

Loving our Body – Correct Nutrition



I am not a nutritionist, but because taking care of our body is an important element of walking the path, I have decided to share my views on nutrition, which are based on my personal research and a great deal of experimentation with various diets. While the science of nutrition is not absolute, it is actually quite shocking how little we know about our body and about which foods are most suitable for human beings. Most people just trust and follow diets based on the knowledge of allopathic medicine or other dominant ideologies. But even alternative approaches mostly lack a basic knowledge of nutrition or are again based on certain ideologies created by the mind.

I wish to emphasize here that my intention is to bring a higher inspiration into the subject of nourishing our body consciously. I do not wish to tell anyone what to eat or not to eat, but rather to open your mind to changing your relationship with something as unconscious and yet as fundamental as eating. There is more to food than eating what everybody else is eating; we need to learn to feed ourselves with discrimination and true care for meeting our body's needs.

While each person needs to discover what kind of diet is most suitable for their body, it is important to aspire overall to gain a higher perspective on nutrition and, moreover, to decondition oneself from various received and often misleading concepts. We all have similar bodies and similar needs, but due to our genetic proclivities and the ways in which the body has been damaged through bad food or an unhealthy lifestyle, each one has to experiment with food to discover what is most suitable for their specific physical constitution.

According to research, over the last 30,000 years, and particularly for the last 10,000 years, human health has largely deteriorated. We are smaller and weaker, and our physical brain has become

smaller by as much as 12%. It has subsequently been theorized that this change has been caused by changes in human diet, particularly since the introduction of agriculture. It is because of agriculture that humans were able to create a surplus of food and therefore overpopulate the planet. But there is always a price to pay: there may be more humans, but they are weaker both physically and mentally. One of the theories developed to explain this decline in health was the introduction of grains and legumes. Obviously, grains have nutritional value, but they also contain many toxins, especially in their outer layers. Particularly recently, an increasing number of nutritionists have been proposing that it is better to eat white rice than brown because, though less nutritious, it is also less toxic.

By the laws of nature, it makes sense that most food does not want to be eaten; it is alive and it wants to keep living. Among the few exceptions are fruits, which want to be eaten in order to spread their seeds. There has always been a battle between the animal and vegetable kingdoms. Within this, plants have developed all kinds of defense mechanisms and toxins to protect themselves against fungi, insects, bugs, birds, and mammals. On the other hand, animals have developed ways to neutralize and digest these toxins (our liver for instance). Some plants are too toxic to consume, meaning that the harm they can inflict is higher than their nutritional value. However, most of the plants we consume are somewhere in-between; we can see the average vegetable as toxic or nutritious, depending on our emphasis. Eating a large amount of salad and being convinced that it is nothing but healthy may be misguided – vegetables can be harmful too. For instance, various salad leaves contain anti-metabolic substances that prevent the assimilation of nutrients. The toxins in plants include phenols, tannins, lectins/agglutinins and trypsin-inhibitors as well as innumerable, more specific metabolic inhibitors, including ‘anti-vitamins’.

Legumes also contain toxins, of which lectins and phytates are the most common. Phytates, especially phytic acid, has been shown to block the mineral absorption of calcium, magnesium, and zinc. Lectins cause the mucus from the small intestine to be stripped, which can result in autoimmune diseases. Other toxic components reported to be present in a wide variety of legumes include goitrogenic factors, cyanogenic glucosides, saponins and alkaloids. Grains have similar

toxins and so do most nuts. Soaking and cooking them helps, but nothing has been found to fully neutralize the plant's natural defenses.

In searching for the ideal food, we are looking to find those foods which have the least toxins and are the most nutritious. While defining what food is the most suitable for us is not easy, the first step is to look at the whole issue with a fresh mind and apply a basic level of discernment and criticism. Many of our ideas about food are conditioned by concepts that have been imprinted in our minds by the media or by nutrition gurus. Until recently, for example, everybody was convinced that saturated fats were bad for the heart and began consuming polyunsaturated oils instead, which, as it turns out, are highly toxic. While many people still believe that cold-pressed, virgin sunflower oil is good for our health, the evidence that vegetable oil (seed oil in fact) is unhealthy is more compelling. This evidence suggests that seed oils are extremely unstable and oxidize very quickly, which means they become toxic either outside or inside our body. Polyunsaturated fats (the consumption of which started a long time ago when humans began to eat seeds) may be one of the reasons for the decline in human health.

