

EAT FOOD...EAT LESS...EAT SEASONALLY

We, at Passiflora, want you to experience vital health each day of your life. Unfortunately, we live in a country where true knowledge about nourishing your body is lacking due to the marketing filters of highly processed foods from big businesses which fill the shelves of our SUPER markets. Michael Pollan's article called *Unhappy Meals*, published in the New York Times 1/28/07, has made a strong

impression on many of us. Mr. Pollan is a highly regarded food journalist and author of two books, most recently the best seller *Omnivore's Dilemma*. I have distilled Mr. Pollan's advice. American's currently spend \$200 billion on diseases related to bad diet. Our health compared to many other cultures and countries is poor. We hope you will heed Mr. Pollan's good advice...

1. **Eat food.** Though in our current state of confusion, this is much easier said than done. So try this: Don't eat anything your great-great-grandmother wouldn't recognize as food. (Sorry, but at this point Moms are as confused as the rest of us, which is why we have to go back a couple of generations, to a time before the advent of modern food products.)
2. **Avoid even those food products that come bearing health claims. They're apt to be heavily processed, and the claims are often dubious at best.** When Kellogg's can boast about its Healthy Heart Strawberry Vanilla cereal bars, health claims have become hopelessly compromised. (The American Heart Association charges food makers for their endorsement.) Don't take the silence of the yams as a sign that they have nothing valuable to say about health.
3. **Especially avoid food products containing ingredients that are a) unfamiliar, b) unpronounceable c) more than five in number — or that contain high-fructose corn syrup.** All of them are reliable markers for foods that have been highly processed.
4. **Get out of the supermarket whenever possible.** You won't find any high-fructose corn syrup at the farmer's market; you also won't find food harvested long ago and far away. What you will find are fresh whole foods picked at the peak of nutritional quality. Precisely the kind of food your great-great-grandmother would have recognized as food.
5. **Pay more, eat less.** The American food system has for a century devoted its energies and policies to increasing quantity and reducing price, not to improving quality. There's no escaping the fact that better food — measured by taste or nutritional quality (which often correspond) — costs more, because it has been grown or raised less intensively and with more care. Not everyone can afford to eat well in America, which is shameful, but most of us can: Americans spend, on average, less than 10 percent of their income on food, down from 24 percent in 1947, and less than the citizens of any other nation. And those of us who can afford to eat well should. Paying more for food well grown in good soils — whether certified organic or not — will contribute not only to your health (by reducing exposure to pesticides) but also to the health of others who might not themselves be able to afford that sort of food: the people who grow it and the people who live downstream, and downwind, of the farms where it is grown.
6. **"Eat less"** is the most unwelcome advice of all, but in fact the scientific case for eating a lot less than we currently do is compelling. "Calorie restriction" has repeatedly been shown to slow aging in animals, and many researchers (including Walter Willett, the Harvard epidemiologist) believe it offers the single strongest link between diet and cancer prevention. Once one of the longest-lived people on earth, the Okinawans practiced a principle they called "Hara Hachi Bu": eat until you are 80 percent full.

7. **Eat mostly plants, especially leaves.** Scientists may disagree on what's so good about plants — the antioxidants? Fiber? Omega-3s? — but they do agree that they're probably really good for you and certainly can't hurt. Vegetarians are healthier than carnivores, but near vegetarians (“flexitarians”) are as healthy as vegetarians. Thomas Jefferson was on to something when he advised treating meat more as a flavoring than a food.
8. **Eat more like the French. Or the Japanese. Or the Italians. Or the Greeks.** Confounding factors aside, people who eat according to the rules of a traditional food culture are generally healthier than we are. Any traditional diet will do: if it weren't a healthy diet, the people who follow it wouldn't still be around. In the case of the French paradox, it may not be the dietary nutrients that keep the French healthy (lots of saturated fat and alcohol?!) so much as the dietary habits: small portions, no seconds or snacking, communal meals — and the serious pleasure taken in eating. (Worrying about diet can't possibly be good for you.) Let culture be your guide, not science.
9. **Cook.** And if you can, plant a garden.

Our goddess, Joanie Gugliemino, Nutrition and Holistic Health Counselor, would be glad to meet with you to counsel you on your dietary, nutrition and lifestyle changes. You can contact her at 860-738-7323 or wildaboutnutrition@yahoo.com.

10. **Eat like an omnivore.** Try to add new species, not just new foods, to your diet. The greater the diversity of species you eat, the more likely you are to cover all your nutritional bases. The vast monocultures (corn, soy etc) that now feed us require tremendous amounts of chemical fertilizers and pesticides to keep from collapsing. Diversifying those fields will mean fewer chemicals, healthier soils, healthier plants and animals and, in turn, healthier people. It's all connected, which is another way of saying that your health isn't bordered by your body and that what's good for the soil is probably good for you, too.
11. **My number 11--- Eat seasonally;** we are coming up on spring which is filled with Earth and Water. The anecdotes are lighter, drier foods. Stock up on the greens and add a plethora of them to your dinner plate; drink nutrient filled nettles tea, and decrease your portion sizes.

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