

How to Eat to Live

No matter how spiritually mature you are, an unhealthy lifestyle and diet will limit your potential.

As a Christian, you are free to eat anything you want. Your diet will not keep you from heaven, but if you continually eat unhealthy foods, you will probably get there much sooner.

All foods are not created equal. In fact, some food should not be labeled “food” but rather “consumable product” or “edible, but void of nourishment.”

Living foods were created for our consumption. They exist in a raw or close-to-raw state. They are beautifully packaged in skins and peels, and no chemicals have been added.

Living foods are plucked, harvested and squeezed, not processed, packaged and put on a shelf. Living foods are recognizable as food.

Dead foods are the opposite. They are living foods that have fallen into human hands and been altered to make them last as long as possible at room temperature and to be as addictive as possible to the consumer.

Life breeds life. Death breeds death. Your body is made up of whatever you put in your mouth. You really are what you eat. And even fashionable clothing can't hide an unhealthy body. It's time to make over your pantry and fridge with more living foods, so you can look and feel your best.

FOOD IS A BLESSING

Exodus 23:25 says: “‘You shall serve the Lord your God, and He will bless your bread and water. And I will take sickness away from the midst of you'” (NKJV). The word here for “bread” is also translated “nourishment.” God wants us to enjoy food. So it's important to know which foods He made to bless your body.

Organic fruits and vegetables. At least half of what you eat should be living foods, preferably organic fruits and vegetables, whole grains and living oils such as extra-virgin olive oil. It is an established fact that the more fruits and vegetables you eat, the lower your chance of heart disease, cancer and many other health problems.

Even adding one serving a day can lower your heart disease risk. The current recommended daily servings of fruits and vegetables, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is five to 13 servings a day.

Many times a diet rich in fruits and vegetables is able to reduce your blood pressure as much as medications do. People who eat more than four servings a day also have significantly lower levels of bad cholesterol. Studies clearly show that for preventing cancer, fruits and vegetables are the best medicine you can take.

Eat your fruits and vegetables raw or steamed because food in its fresh state has all its enzymes. They should be eaten unpeeled whenever possible because many vitamins and minerals are concentrated just beneath their skins. If you have not purchased organic items, it is imperative that you wash these fruits and vegetables carefully.

If no fresh produce is available, choose frozen fruits and vegetables, though their nutritional value is mildly compromised. Canned produce is usually heated very quickly, destroying many vitamins and enzymes.

Organic foods are produced without the use of artificial pesticides and chemical fertilizers. These foods deliver superior nutrition without the harmful chemicals or substances that can wreak havoc on our health.

Carrots, tomatoes, parsley, garlic, strawberries, tangerines, grapes, blueberries and hundreds of other colorful, living fruits and vegetables contain antioxidants and phytonutrients,

protecting you from a myriad of diseases, including cancer. Eat plenty of nonstarchy vegetables such as spinach, lettuce, cabbage, broccoli, asparagus, green beans, brussels sprouts, collards, radishes, turnips and cauliflower. Eat colorful salads with balsamic or red wine vinegar and extra-virgin olive oil or other healthy oils.

Starchy vegetables such as beans, peas, lentils, corn, potatoes and sweet potatoes are fine, though if you are overweight you will need to eat them in moderation. Beans, peas and lentils are high insoluble fiber, which helps lower cholesterol and control blood sugar.

One of the important ingredients in fruits and vegetables is indigestible fiber, which soaks up toxins and water in the digestive system and sweeps them out. High-fiber diets move food, toxins and parasites through your gastrointestinal (GI) tract quickly and harmlessly. Generally speaking, the higher the fiber content the better.

Whole grains. Another living foods staple is fiber-rich, living grain products such as sprouted-grain breads, brown rice, whole-grain pasta and whole-grain cereal. These are nutrient-dense and pass on lots of vitamins and minerals to your body. Whole grains also contain lots of fiber, which is a fabulous toxin-trapper.

When you buy grain products, look for the words “sprouted,” “whole wheat” or “whole oat” on the ingredient list. I encourage you to eat sprouted breads and flat breads. Ezekiel bread and manna bread are both terrific flour-less breads made from live, sprouted grains and should be refrigerated. Limit your consumption of whole-grain products that contain corn.

Good fats. The good types of fat are necessary every day for the health of your heart, brain, skin, hair and every part of you. Good fat nourishes and strengthens cell membranes. They include: (1) monounsaturated fats and (2) omega-3 fats.

Monounsaturated fat is found in extra-virgin or virgin olive oil that is cold-pressed (not heated). You can also get monounsaturated fats in natural organic peanut butter, avocados, olives, macadamia nuts, and especially almonds, walnuts and hazelnuts. Raw nuts and seeds should be a mainstay of your diet. Almonds are high in monounsaturated fats and contain about 20 percent protein.

Omega-3 fatty acids are found mainly in cold-water fish, some marine mammals and algae (seaweed). I recommend that you eat wild salmon as a good source of omega-3 fats.

Fresh organic fruits and vegetables, whole grains and monounsaturated fats you can eat almost unreservedly. However, meats and dairy products should be eaten with a little more caution.

EAT MEAT WITH CAUTION Humans are omnivores, and meat can be an acceptable and healthy part of your diet. But many people don't understand the dangers of eating too much meat or the wrong meats.

Red meat has a higher concentration of toxins than nearly all other foods. Any pesticide, sulfa drug, hormone, antibiotic, chemical or other toxic residue an animal eats generally gets stored right into its fat. If you eat that fat, the same toxins go into your body and lodge in your fat.

White meat is better, but most chickens are given antibiotics, especially tetracycline, to counter salmonella and other bacteria. In the past, it was common practice to give growth hormones and estrogens to animals to add bulk to increase their value. Fortunately, now these practices have changed.