In order to function, our human body needs the essential amount of protein, fat, and carbohydrates. These are called macronutrients because they provide our body with energy. Additionally, in order to remain healthy, we need an adequate amount of fiber, minerals, and vitamins. It is common that people on a vegetarian diet consume too little protein. Protein is essential not only as the building material for the body and for tissue repair but also for the functioning of all the organs, especially the liver. Without enough protein, the liver cannot produce a sufficient amount of thyroid hormones. The latest research suggests that the average minimum protein intake should be approximately 1 gram per 1 kilogram of body weight. This can be obtained from a combination of incomplete and complete protein sources. The protein obtained from plants is called 'incomplete' protein because the body has to assimilate it into the proper, complete protein. For those who are on a vegetarian diet, complete protein is only found in milk products and eggs. On that note, while consuming some types of meat or fish can be considered healthy for the body (and

based on historical records, eating meat does seem to be a natural part of the human diet) it remains each person's personal choice whether it feels in accord with their sense of morality.

Another important part of a wholesome diet is healthy fat. Nowadays, it is increasingly accepted that we should consume saturated fat, which has the most stable atomic structure. This kind of fat can be found in butter, ghee, and coconut oil. Coconut oil is particularly beneficial. It is made from medium-chain fatty acids (like breast milk) and does not need bile to be digested; it goes straight to the liver. Among its many benefits, it increases metabolism and actually helps us to lose weight. Also, it is very resistant to high temperatures and hence is ideal for cooking. Another healthy fat is monounsaturated fat, which is found in macadamia nuts and olive oil.

The third macronutrient that is essential in our daily diet is carbohydrates. Carbohydrates are basically sugars which provide the basic energy for the whole body and the brain. The body has a way to survive without carbohydrates (such as in low-carb diets) by producing ketones in the liver (ketogenic diet) but this has been shown to be highly unnatural and energetically inefficient. Carbohydrates are divided into two categories: complex and simple. Complex carbohydrates are basically starches. They are called 'complex' because the body has to break them down in order to produce glucose. Glucose is then being stored as fuel in the liver and muscles in the form of glycogen.

Due to the idea that simple sugar causes a sudden increase in blood sugar and may even be responsible for diabetes, the concept was developed that complex carbohydrates are healthier. This crusade against sugar seems quite unjustified, and there are more and more people who realize not only that sugar is not evil but that it is in fact the most suitable carbohydrate for the human body. As we know, a sweet taste is pleasing to more or less everyone, and this indeed suggests that it is not an acquired taste but an innate one, a direct expression of the wisdom of our body. Despite this, the demonization of sugar has gone so deep into people's psyche that many still feel guilty when they eat something sweet (as if they were cheating). Moreover, when people suffer from different ailments such as candida, they are often told to stop eating sugar. However, rather than

jumping to conclusions, it should be considered why that sugar is not being digested properly and is therefore becoming the food for harmful bacteria or fungi. Each component should be considered in the context of the whole diet. For instance, various trials show that sugar indeed becomes toxic when it is consumed with polyunsaturated fat, while saturated fat and sugar are very compatible.

There are several forms of sugar, and the most common are glucose, fructose, and lactose. Lactose is the sugar found in milk. In nature, all the sugars are a combination of glucose and fructose in different ratios. For instance, sucrose (common table sugar) has a ratio of 1:1 glucose to fructose. This is similar to honey, but whereas in sucrose these two are bonded together, in honey they are isolated and hence more easily absorbed. Sucrose needs to be broken down into glucose and fructose in the upper portion of the small intestine by the liver enzymes. Both are then absorbed directly into the bloodstream. Glucose is stored as glycogen, and fructose is mostly stored in the liver for further processing. All fruits have a combination of glucose and fructose as well. Because starch was accepted as producing a 'better' type of sugar, which is glucose alone, most of the critique against sugar turned out to be a critique against fructose. Fructose was depicted as some kind of poison that made people fat and sick.

However, more conscious nutritionists have begun to realize how important fructose is in regulating glucose, among other things. It is the combination of glucose and fructose that seems to be the most beneficial form of carbohydrate. Because fructose regulates glucose and glucose helps the digestion of fructose in the small intestine, it is thought that the best kind of sugar would have that ideal ratio of 1:1 glucose to fructose. Maple syrup is closer to this ratio while, for instance, agave syrup is mostly fructose. People who have issues with digesting fruits often have issues with fructose (perhaps due to the lack of certain enzymes) and may benefit from paying more attention to this ratio. Another way to help the digestion of fructose is to take it with milk. Lactose is composed of glucose and galactose and therefore can provide the additional glucose needed for its assimilation.

