

Vitamin Cottage Nutrition Philosophy

Here at Vitamin Cottage we believe in the whole foods philosophy. Whole foods are foods in their natural, whole form, or as close to how they occur in nature as possible. A whole foods diet means limiting over-processed foods, which are often found in bags, boxes, or cans. This diet also involves cooking foods minimally and is based on (preferably organic) whole grains, fruits and vegetables, nuts and seeds, wild cold-water fish, legumes, unrefined oils, organic eggs, grass-fed meats, game meats, free-range and chemical-free poultry, and fermented dairy products. There are three basic principles that define how whole foods support optimal health.

Three Principles of an Optimal Diet

1. *Eat whole, unrefined foods high in nutrient density and as close to their natural state as possible.*
2. *Eat as wide variety of foods as possible.* This will ensure consumption a wide variety of nutrients and minimize the potential for food sensitivities with over consumption of the same foods.
3. *Personalize your diet to fit your unique biochemistry and lifestyle.*

You Are What You Eat!

The nutrients you consume make up the cells of your body and determine its health. Eating a whole foods diet has shown to increase immunity, vitality, longevity, and quality of life. Not doing so is an open invitation to any number of degenerative diseases.

The six nutrients required by the body to produce energy and maintain life are: ***protein, fat, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, and water.***

Protein

Structure & Function: Protein is a vital structural and working material of **all** cells. Amino acids are the building blocks of those proteins. The proteins in our foods are varying combinations of amino acids, linked together in chains ranging from several to thousands in length. The most important job for protein is to *rebuild cells*. This nutrient is also necessary for the production of enzymes, hormones, antibodies, and DNA in the body.

Individual Needs: Protein needs vary dramatically among individuals, due to numerous factors such as stress levels. If you are under stress, you need more protein than if you are not. According to Robert Crayhon, M.S., C.N.S., author of *Robert Crayhon's Nutrition Made Simple*, people with hypoglycemia, hypothyroidism, adrenal insufficiency, yeast overgrowth, and food allergies usually need more protein. Protein requirements also change throughout life.ⁱ Because many factors affect optimal protein intake, the best way to determine how much protein you should eat is to experiment with different amounts and see how you feel. Common symptoms that can signal a need to eat more protein (and fewer carbohydrates such as breads, sugars, and starches) include fatigue, poor mental focus, frequent susceptibility to illness, yeast overgrowth, bloating, an inability to lose weight, premenstrual syndrome, and sugar and carbohydrate cravings.ⁱ

Listen to your body and find your optimal range. Most people do best with **20%-35%** of their daily calories coming from protein.

Sources: Some healthy sources of protein include naturally raised eggs, legumes, nuts, seeds, organic grass-fed meats, wild, fresh fish (not farmed or canned), and fermented dairy products (e.g. yogurt, kefir, cottage cheese, and raw cheese).

Fats

Structure & Function: Fats are a component of internal fatty tissues and membranes of each living cell in the body. Therefore, they are intricately involved in cell health, which means overall body health. Healthy fat sources also provide a vast array of vitamins and minerals, particularly the fat-soluble vitamins A, D, K, and E. Dietary fat is composed of fatty acids. There are three classes of fatty acids: *saturated*, *monounsaturated*, and *polyunsaturated*. Most foods contain a mixture of all three and are categorized by the type they mostly contain. These three classes can be organized into three main types:

- **Saturated fats**, which are solid at room temperature: the fat in most meats, animal and dairy products (butter, ghee, milk, yogurt) as well as coconut and palm oil. Cholesterol is found in all foods high in saturated fat and is necessary for all adrenal hormones to be produced.ⁱⁱ It is also the body's repair substance and important for adrenal support.ⁱⁱ It also acts as a precursor to vital corticosteroids, hormones that help us deal with stress and protect the body against mental dysfunction. Cholesterol is a precursor to vitamin D, a very important fat-soluble vitamin needed for a healthy nervous system, mineral metabolism, insulin production, and immune system function.ⁱⁱⁱ Saturated fat is also important for brain function and helps the body make stress coping substances.ⁱⁱⁱ These fats are also needed for the proper utilization and retention of essential fatty acids.^{iv}
- **Unsaturated fats** are those that are liquid at room temperature: virgin flax, olive, canola, sunflower, corn, all unhydrogenated and unrefined vegetable oils, and fish oils.
- **Minimize omega-6 rich vegetable oils**, such as corn, sunflower, soy, and safflower. An excessive intake of omega-6 fatty acids has been linked to pre-diabetic conditions with more insulin resistance, increased weight, and elevated blood lipids.
- **Toxic fats:** margarines, vegetable shortenings, partially hydrogenated oils, fried oils used in high-heat recipes, and refined oils sold in supermarkets. Most of our common vegetable oils (except extra virgin olive oil) are dangerously rancid prior to being bottled due to heavy processing and deodorizing. Although we may not be able to smell the rancidity, they still cause damage in the body.
- **Emphasize omega-3 oils:** A high intake of omega-6 fatty acids relative to omega-3 fatty acids and an inadequate intake of omega-3 fatty acids (e.g., from fish and fish oils) have been associated with increased levels of depression^v
 - **Eat Fish:** People who eat diets high in omega-3 fatty acids from fish have a lower incidence of mood symptoms.^{vi,vii,viii,ix} Choose cold water, wild, fatty fish like salmon, halibut, sardines, and mackerel.

