

Healthy Eating: Simpler Than You Think

Much of the food we eat today does not resemble the food that God created for us. In an attempt to make food more marketable and more palatable, we have made changes that have affected its nutritional value significantly. We wanted fluffier cakes, we have them—and we are paying the price with our health. We have used our taste buds to tell us what foods to eat when we should have been asking our brains.

Our goal is to live a healthier lifestyle. Why is it as difficult for us to figure out how to eat healthier meals as it is to find the time to exercise? Somehow, these two goals seem elusive.

Let's take a look at our most common excuses for not trying to improve our diets:

1. "It costs too much money." I'm not going to lie to you. It can cost more, but you can always find ways to cut the expense. If you buy all organic food at the store, it's definitely going to cost you more. Health food can't compare to ramen noodles at five for a buck, a family-size box of mac and cheese for 20 cents more, the five frozen pizzas for 10 dollars, or the 10-pound can of pork and beans from Costco.

However, if you are committed to doing this, you can take steps to keep it cheaper. You can grow your own veggies, find local farmers who will sell you chickens that have been raised naturally, or go online and buy 50-pound bags of spelt flour. Money should not be a barrier to good health. When you eat healthier food, you will eat less of it. A slice of truly whole-grain bread will be more filling than two or three slices of Wonder Bread, and you will be less likely to overeat.

2. "I don't have the time." I do not buy this excuse. People complain how much more time it takes to cook regular oats compared to instant oats. Really? If I microwave a bowl of regular oats, it may take three minutes. The instant oatmeal cook time is one or two minutes. What kind of NASCAR world do you live in that you're worried about shaving sixty seconds off your morning preparations?

I'm not asking you to pull out your Franklin Planner and set up two or three hours a day for meal preparation, although if you can, that's fine. You can do it either way. But I really don't want to hear how much time it takes.

3. "I am afraid I won't like healthy foods." This is the worse excuse of them all. Of course, ignoring a sense of one's own mortality and desire to be healthy, most people would pick a good chocolate chip cookie or a big frosting-covered cinnamon roll over Brussels sprouts any day of the week. For most of us, we need to link junky eating to an unwelcome outcome, such as being fat or sick or in pain or having nonstop diarrhea. Once we make the connection, we will modify our eating and drinking.

4. "It is easier to stop and pick up fast food on the way home from work." I try to tell my patients that they just need to plan ahead, and if they fail to plan, they can still go through the drive-through on the way home. You just make different choices. Instead of getting the Big Mac and fries, you can order the grilled chicken and eat it without the bun; you can also get a salad and maybe even a mini-bag of carrots or an apple. Of your can go the local Mexican fast-food place and order a crunchy taco fresco style (no cheese).

No-No Foods

I strongly urge you to eliminate from your diet all types of white flour, pasteurized dairy products, artificial sweetening products, all chemically processed oils and all genetically

modified foods.

What You Should Eat

In general, as you may have heard it said, “shop the outside (perimeter) of the store layout—produce, seafood, meats. The supposed timesaving of the pre-packaged foods aren’t worth the health hassles. Beyond that, here is my advice:

Fresh and frozen vegetables. No canned veggies, please. They have been cooked too much. That leaves fresh and frozen vegetables, and there is a debate as to which is better for you. Many vegetables lose their labile (unstable vitamins) such as B vitamins and ascorbic acid in the freezing process, but those would have been lost in the cooking process anyway.

Deli Meat. Deli meats are certainly not perfect food, but they are better than gorging on bread, muffins and pasta salad. When people feel stuck with regard to controlling their eating, I give them permission to grab some deli meat, especially if they are having a hard time getting enough protein in their diet. I know what you’re thinking: “How am I supposed to eat my deli meat without bread?” Answer” Roll it up and eat it like a carrot.

Nuts and Seeds. Unless you have an allergy to nuts (and you may not be allergic to all nuts), consider nuts as a source of protein. Almonds, walnuts, pecans, cashews, peanuts, hazelnuts, chestnuts, macadamia nuts and less-common types of nuts can supply protein and other nutrients in an unprocessed form. Don’t forget about the many types of edible seeds, some of which you can eat by the handful, such as sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds and pine nuts.

Nut Butters. Again, for those of you who are having massive hunger pains and you can’t figure out what to eat, how about peanut butter or almond butter or even cashew butter? Here come the questions again: “How am I supposed to eat peanut butter if you won’t allow me jelly and I can’t put it on

bread? You have a lot of options. You could just stick a spoon into the peanut butter jar and spoon it right into your mouth. Or, you could be like me and add a bit of honey on the top of the peanut butter. Or you could still add jelly to your spoonful of peanut butter—as long as it is the fruit-juice sweetened kind. Or you could use a celery stick or yummy apple slices to scoop up the peanut butter.

*Note: The preceding is an excerpt from Michael Berglund's book, Tired of Being Sick and Tired. **Michael Berglund, DC**, is in private practice at Berglund Health & Wellness Center in Kenosha, Wis. He is a board-eligible chiropractic internist with a doctor of chiropractic degree from National University of Health and sciences and a degree in medical technology (laboratory medicine) from Michigan Technological University.*