To generalize, it appears to be beneficial to digest most of our food chemically in the small intestine. Any food that is not absorbed in the small intestine moves into the colon where it is being fermented by germs which produce a lot of metabolic waste. For instance, if a person does not digest fructose, it is then being fermented in the colon, causing gas and bloating.

Many people are not aware that starch is sugar and that rice and potatoes are actually sugar. There appears to be no reason to see starch as in any way superior to simple sugar. Simple sugar is digested directly in the small intestine and easily absorbed. Complex sugar, on the other hand, needs to be broken down and has been shown to produce a lot of waste through that process as well as causing an overgrowth of the bacteria that feed on it. Among other benefits, simple sugar is known to protect us against stress and to increase metabolism. No wonder it is common to crave sweet foods when we are under stress. Stress burns glucose and depletes our glycogen stores. Due to its positive impact on metabolism, one can actually lose weight by eating simple sugars. Of course, calories matter, and any excess of sugar, fat, or protein will cause us to gain weight.

It has become increasingly evident that the best sources of carbohydrates are fruits and honey. We have been eating fruit since the beginning of time, and it is the only food that has almost no toxins when it is ripened properly. Naturally, all fruits are not equally good for you, and some of them need to be eaten in moderation. Moreover, eating fruit is not enough to provide the body with complete nutrition. From a certain perspective, people who promote extreme diets like frutarianism or raw veganism seem not to be aligned with our biological evolution. For instance, we have a bigger brain, and it is convincing that we therefore need food which is easy to digest and is calorie-dense so that our brain has the necessary energy to support its functioning. The digestive system also takes a huge amount of energy to operate. Unlike apes and other herbivores, we have a very short colon. For them, the colon is needed to digest green leaves and vegetation with the help of bacteria. As a relevant aside, followers of extreme diets also often become fanatical and can't stop thinking about food, rather than becoming properly satiated through a wholesome, balanced diet so that they can go on to focus on the other things that matter in life. Here, diet becomes a type of religion, and the healthy perception of the body and how to nourish it is lost. In

this sense, extreme diets such as veganism (and especially a raw vegan diet) are not in touch with reality, as they impose unnatural discipline and nutrition upon the human body and often result in a decline in health.

As we consider this issue, it helps to remember that many of our eating habits were created in times of relative famine. When we see a monkey eating leaves from a tree, in most cases, it is doing it because fruits are not available; it may not be the monkey's first choice, and it would very likely give away the whole tree of leaves for one banana. Similarly, we humans have learnt how to survive on anything we could find. Someone once said that vegetables are the food that we learned to eat when there was no food. The same can be said for grains, beans, and tubers. We can live on them, and we can make them into delicious dishes through a special type of cooking. But while it is okay for most people to eat these things, this does not mean that they constitute an optimal diet for human beings.

If you study the figures, most vegetables are nutritionally very empty. They have some minerals, vitamins, fiber, and a little protein, but they also have plenty of toxins. Whether their benefits override their toxicity is a matter of personal choice, but it seems prudent to be cautious in glorifying this kind of food. That old paradigm of eating brown rice and plenty of vegetables in order to be healthy may not be applicable for those who wish to eat more consciously. Regarding vegetables, root vegetables (like carrots) are seen to be safer due to having much less self-defensive chemicals. However, nightshades, such as potatoes, need to be cooked for a long time to partially neutralize their toxins. There is much debate about the nutritional value of nuts, but the most compelling views suggest that they should be eaten sparingly. They have a high omega-6 fat content and contain anti-nutrients which prevent the absorption of important minerals in the body (similar to beans). It is usually recommended to soak them overnight before consuming them. Eating a couple of Brazil nuts daily may be a good idea for their selenium content, and macadamia nuts are safe to eat.

Whether raw or cooked food is better for us is another well-contended issue. However, it seems to be true that, with the exception of fruits, most food becomes more bio-available through cooking it. It is true that some of the minerals or enzymes are destroyed, but all the rest becomes much easier to absorb. Some people think that cooking renders the food dead, but it is more that it becomes pre-digested to a degree. Looking back at our biological evolution, we have become humans by cooking; we are not just omnivores but cook-i-vores. Thanks to cooking, we could begin to eat foods which would otherwise be unsuitable for human consumption. In addition, eating cooked foods has radically transformed our digestive system and probably had a direct influence on the increased size of our brain. Cooking also kills parasites and neutralizes many toxins in the food. As to the idea that it destroys the enzymes in food, evidence shows that the enzymes that we need are produced by our body anyway, and in truth, almost all of the enzymes in food are killed by our stomach acids. For instance, some people believe in drinking raw milk, but firstly, there is a danger of bacterial contamination, and secondly, it is not really proven that raw milk is easier to digest; perhaps cooking it actually helps its absorption. The same applies to eggs. Raw eggs are actually toxic to some extent, and the protein from the raw egg-white (avidin) binds with biotin (vitamin B), preventing its absorption. Cooking neutralizes avidin. Eggs are very nutritious, but it is important to obtain organic ones. Soft-boiling as opposed to hard-boiling or frying can better preserve the vitamin B.

