

Average American Diet: Lacking in Vitamins and Minerals

Even if you are a normal weight and think you take pretty good care of yourself, chances are you are lacking in at least one critical vitamin or mineral necessary for good health. It's called micronutrient deficiency, and it's a new health issue caused by modern living.

Our food supply has deteriorated in quality. The main culprit is processed food, such as packaged and fast food. Because it is cheap, convenient and tasty, it is taking over the American diet. Unfortunately, processed food is sorely lacking in micronutrients.

But it doesn't stop there. Even whole foods such as fresh vegetables, meats, and fish are lacking the micronutrients they once contained.

Many of us remember the way vegetables used to taste. They were full of flavor, highly recognizable and unique to that particular vegetable. Today's veggies, compared to those from decades past, have little taste.

What comes to my mind is tomatoes. I remember as a child, a fresh-from-the-farm tomato was one of my favorite foods! Sprinkle a bit of salt on it, and it was delicious. Now however, those things in the store that are called tomatoes barely even resemble what they once were. They are hard and tasteless. Turns out, they also no longer have the nutrition they once did. Sadly, much of our produce is that way. For instance, apples contain 77 percent fewer minerals than they did 80 years ago.

The major reason for this change is over-farming, which robs

the soil of precious micronutrients that used to be absorbed into the food. Also, shipping produce long distances adds to the problem. Picking it too soon and exposing it to light, heat, and air for a long time, all take away micronutrients. Furthermore, many industrial farms overwater their crops, creating larger, more profitable fruits or vegetables, which are lacking in nutrition.

As discouraging as this sounds, the best way to mitigate micronutrient deficiency in produce is to buy from local farmers.

Dr. Jayson Calton and his wife Mira, a certified nutritionist, have dedicated their lives to eradicating micronutrient deficiency, and are the authors of *The Micronutrient Miracle*.

Their mission originated with Mira's osteoporosis diagnosis at the age of 30. Her doctor said she had the bones of an 80-year-old woman! When she started getting the vitamins and minerals her body was craving, she completely reversed her osteoporosis. She said micronutrient is at the root of many health problems.

"For me it was osteoporosis," Mira said. "But it's also things like cancer, it has to do with your high blood pressure, your cholesterol levels, your metabolism, whether or not you sleep well, it has to do with everything, diabetes, and it also has a lot to do with obesity."

Topping the list of micronutrients most people are lacking are potassium, calcium, magnesium and vitamins A, D and E.

In addition to fresh produce, fresh meat is also lacking the vital micronutrients it once contained. This is because of the ravages of factory farming. Most animals raised on factory farms never see the light of day and are fed unnatural, unhealthy grains or worse.

Jayson says, "They're being fed up to seven pounds a day of

stale candy and chocolate bars that these candy manufacturers are throwing at these farmers and saying, 'Hey, fatten up the cattle with this. It will spike their insulin, you'll get more marbling in the meat, you'll be able to sell the meat and it will taste better,'" he said. "This is just, to me, an abomination."

A much healthier alternative to factory farmed beef is grass-fed beef.

"Now what's going to happen when the animal is out in the sunshine, absorbing the vitamin D, eating the grass? They're going to have over 400 percent more vitamin A and vitamin E in that meat," Jayson explained.

"There's going to be 300 percent more of something called CLA, or conjugated linoleic acid. This is a kind of fat that science thinks is going to help prevent cancer, it's also a kind of fat to help burn our body fat. This is a fat that these cows can really only get when they eat grass," he said.

It's not just diet that contributes to micronutrient deficiency. Smoking, living in a polluted city, stress, prescription medicine, even exercise, all deplete our body's reserve of vitamins and minerals.

Could you be micronutrient deficient? Take this quiz to find out.

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