Eating too much meat and protein makes it harder for your body to detoxify on a cellular level. It may also put a strain on the kidneys. Individuals with kidney failure must restrict their intake of protein, especially meats.

Men usually need only 20 to 30 grams of protein (3-4 ounces of meat) with each meal. Women usually need only 14 to 21 grams of protein per meal (2-3 ounces of meat).

I recommend organic, free-range or grass-fed meat. If you cannot afford these, get the leanest cuts and trim off any visible fat.

Recognize and avoid irradiated meats or other foods. Evidence suggests that irradiation is unsafe. It has been confirmed that it harms the nutritional value of foods. Labels on packages of irradiated food are legally required to carry the phrase "treated by irradiation" or "treated with irradiation."

Turkey breast usually contains the least amount of pesticides and toxins. Other relatively safe meats include the leanest cuts of lamb, venison (U.S.), rabbit and buffalo.

When preparing poultry, peel the skin off and cut away any visible fat before cooking. Bake, broil, grill or lightly stir-fry your meat.

Don't deep-fry your chickens or turkeys. Scrape off charred portions because char contains benzopyrenes, which are carcinogens, associated with colorectal cancer. Cook meats thoroughly because most poultry contain dangerous bacteria such as salmonella, and red meat may contain a dangerous form of E. coli. Once you start buying the right kinds of meats and preparing them in a healthy way, you can fully enjoy them as part of your regular diet.

WHAT ABOUT FISH? New studies keep emerging about the high mercury content of fish. But the following fish are usually safe: Wild Alaskan or Pacific salmon, mahi-mahi (Florida), sardines, Tongol tuna (found in health food stores) and grouper (Argentina, Chile, Mexico).

Fish can be your best source of healthy omega-3 oils, which studies have shown is one of the best oils on the planet. The

highest concentrations of omega-3 oils are found in Pacific herring, king salmon, wild Pacific salmon, anchovies and lake trout. Wild Pacific salmon contains higher omega-3 fat than farm-raised Atlantic salmon.

Avoid shark and swordfish. They have some of the highest levels of mercury and pesticides of any fish in the sea. In many areas trout also have been subjected to contamination through industrialization. Select fish taken from fresh, pure water areas.

Shrimp contains higher levels of cholesterol than other seafood, but it is usually free from contamination from pesticides. Like most shellfish, it usually contains the heavy metal cadmium, which is associated with hypertension. If you choose to eat shellfish, do so infrequently. Cook thoroughly, since raw or undercooked shellfish may be associated with food poisoning or hepatitis A.

DAIRY PRODUCTS AND ALLERGIES For some, dairy products, and cow's milk in particular, are linked to all kinds of allergies and sensitivities, including skin rashes, eczema, fatigue, spastic colon, excessive mucus production, nasal allergies and chronic ear and sinus infections. Some people have diarrhea due to lactose intolerance. If you have any of these, stop all dairy products for a week or so, and watch the improvement.

Also, dairy products tend to have lots of saturated fats in which toxins are concentrated. High amounts of pesticide residues are usually found in butter and cheese.

Goat milk products generally cause fewer allergies and sensitivities than cow milk. Organic, low-fat, or fat-free goat milk or goat cheese can be found in some health food stores and online.

Eat low-fat or nonfat organic cheese, sour cream or yogurt. Use organic butter or ghee, which is clarified butter. Never substitute margarine for butter. It contains trans fatty

acids, which are associated with heart disease.

It's best to avoid ice cream and frozen yogurt. Both are high in sugar. Ice cream is usually also high in saturated fat.

The best dairy products for you is low-fat organic plain yogurt or kefir, or low-fat organic plain goat milk yogurt or kefir, which contains good bacteria to maintain a healthy GI tract. These good bacteria help reduce the production of cancer-causing chemicals.

If you can, buy living foods the day you intend to prepare them. Through proper handling, you can keep living foods healthy all the way to your dinner table.

COOK AND SERVE Once they are exposed to air, fruits and vegetables begin to lose nutritional value. If you must chop or cut up your vegetables, do so just before eating.

Busy homemakers like to prepare meals in advance, but reheating food and leftovers depletes them of vitamins, minerals and nutrients. When you boil vegetables, the nutrients leach into the water, so bring the water to a boil first, then add your vegetables for a brief time. Drain them immediately and serve them. Lightly steaming your vegetables causes very little loss of nutrients.

A study in Science News in 1998 found that just six minutes of microwave cooking destroyed half the vitamin B-12 in dairy foods and meat. This is a much higher rate of destruction than other cooking techniques.

Stir-frying, steaming and grilling are wonderful ways to prepare your food. Don't overcook it, and watch what you cook in.

Teflon is possibly related to cancer because of the presence of a toxic chemical used to produce it. Aluminum has toxic effects, and iron is a free radical. I recommend the use of

stainless steel, glass or porcelain cookware.

Once you've set the table with healthy foods, start your meal with a heartfelt blessing and keep the conversation pleasant. Eat moderate portions and feast instead on conversation and laughter. Chew each bite 30 times and put your fork down between bites. This dramatically slows down the meal so that the hormone leptin will signal the brain to stop eating.

Set new goals for yourself this year. Plan and cook healthy meals, and most of all, enjoy the company of your family and friends. Deuteronomy 30:19 says: "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore, choose life, that both you and your descendants may live."

Don Colbert, M.D. is the author of *The Seven Pillars of Health* (Charisma House), from which this article was adapted. His latest book is *I Can Do This Diet* (Siloam Press). For additional resources and articles by Colbert go to [.](#)