

# Healthy Nutrition and its Guidelines

**Abstract:** *The aim of dietary therapy is to maximize health through nutrition. A dietary therapist will analyze the existing diet and then draw up a plan of what the client should be eating to improve their overall health. Foods that may have had a detrimental effect on the client's health will be cut out.*

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## DIETARY AND NUTRITIONAL THERAPY

Dietary and nutritional therapies are not the same. **Dietary Therapy** emphasizes correct eating and drinking for health, while **Nutritional Therapy** is concerned with the use of nutritional or food supplements to treat existing health problems.

**Dietary Therapists** or dieticians advice on what you should not eat while **Nutritional Therapists** specialize in the recommendation of specific doses of vitamins and minerals for healing purposes. Although there is a growing overlap between the two therapies and it is possible that they may become a single discipline at some point in future, important differences do exist. For example, dieticians do not recommend high doses of vitamins and minerals for the purpose of treating illnesses as few dieticians accept the need for extra nutrients, if a healthy balanced diet is followed. The average western diet does not contain all the nutrients the body needs, attributing this largely to modern methods of food production with most food low in nutrients or lacking nutrients altogether. Nutritionists recommend that these missing nutrients should be provided via the intake of various vitamins, minerals and other food supplements.

## HAIR MINERALS ANALYSIS

Some nutritional therapists use samples of hair to detect mineral deficiencies within the body. This technique involves sending a hair sample to a laboratory for analysis and to detect the presence or absence of specific substances. The value of

testing hair mineral content may not be an accurate reflection of the state of the body and different laboratories show conflicting results on the same samples of hair. Hair is also affected by the samples and other products we use and the processes used by hairdressers and may not be a true indication of our internal state. For this reason we should not rely on hair analysis alone to determine the mineral content of the body.

## DIETARY THERAPY

There are many diets based on various different principles that have been designed to promote health and that claim to be effective in alleviating some painful conditions. They include the mono diet, the hay diet, the Gerson diet and the macrobiotic diet. Specific dietary recommendations have also been matched to specific illnesses such as asthma, migraine and arthritis. The patient suffering from these and other illnesses should monitor their pain history and diet carefully and may be able to discover for themselves a helpful regime. Any diet should be examined carefully to see that it includes all necessary nutrients and should be followed with caution.

## MACROBIOTIC DIET

The macrobiotic or 'Yin-Yang' diet aims to return the body to its ideal yin-yang energy balance with foods containing yin and yang energies. Yang is the active hot side of our nature, yin is the cool, peaceful aspect. So yang foods include cereals, root vegetables and pulses, while yin foods include leafy vegetables, nuts, seeds and

fruit. Macrobiotics also emphasizes that foods should be organically and locally produced and eaten in their proper seasons.

### MONO DIET

It is claimed that mono diets or single food diets promote the "cleansing" of the digestive system through the consumption of only one type of fruit or vegetables for two days or more. The food is usually pureed or juiced; grape, apples, carrots, beetroot and cabbage are commonly used.

### FOOD COMBINING DIET [HAY DIET]

The food combining diet involves not eating starchy food such as pasta, bread and potatoes at the same time as proteins are "converted" in the digestive tract by different chemical processes and eating them together means that neither is converted properly. The diet effectively treats pain caused by arthritis and digestive problems.

### GERSON DIET

The Gerson diet claims to help prevent cancer. The diet includes organically grown fruit and vegetables particularly green leafy vegetables such as cabbage, Brussels sprouts and broccoli,

which contain chemicals called indoles. Indoles deactivate oestrogen which may be implicated in certain types of cancer. This indicates there may be some justification for the Gerson diet.

### FASTING

Though not all doctors agree, a fast of not more than 24 hours carried out under proper advice and supervision is an effective way of clearing out toxins from the body.