Overall, the food we eat should, as much as possible, be fresh, alive, and organic to reduce the amount of toxins. For instance, the milk and eggs in the West are very low quality. The fat in milk is taken out and replaced with artificial substances to preserve the taste, and animals are fed with grains (which increase the omega-6 content) and antibiotics. The food is artificial and manipulated in all kinds of ways. While sometimes one has no choice but to eat inferior products, it seems best to buy organic or even look for individual farmers.

To summarize: a balanced and well-considered view suggests that we need to make sure to eat enough complete protein. The best source would be milk, yogurt, simple cheese, and certain eggs. Those who are allergic to milk or lean towards a vegan diet would have to look for other sources

of protein, like rice, beans, and more protein-rich vegetables or even supplements such as organic protein powders. Taking a good quality protein powder on a vegetarian diet is not a bad idea anyway.

Then we need to eat healthy fat, like coconut oil or butter. If we consume milk, it naturally contains healthy fat. It helps to remember that fat not only provides energy and satiates us but is also necessary for the absorption of many vitamins. In terms of carbohydrates, which are necessary to fill up our glycogen stores and provide the most economical form of energy, we should try to eat enough fruits, honey, or raw forms of sugar. While white sugar is okay, it seems to be a good idea not to eat too much of it, especially because it undergoes all kinds of bleaching procedures. However, as to the concept that white sugar is 'empty calories', this has recently been questioned as well since there is no such thing as empty calories: calories are calories. For instance, no one calls fat 'empty calories' despite the fact that it has no real nutritional value and yet is essential to our survival. Sugar substitutes should ideally be avoided; they are mostly very toxic.

Dark chocolate is very healthy and rich in minerals, even more so cocoa beans or cocoa bean powder. Bee pollen is also very beneficial: it is full of amino acids, minerals, and enzymes, and it has healing properties. It has been discovered that it is good to take honey, alone or with lemon, before going to bed in order to promote deeper sleep and also to help the burning off of unwanted fat. Most body fat actually burns off during sleep, and having problems with sleep has been connected to obesity. Honey allows us to replenish the glycogen stores in the liver. Because the body then doesn't need to look for other sources of energy in the muscles or bones, its natural processes can be effortlessly supported during sleep.

As far as drinking liquids is concerned, contrary to popular views, it should be done in moderation. Drinking too much has been proven to weaken the kidneys. A simple test is to check that the urine is not transparent but slightly yellow. Drinking too much water appears to overly flush the essential electrolytes from the body and diminish our inner heat. One should drink, more or less, when one is thirsty. While some argue against the benefits of caffeine, drinking tea and coffee can also be

beneficial. Caffeine stimulates the metabolism, and coffee contains a lot of magnesium. Alcohol in very small amounts is considered thermogenic and has antioxidant effects as well. However, when one crosses the line of 'very small amounts', it becomes toxic of course. Since we mentioned electrolytes, it is important to take enough salt everyday (around 1.5 teaspoons). Salt is anti-inflammatory, supports metabolism, and, in the form of sodium, is essential as a conduit of electricity in the body.

We must love our body without being excessively attached to it. The body must be pure as much as possible. Eating pure food with a pure mind, from the place of having genuine care, love, and respect for our body, allows it to become pure as well. The more our body becomes pure, the more we can feel its needs and respond to its natural cravings. We eat because we feel the hunger arising in all our cells. Each cell needs to breathe and be nourished. Each cell is like a separate organism that lives on its own and yet in unison with all the other cells, creating one being – the sacred temple of our body. When we are psychologically unwell or emotionally disturbed, we seek compensation in food; it is no longer our body but the mind that wants to fill up its emptiness through food. By coming closer to inner peace and surrendering our mind, we can come back to our body and feel the mystery and blessing of being grounded in our physical form. Having a healthy body, a body that has been embraced with the love of our soul, we begin to experience our physical existence as a direct reflection of the bliss of the light of our existence.

Blessings,

Anadi

For a full glossary of terminology, you may visit the glossary page of our website www.anaditeaching.com/glossary