- *Farmed fish* are often fed corn and soy and given antibiotics. Much of the salmon and trout commercially sold and served at restaurants are farmed. Fish need to eat the nutritious food from the ocean (e.g. algae) to create the health benefits they can offer.

Individual Needs: Most people do best with **20%-35%** of their daily calories coming from fat. Dr. Hanley, author of *Tired of Being Tired* states, "Eating a low-fat diet is a surefire way to put your adrenals into red alert that your body is in a dangerous famine. It is the way to increase body fat, malnutrition, and risk of heart attacks and chronic disease and is clearly a major stressor for your body."

Sources: Healthy fats to consume are extra virgin olive oil, coconut oil, palm oil, avocados, nuts and seeds (almonds, walnuts, cashews), grass-fed meats, naturally raised eggs, flaxseed meal, cold-water fatty fish (e.g. salmon, tuna, mackerel, herring, sardines), butter, ghee (clarified butter), and fermented dairy products (e.g. yogurt, kefir, cottage cheese, and raw cheese).

Fats in the Kitchen & Cooking Overview: Frying food in oil produces free radicals – highly reactive chemicals that destroy essential fats in food and can damage cells, increasing the risk of cancer, heart disease, and premature aging, as well as destroying the very nutrients such as vitamin A and E which protect us from these dangerous substances. The damaging effects of frying depend on the oil, the temperature, and the length of time. Ironically, polyunsaturated oils oxidize more rapidly, becoming undesirable toxic fats. So frying with saturated fats (like butter, coconut oil, or palm oil) or olive oil (a monounsaturated fat) is safer. Deep-frying is more destructive than a two-minute sauté, followed by adding a water-based sauce and putting a lid on the food "steam-fries" in much lower temperatures. Steaming, slow-cooking in a crock pot, grilling, stir-frying, or baking are the best cooking methods. Nevertheless, any form of overcooking will increasingly reduce the nutrient content of the food^x and decrease the digestibility.^{xi}

Beware of Hydrogenated Oils: Our food supply is inundated with hydrogenated oils and damaged fats. Hydrogenation is the process used to turn oil like soy, corn, or cottonseed, into margarine and vegetable shortening – basically a man-made saturated fat. There are many hidden sources of health-deteriorating man-made fats, such as many salad dressings, most crackers, fast food, commercially baked products, most mayonnaise (grape seed oil type would be the exception) and most all fried foods. In the process of making these fats an abnormally shaped molecule is produced known as a trans-fatty acids, which are rarely found in nature. Most of these man-made *trans* fats are toxins to the body, but unfortunately your digestive system does not recognize them as such. Instead of being eliminated, *trans* fats are incorporated into cell membranes as if they were normal shaped fats - your cells actually become partially hydrogenated!

Consumption of hydrogenated fats is associated with a host of serious diseases, such as cancer, atherosclerosis, diabetes, obesity, immune system dysfunction, low-birth-weight babies, birth defects, decreased visual acuity, sterility, difficulty in lactation, and problems with bones and tendons.^{xii,xiii,xiv}

Carbohydrates, Vitamins & Minerals

Structure & Function: Carbs are the body's preferred energy sources (with fats running a close second). Carbohydrates are known as energy foods because when they are metabolized, they supply glucose, a sugar that circulates in our blood and provides energy to the body. Our brain is the main glucose guzzler.^{xv,xvi} Low glucose levels result in decreased brain function, mental fatigue, and possibly dizziness. The body works hard to maintain a steady stream of glucose and keep brain function optimal. Therefore, to meet our glucose needs and to spare muscle tissue, we need a certain amount of carbs in our diet at frequent intervals.^{xvi}

Types of Carbohydrates: Carbohydrates are sugar molecules and are of two types: **complex** and **simple**. **Complex carbs** are very long molecules that require longer digestion time and provide a steady source of energy to the body. Complex carbs are mostly found in vegetables, whole grains, and legumes. They should make up most of our carbohydrate intake. Starch (found in grains, legumes, and starchy vegetables like peas, corn, and potatoes) and fiber (non-digestible soluble and insoluble forms) are both complex carbohydrates as well. Fresh, deeply colored vegetables are especially loaded with **vitamins and minerals**. They are also a rich source of *phytochemicals* (such as *indole 3* in cruciferous vegetables and *lycopene* found in tomatoes), which are powerful disease preventing agents.