### DIET FOR SPECIFIC ILLNESSES

Many chronic illnesses can be alleviated by attention to diet. This may be different for different patients but generally it seems that a low fat, low protein diet can ease pain from rheumatoid arthritis. Migraine sufferers should avoid cheese, chocolate and wine. Asthma patients should try to ascertain which foods they react badly to and avoid foods containing sulphites such as wine and beer.

Fresh fruits and vegetables contain large amounts of vitamins and minerals. Drinking fresh fruit juice is a good way of taking in these essential nutrients.

### DIETARY THERAPY IN A NUTSHELL

FOODS	REGULARLY	SOMETIMES	AVOID
Cakes and Biscuits	Low fat (Preferably home made) cakes and biscuits.	Cakes/biscuits made with non hydrogenated polyunsaturated fats, sorbets, low fat ice cream.	More commercial cakes and biscuits, cream cakes, full cream ice cream.
Cereals and Bread	Whole meal flour, oats, wholewheat pastes, brown rice, sugar and salt free cereals.	Refined pasta, white rice, white bread, semi sweet biscuits, white flour products.	Croissants, brioches, pastries.
Dairy and Egg products.	Skimmed milk, cottage cheese, egg white, low fat yoghurt.	Semi skimmed milk, medium and half fat cheeses, light sour cream, egg yolks.	Full fat yoghurt, milk drinks.
Drinks and Soups	Water, fruit juice, low fat soups.	Alcohol, tea, coffee, malted drinks and low fat drinking chocolate.	Cream soups, full fat milk drinks.
Fats and Oils	Olive oil	Non hydrogenated polyunsaturated oil and margarines. eg: Sunflower oil, corn oil.	Butter, lard, ghee.

FOODS	REGULARLY	SOMETIMES	AVOID
Fish	White and oily fish, eg tuna, Sardines, salmon, mackerel (Preferably fresh or frozen).		Fried fish in batter, taramasa lata.
Fruit and Vegetables	Fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables; beans lentils and other pulses.	Chips cooked in non hydro-generated polyunsaturated oil, avocados.	Crisps, chips cooked in saturated oils.
Meat	Skinless, chicken and turkey.	Lean beef, pork, lamb, kidney or other offal.	Fat meat, sausages, meat pies, salamis, duck, pate.
Dressings, Preserves and Sweets	Herbs, mustard, low fat dressings, jams made from fruit only (use sparingly)	Low fat salad cream and mayonnaise, sugar based jams, marmalade, honey, dark chocolate.	Full fat salad cream and chocolate and other mayonnaise, sugar, milk, sweets.

Nutritionists recommend a diet that is raw fruit, vegetables and fibre but low in saturated fat, salt and sugar. This chart shows which foods you should eat regularly, which you can have occasionally and those to avoid.

**NUTRITIONAL THERAPY**

With the discovery of vitamin A in 1913, scientists recognized the vital part these compounds play in nutrition. Dietary supplements have become more widespread with the identification of much more essential part in the body's metabolism. There are about 15 of them, but vitamin B is usually referred to as vitamin B complex as it consists of a group of related compounds. The body is able to synthesize some vitamins from food stuffs others must be obtained whole from the diet. The vitamins can be divided into two - those which are soluble in fat and those which are water soluble. The fat soluble ones A, D, E and K can be stored and therefore need to be supplied regularly. Further more, because they are soluble in water, they are often lost in the cooking process. If vitamins which the body can store are taken in excess, they can be harmful. Whereas generally speaking the body will simply excrete excess amounts of B and C. Nutritional therapy is based on the fact that deficiencies of various nutrients in the body will cause malfunctions ranging from scurvy (lack of vitamin C) to anaemia (which may be lack of B, C or E). The missing vitamins can either be supplied

by balancing the diet or by taking vitamin supplements. During illness the body requires more nutrients to allow it to fight against the condition and repair its cells sufficiently. A nutritional therapist analyses the diet, the current state of health and the lifestyle. Armed with this information, dietary changes and therapeutic doses of various nutritional supplements is advised.

