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## Food for health and wealth

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**'The doctor of the future will give no medicine, but will interest his patients in the care of the human frame, in diet and in the cause and prevention of disease.'** (Thomas Edison)

Contradictory theories on health and nutrition abound; indeed the only thing that health and food experts have done consistently is to create epidemics of confusion and anxiety. As such we should find out the truth for ourselves. It is important to understand what principles constitute the framework of a good diet and health. Remember that the symptoms of disease we experience are indications that we are making mistakes, and require more than a quick fix to produce lasting results.

We need to address the root causes of illness, rather than only masking the symptoms. Tomorrow's medicine will involve more than using nutrients instead of drugs – it will involve looking through an entirely new pair of glasses, which reveal the true causes of disease. In most cases these lie in faulty nutrition, pollution, stress, and lack of exercise, but the greatest cause of all is ignorance.

The paradox not recognised in orthodox circles is that true learning does not involve merely filling the mind with more knowledge relating to the science of health. It rather refers to the unlearning of all that is obsolete and superfluous to our inner needs, or to the realities that exist within and without us. At present, disease still gets the lion's share of attention, while health is neglected. The focus should be on wellness instead of illness. **We study many diseases in great detail, but no university in the world educates us on the nature of health.** As a result consumers must rely on anecdotal and non-mainstream sources for their health education.

Each of us can invest in our own future. Our challenge is to make informed choices. We don't have to give up the blessings of civilization, but we do need to live in harmony with our body's physiology. The body is food transformed, therefore eating is being. Seventy per cent of our health depends on the food we eat. Most chronic and degenerative diseases from which we suffer today are a direct result of poor eating habits. Nutrition is not the only determinant of our health, but one of the factors over which we have the

most control. It's your choice what you put into your mouth. However, to be optimally healthy we must live according to the laws of nature. We need clean air, clean water, a nutrient-dense diet, sunshine, rest and sleep, exercise and recreation, joy, creativity, a vision and spiritual development. To live to our fullest potential and enjoy true quality in life, we must take care of our body, mind and spirit.

## WHAT IS HEALTH?

The definitions of 'health' and 'illness' are subjective terms unique to each individual. One person's normality might be another person's pathology. Albert Szent-Gyorgyi, the Hungarian biochemist who discovered vitamin C, said: 'Very few people know what real health is, because most are occupied with killing themselves slowly.'

Most people are not sick enough to lie down (the horizontally ill), but suffer from one of the so-called 'diseases of civilisation', thus they are vertically ill! Do you fall into this category? We might not suffer from cancer, heart disease, diabetes or arthritis. However, most people have at least one of the following debilitating conditions: chronic fatigue syndrome, allergies, food intolerances and chemical sensitivities, migraines or headaches, digestive disorders, acne, memory loss, poor concentration, hyperactivity, loss of sex drive, or premenstrual syndrome.

The vertically ill often become trapped in a cycle of dependency, relying on their doctors to monitor and constantly adjust their medications. They derive only limited benefit from the 'addictive' array of anti-depressants, tranquillisers, anti-inflammatory drugs and antibiotics.

Sadly, most people live at only 50% of their full health potential, not really sick, but not truly well either. To regain health we need to take responsibility for our own recovery. It is only through self effort that we will be able to understand what must be done and why, and it is only through this acquired understanding that we will be able to reject all the unscientific nonsense that has been written and propagated about health. We should empower ourselves to address the causes of dis-ease by changing our lifestyles, amending our diet and taking steps to rebuilt our immune systems. With or without hi-tech tests and scientific studies, we all know we're at risk of lifestyle-related conditions. But we don't have to sit back and let disease happen. Let prevention itself be the cure!

## PREVENTION

Conventional medicine excels in the management of medical emergencies, bacterial infections and complex life-saving surgery. However, it fails miserably in the areas of disease prevention and the treatment of chronic degenerative diseases. Prevention is possible, and must be the model of choice in fighting disease! For centuries, medicine sought new and better ways of healing, treatment and therapy. Now, **the focus is shifting from 'fixing things', to making sure they don't get broken in the first place.** The goal should be not just to keep disease at bay. Rather, it's to pinpoint the possibility long before it happens. Lifestyle modification is a process of behavioural change. However, most patients don't want to take responsibility, preferring to put their hope in a doctor's 'magic bullet' – which of course does not exist! There is no magic solution; it's all about attitude. You have to take responsibility for your own health by modifying your lifestyle and making changes slowly and consistently.

## **NUTRITION**

Modern humans have lost touch with the diet and lifestyle of their foraging ancestors. We have lost our natural instinct of what is good and true. Ironically, our ancestors ate the kinds of foods many of us avoid today. Animal protein was a mainstay in the daily diet, as was farm-fresh butter. Ancient foragers ate mostly nutritious plant foods high in fibre such as sunflower seeds, ground mesquite and cactus seeds, acorns, walnuts, pecans, persimmons, grapes, berries, and cactus flowers, fruits and pods. These ancient foragers balanced their mostly plant-food diets with about 10 - 20% meat obtained from small animals such as mice, several types of rat-sized rodents, fish, freshwater clams, small lizards, caterpillars and grasshoppers, small birds and bird eggs, and when they were lucky, rabbits and deer. Our pizza, hamburger and ice-cream diet of today is a far cry from what our ancestors enjoyed.

Further, the poisons of the technological age are very recent introductions – so recent that our bodies have not been able to adjust to these unnatural chemicals and foods. Today, more than 2 million synthetic substances are known, 25 000 are introduced each year, and over 30 000 are produced on a commercial scale. Only a tiny fraction is ever tested for toxicity. Processed foods have been freely available for only the past 100 - 150 years, when huge flour mills and sugar refineries were introduced for the first time in history. Refined foods are ruining the health of millions through sheer ignorance of what these foods can do.

The solution is to keep it simple. Most answers are contained in nature. Nature inherently contains all the necessary preconditions for health and vitality when left undisturbed. It is human tampering that upsets this balance and throws us into states of disease. Quality whole food is the foundation upon which vibrant health and well being are built. The literature testifying to this fact is abundant. Processing of any kind, especially the application of heat, destroys food value. There is a delicate essence present in fully ripened food grown on rich organic soil that can only be appreciated when it is eaten in the fresh, raw state.

Most people complain that it is too expensive to eat a well-balanced whole-food diet, but may be surprised to learn that in the long term eating healthily may actually be cheaper. You don't need to be a rocket scientist to figure out that an apple is cheaper than a packet of crisps!

## **THE CHOICE IS YOURS!**

We are all created healthy, beautiful and wise. The only difference lies within us. The different choices we make determine whether we enjoy life to our full potential. Health is not everything, but without it, everything else is nothing. Health is wealth! To be healthy, we must search, discover, feel, think and act in new ways, different from those leading to the degenerative conditions that kill two-thirds of us. We can do so only by looking more deeply within ourselves.

'May understanding of health be the starship of the next generation. May the worship of diseases die with us.' (Udo Erasmus)