Vitamin and Mineral Side Note: Minerals are absolutely necessary for our body to utilize vitamins. These micronutrients (nutrients needed in small amounts) are catalysts for many biological functions, including digestion, muscle response, nerve transmissions, growth, energy production, and healing. Minerals are supplied most richly in vegetables, fruits, and legumes, but only if the foods are grown in mineral-rich soils, which is often not the case with conventionally farmed foods. Vitamins promote growth, health and life as well as regulate metabolism and assist the biochemical processes that release energy from digested food. A lack of one or more vitamins can cause a variety of deficiency symptoms and health problems. Vitamin content is highest when food is fresh and minimum heat is applied.

Simple carbs are short molecules that are absorbed and used quickly by the body. These carbohydrates will elevate blood glucose rapidly requiring more insulin and potentially causing more blood sugar problems. Simple carbs are also of two types: **natural** and **refined**. Natural, simple carbs are found in fruit, raw honey, maple syrup, molasses, and milk. These contain vitamins, mineral and enzymes needed for their digestion and assimilation in the body. Refined simple carbs are found principally in brown and white sugar, fructose, and corn syrup. Refined grain products, like white flour and white rice, also qualify as refined simple carbs due to extensive processing and stripping of nutrients. The refined simple carbohydrates are empty, negative calories that drain the body's nutrient reserves.^{xvii}

The Hazards of Excess Processed Carbs: Researchers have undoubtedly linked increased white flour and white sugar consumption to the degenerative diseases that plague modern people. Excessive sugar and processed carbohydrate consumption contributes to the development of almost any health problem including (but definitely not limited to) cancer (particularly of the breast, ovaries, prostate, and rectum).^{xviii}

osteoporosis,^{xix} heart disease,^{xx} hypoglycemia, adrenal exhaustion, and parasitic and yeast infections.^{xxi} Excess sugar and refined flour can also suppress the immune system,^{xxii,xxiii} significantly raise triglycerides^{xxiv} and elevate LDL cholesterol.^{xxv}

Individual Needs: A general recommendation is to consume approximately **30% to 50%** of your overall daily calories from carbohydrates.

Sources: Focus on eating **cruciferous vegetables** such as broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts and cabbage; root vegetables like rutabagas and turnips; and salad vegetables like carrots, radishes, celery, cucumbers, green and red peppers, and sprouts. Emphasize the more intensely colored vegetables (red beets, purple cabbage, yellow squash, collard greens, and spinach). The term "**whole grain**" refers to the grain before it has been milled into a flour. "**Whole grain flour**" means the whole grain, including its bran and germ, have been milled into a flour. Focus on whole grains, such as oats, cracked wheat, brown rice, wild rice, unhulled barley, millet, buckwheat, rye, spelt, kamut, quinoa, teff, and amaranth. **Legumes** are sources of complex carbohydrates as well as protein. Try aduki beans, lentils, mung beans, kidney, navy, black-eyed peas, soy, garbanzo, lima, and black beans. **Fruits** are also valuable sources of nutrients and fiber. Two to three servings of fruits per day is optimal.

Water

Structure & Function: Two-thirds of the body consists of water; therefore it is the *most important nutrient*. Without water, nothing biological can occur. It provides the medium where a majority of metabolic reactions take place, helps rid the body of wastes, transports nutrients to where they need to go, aids in metabolizing stored fat, helps regulate body temperature, and helps maintain quality muscle tone by allowing the muscles to adequately contract, and helps prevent dehydration. In fact, simple dehydration can be associated with many symptoms and conditions, such as pain, headaches, dry skin, high blood pressure, digestive problems, and sleeping troubles. Error! Bookmark not defined.

Individual Needs: Although our thirst response leads us to replenish needed water into our bodies, it actually lags behind the body's true water needs. Therefore, when you are thirsty, you are probably already dehydrated. Although the general recommendation is that adults should consume between two to three liters (approximately six to eight glasses a day), a more personalized calculation is to *divide your body weight in half and that equals the number of ounces you should drink in one day*. Bear in mind, this is your baseline amount. You may need even more water given our Colorado altitude and dryness, both during hot and cold weather. Also take into consideration your activity level.

Especially Harmful Food Additives to Avoid

Here is a list of substances that have been shown to have negative health consequences when consumed, especially in excess: nitrites and nitrates, artificial sweeteners, MSG (monosodium glutamate), olestra (fat-free replacement), artificial colors, and preservatives.

Remember, diet comes from the Latin word *diaeta* meaning "a way of life."