**MEGAVITAMIN THERAPY**

When used to heal rather than for general health the supplement doses recommended can sometimes be extremely high. For example, doses of 1000 mg or more of vitamin C may be recommended to fight against diseases, although the amount recommended except on the advice of qualified practitioners as it is possible to overdose. However taking vitamin and mineral supplements in the doses recommended on the labels is safe.

**NUTRITIONAL THERAPY**

Nutritional deficiencies in the diet can be identified by analysis of body fluids. Generally, supplements should be taken regularly over a period of weeks, months or even years, although a quick boost of vitamin C can help boost the immune system. Taking a good quality multi-vitamin and mineral supplement is the best way of ensuring you get a balance of nutrients. Supplementing with one vitamin or mineral on its own is not as effective as taking several nutrients together. Many nutrients

need other to be effective. For example, vitamin C needs Zinc to work properly and the B vitamins usually should be taken as a complex as there are more than a dozen of them and they work by complementing each other.

**GUIDELINES FOR TAKING SUPPLEMENTS**

1. Take supplements with or just after a meal.
2. If taking a number of supplements, divide them equally between meals eg half at breakfast and half at lunch or a third at breakfast, lunch and dinner and spread the combination evenly throughout the day. Do not take all vitamin C in the morning and all the B complex in the evening as these cannot be stored by the body for later use. If they are surplus to requirements they are eliminated from the body.
3. If self dosing is done, always follow the guidelines for doses written on the labels. Taking one or more combination supplements with a daily multivitamin and mineral supplement may mean you are overdosing.
4. Seek the advice of a trained therapist if you want to take large doses of any supplements. These effects can vary, for example, B vitamins taken late at night can cause restlessness while multiminerals can aid sleep. Moreover high doses of some supplements taken over a long time or at the wrong time (such as during pregnancy) can be toxic. Examples are vitamin A, zinc, iron and selenium.
5. Expect to feel benefits within the first three months see a nutritional therapist if no benefits are experienced.
6. Stop taking the supplements and see a therapist if you feel unwell or have side effects or unusual symptoms such as nausea or headaches.
7. For a specific condition it is advisable to seek the expert advice of a qualified nutritional therapist. Supplement tablets and hard compressed concentrations of ingredients where as capsules contain the ingredients in a looser form or as a liquid.

They are only an indication and vary with physique, age and sex, women have different needs

at different times (For example, when pregnant, lactating or postmenopausal), as do children, and should seek professional advice.

**GUIDE FOR HEALTHY DIET**

1. Achieve and maintain ideal body weight.
2. Do not skip meals. Eat meals and snacks at regular timings everyday.
3. Read and understand nutritional labels.
4. Do not eat watching television.
5. Eat variety of fruits and vegetables.
6. Eat fibre rich food such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains and beans.
7. Limit high salt food such as salted peanuts, processed meats (hot dogs) and canned foods.
8. Eat fish more frequently than meat and poultry and limit/avoid organ meats.
9. Limit refined starch like cornflakes, noodles, etc.
10. Do not deep fry food, rather boil, steam, grill or bake.
11. Use little oil to cook and on low cooking heat.
12. Do not heat the leftover oil repeatedly.
13. Use less added fat (*ghee, vanaspati, butter, cheese, etc* )
14. Limit intake of calorie dense food like sweet, sprouts and healthy snacks.
15. Avoid overeating to prevent over weight and obesity.
16. Drink water in adequate amount (2-2.5 liters/day) and beverages (coffee, tea) in moderation.
17. Avoid alcohol, those who drink should limit intake.
18. Avoid smoking.
19. Exercise regularly to maintain desirable body weight.

**HEALTHY COOKING TIPS**

1. Do not wash grain repeatedly before cooking.
2. Do not wash vegetables after cutting.
3. Do not soak the cut vegetables in water for a long period.
4. Cook food in vessels covered with lid.
5. Do not discard the excess water after cooking.
6. Avoid using soda while cooking pulses and vegetable.