruit and veggies) made up only about 5% of our ancient forbearers diet.

In spite of this small percentage of our total daily caloric intake, we still derive some benefits from eating plants. And of the plants we do eat, organic produce has been shown to have fewer chemicals and more nutrients per serving than commercially farmed produce but at a higher cost. While intuitively one would believe organic foods should be the healthier choice, there is little data supporting this assumption. There simply are no studies proving organic fruit and vegetable eaters live longer or healthier lives than do those eating commercially grown produce. Perhaps a more financially palatable strategy would be to include some combination of commercial and organic foods into our diets. Information as to which commercially grown fruits and vegetables contain the most/least pesticides can be found on line (<http://www.ewg.org/foodnews/summary>).

I'm sure we all know that drinking at least eight big glasses of clean, unadulterated water each day is a basic nutritional tenet. However, when eating, we should avoid drinking any liquids as drinking at mealtime dilutes our stomach acid. Our digestion, specifically digestion of protein, depends on strong hydrochloric acid produced in our stomach. Drinking at mealtime fills up the stomach while it dilutes the hydrochloric acid. The stomach can only hold so much before its' contents will creep upwards past the diaphragm and into the esophagus. The diluted stomach acid is still acidic enough to burn the soft tissues of the lower esophagus. Can anybody say *reflux*?

When the stomach acid is too weak to do its job the brain signals the stomach to make more hydrochloric acid further filling up the stomach. By now my readers should understand that most reflux disorders are not the result of the stomach producing too

much or too strong of hydrochloric acid but rather that the diluted acid is overflowing from the stomach and torching the lower esophagus.

Alas, many reflux sufferers have become convinced their stomach acid is too strong and must be weakened with various antacid products. Do you wonder what happens when the protein in your steak or your chicken burrito cannot be digested because your stomach acid is too weak? It's almost like the "*experts*" don't know how important the protein is for our bodies. Without being digested, the protein eventually passes through the stomach and into the bowels where it can provoke other digestive problems or stimulate an autoimmune response. These poor reflux sufferers, often paying big bucks for lame advice, become trapped into a lifetime of antacid dependency with no real hope of ever resolving this painful, self-inflicted malady.

I have recommended punching up digestion by taking digestive enzymes for years. To take a load off of our overworked pancreas and to help with digestion of all the good, increased fats in your diet, digestive enzyme supplements can be taken with each cooked or fatty meal. For some, the use of supplemental betain hydrochloride is useful to ramp up the acidity of stomach acid when eating meals containing protein.

A lifetime of poor dietary choices often come with terrible consequences to our health. Many employing these simple strategies as discussed above should improve their current health picture or finally end their chronic, lifelong health problems.

For additional information, consider scheduling a nutritional consult at our office and get back on the road to health.