-
- ⁱ Crayhon, Robert. M.S. C.N. *Nutrition Made Simple*. M. Evans and Company. New York. 1994
- ⁱⁱ Engelberg, Hyman, *Lancet*, Mar 21, 1992, 339:727-728; Wood, W G, et al, *Lipids*, Mar 1999, 34(3):225-234
- ⁱⁱⁱ Enig, Mary Ph.D. and Fallon, Sally. *The Skinny on Fats*. Found at www.westonaprice.org. Published 1999. Found on Dec. 18th 2001.
- ^{iv} Garg, M L, et al, *FASEB Journal*, 1988, 2:4:A852; Oliart Ros, R M, et al, "Meeting Abstracts," AOCs Proceedings, May 1998, 7, Chicago, IL
- ^v Hibbeln JR, Salem N Jr. Dietary polyunsaturated fatty acids and depression: when cholesterol does not satisfy. *Am J Clin Nutr* 1995;62:1-9 [review].
- ^{vi} Makiya H. Epidemiological investigation of psychiatric disorders of old age in Sashiki-village, Okinawa. *Keio J Med* 1978;55:503
- ^{vii} O'Hara MW, Kohout FJ, Wallace RB. Depression among the rural elderly. A study of prevalence and correlates. *J Nerv Ment Dis* 1985;173:582-9.
- ^{viii} Krause N, Liang J. Cross-cultural variations in depressive symptoms in later life. *Int Psychogeriatr* 1992;4(Suppl 2):185-202.
- ^{ix} Iribarren C, Reed DM, Wergowske G, et al. Serum cholesterol level and mortality due to suicide and trauma in the Honolulu Heart Program. *Arch Intern Med* 1995;155:695-700.
- ^x Holdford, Patrick. *The Optimum Nutrition Bible*. The Crossings Press. Freedom, CA. 1999.
- ^{xi} Appleton, Nancy. Ph.D. The Risk of Overcooking Food. *Well Being Journal*. Vol 9, No 2. 2000.
- ^{xii} Fallon, Sally. *Nourishing Traditions*. ProMotion Publishing. San Diego, CA. 1995.
- ^{xiii} Enig, Mary Dr. Health Risks from Processed Foods and Trans Fats. Interview with Richard Passwater, Ph.D. *Whole Foods Magazine*. Found at www.healthy.net on Nov. 18th 2001.
- ^{xiv} Enig, Mary G, PhD, *Trans Fatty Acids in the Food Supply: A Comprehensive Report Covering 60 Years of Research*, 2nd Edition, Enig Associates, Inc, Silver Spring, MD, 1995; Watkins, B A et al, *Br Pouli Sci*, Dec 1991, 32(5):1109-1119
- ^{xv} Haas, Robert. *Eat Smart Think Smart*. Harper. New York. 1994.
- ^{xvi} Smith, Melissa Diane. Confused About Carbohydrates? *Delicious Magazine*. May 1997.
- ^{xvii} Byrnes, Stephen, N.D. *Digestion Made Simple*. Wellspring Publishers. 1999.
- ^{xviii} M. Bostick, J.D. Potter, L.H. Kushi, et al. "Sugar, Meat, and Fat Intake, and Non-dietary Risk Factors for Colon Cancer Incidence in Iowa Women." *Cancer Causes and Controls* 5, 1994, pp. 38-52.
- ^{xix} Nancy Appleton. Lick the Sugar Habit Bones. (Garden City Park, NY: "Reaction of Monosaccharides Avery Publishing Group, 1989, with Protein: Possible Evolupp. 36-38.)
- ^{xx} Katz RJ , Ratner RE , Cohen RM , Eisenhower E , Verme D Are insulin and proinsulin independent risk markers for premature coronary artery disease ? Department of Medicine, Division of Cardiology, George Washington University School of Medicine, Washington, DC 20037, USA. *Diabetes* 1996 Jun;45(6):736-41
- ^{xxi} Gittleman, Ann Louise, M.S. C.N.S. *Get the Sugar Out*. Three Rivers Press. New York. 1996.
- ^{xxii} A. Sanchez, et al. "Role of Sugars in Human Neutrophilic Phagocytosis." *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, November 1973, pp. 1180-1184
- ^{xxiii} *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 1973, vol. 26
- ^{xxiv} Scanto and John Yudkin. "The Effect of Dietary Sucronse on Blood Lipids, Serum, Insulin, Platelet Adhesiveness and Body Weith in Human Volunteers. *Postgraduate Medicine Jmournal* 45: 1969 602-607
- ^{xxv} Lewis GF , Steiner G Acute effects of insulin in the control of VLDL production in humans. Implications for theinsulin-resistant state. Department of Medicine, University of Toronto, Canada. *Diabetes Care* 1996 Apr;19(4):390-3 R. Pamplona, M.J. Bellmunt, M. Portero, and J. Prat. "Mechanisms of Glycation in Atherogenesis." *Medical Hypotheses* 40, 1990, pp. 174-181.