



Nutrition Fundamentals

Presented by Lorraine D'Aversa, MFT

Nutritionist, Psychotherapist; Holistic Life Coach and Consultant

While nutrition is an extremely complex and integrative topic, these 8 principles were designed to answer many fundamental questions about nutrition and to provide a simple guide to healthy eating. It really is quite simple. Focus on and enjoy eating whole, plant-based, non-processed foods and you will enjoy optimal health along with a youthful spirit and appearance.

1. Nutrition represents the combined activities of countless food substances, and the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. When you consider that each whole food has literally thousands of compounds within it, many of which are unknown and/or unstudied, imagine the possibilities for beneficial synergistic effects when many whole foods are eaten together. This has already been observed in such food combinations as citrus fruit and whole grains, so just imagine how many undiscovered health multiplying benefits are out there if you eat whole plant foods!

2. Vitamin supplements are not a panacea for good health. In other words, eating terribly cannot be made up for by taking some isolated vitamins. Nutrition is an infinitely complex biochemical system involving thousands of chemicals and thousands of effects. Isolated nutrients cannot substitute for whole foods and may have dangerous side effects. For example, studies have shown Vitamin A and E supplementations as being associated with an increased incidence of cancer – something to think about!

3. There are no nutrients in animal foods that are not better provided by plant foods. Animal products across the board are rich sources of fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol (which is only present in animal foods). Plant foods, on the other hand, are good sources of vitamins, minerals, fiber, and antioxidants (with the last two only being present in plant foods). Plants have more nutrients and less calories, while animal products offer the exact opposite.

4. Genes do not determine disease on their own. Genes function only by being activated or expressed, and nutrition controls which genes, good or bad, are expressed. This is an extremely important point. The modern rise of genetic research for combating chronic disease has been fruitless. Mainstream tabloids would lead one to believe that simply identifying a gene that causes disease, then making a drug to control said gene, will be the end of poor health as we know it. Things just aren't that simple. Each disease is the product of actions by potentially hundreds of genes, and no single gene only has one job. So, expecting a single desirable effect from the chemical control of a single gene is very unrealistic. What's worse, the belief that your health is controlled entirely by your genes leaves you in a helpless position. Why bother taking care of yourself if it all comes down to your genes? In actuality, eating a whole plant-based diet goes extremely far in giving you the most beneficial possible gene expressions, putting you back in control, and all without any fancy research or drugs required.

5. Nutrition can substantially control the adverse effects of noxious chemicals.

Similarly to controlling your genes to your greatest benefit, nutrition also greatly improves your body's ability to handle toxic chemicals that could potentially do a lot of harm. For example, Aflatoxin is among the most toxic and carcinogenic chemicals ever discovered. In the book, *The China Study*, Dr. Campbell's illustrates that in his own lab he was able to keep rats on an aflatoxin-laced diet completely healthy and cancer free just by controlling their nutrition. 0% of the animals on high protein plant-based diet developed cancer, while 100% of animals on a high protein milk protein-based diet developed cancer. Results don't get much clearer than that. For a human example, studies following heavy smokers who practice a whole plant based diet have shown that they have lung cancer rates almost as low as typical non-smokers!

6. The same nutrition that can prevent disease in its early stages can also halt or reverse it in its later stages.

The clearest example that comes to mind here is the number one cause of death in the US – heart disease. Heart disease rates have climbed steadily in the US for decades, and now the disease claims 430 thousands lives every year in the US alone. Work done by Dr. Esselstyn demonstrates that heart disease is a completely avoidable disease for everyone, and he now coaches patients on how to halt and reverse their heart disease at the prestigious Cleveland Clinic. Dr. Esselstyn has successfully taken many patients from the brink of death by heart disease to return to normal healthy lives through dietary intervention alone. His website and his book “Prevent and Reverse Heart Disease” go into far greater detail than I can here, but suffice to say if it works for these most extreme cases, it will work for anyone. While a diet rich in processed foods and animal products strongly promotes the hardening of arteries, the formation of plaques, and the raising of blood pressure, a whole foods plant based diet has the exact opposite effect. In fact, the same is true for cancer. Dr. Campbell's own lab demonstrated that nutrition alone could promote or halt the growth of tumors in rats, and epidemiological studies clearly support this theory in human populations.

7. Nutrition that is beneficial for a particular chronic disease supports good health across the board. This principle is self-explanatory. A whole foods plant based diet will prevent and treat any and all chronic disease prevalent in society today, and will simultaneously promote good health across the board.

8. Good nutrition creates health in all areas of our existence. Dr. Campbell's final principle of nutrition is by far the most all-encompassing. By eating more healthfully, every aspect of our lives and our surroundings stands to benefit. Our economy stands to benefit by saving billions of dollars on healthcare costs. Our population stands to benefit by being better fed because it is cheaper and much more efficient to use land to produce crops rather than livestock, and the environment as a whole stands to benefit for this same reason. In fact, the single greatest impact you can have on your 'carbon footprint' – if that is important to you – is to choose whole plant foods over processed foods and animal foods.