

You really are what you eat



By SVEA GORDON

“Let food be thy medicine and thy medicine shall be thy food.” – Hippocrates.

Think about that for a moment.

Then think a moment longer about your diet. Do you ever really use your food as a medicine? Most of our normal daily diets consist of soft drinks, coffee, refined grains, refined sugars with very few fruits and vegetables. Yet, we complain of being tired and dragged out. At the end of the day we just want to sit down and relax.

Now think about how it would feel to go through an entire day with high energy, enthusiasm, joy and a great feeling of health. I am here to tell you that this is entirely possible – all through diet, exercise and emotional well-being.

Start by analyzing your diet.

How often do you eat fruits and vegetables? A basic guideline is to consume at least two fruits and six vegetables per day. Also determine the source of these fruits and vegetables. If you are eating them out of a can you can bet that you aren't getting any vitamins or minerals, they were destroyed in the processing.

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Raw produce is best, frozen comes in second place, while canned food comes in dead last.

How much of your diet comes out of a box? Foods we prepare from a box have an extremely long shelf life yet they are not alive and cannot keep us alive. When you shop, read the ingredient label. If you cannot pronounce an ingredient, or if you do not know what it is, you probably shouldn't be eating it. At all costs avoid high fructose corn syrup. This ingredient, used as a sweetener in many foods, is causing tremendous weight gain within our society. Try more natural sweeteners – honey, maple syrup and stevia are great substitutes. And remember, coffee and doughnuts do not build healthy tissues. Instead they build dry and chapped skin, cracked nails, and a starved body. If you really want to start feeling better, feed your body the foods that the Earth naturally provides for it!

Next, figure out how much water you drink each day.

Do not follow the old eight-glasses-a-day guideline. A woman who weighs 100-pounds requires a much different water intake than a man who weighs 250. A good guideline to go by: drink one half of your body weight in ounces of *quality* water daily. So, a woman who weighs 120 pounds should be consuming 60 ounces of water per day. Remember, at least three-quarters of your body is made of water – so feed your cells good water so they can cleanse and rebuild. And don't count soft drinks, coffee or alcoholic beverages toward your fluid intake.

Then determine how much exercise you get in a typical day.

Clicking the buttons on the remote control does not count toward exercise – for that you need to get up and move. Our bodies have been designed to walk, to run, to dance and to play! The more you sit around, the more your muscles break down and become weak. Find something that you love to do and do it daily. Start out with 20 minutes of continuous exercise every day, working yourself up to an hour. Walking, running, biking, and hiking are all great activities and allow you to get fresh air as well. Find a friend who wants to exercise and do so together. It is much easier to commit when you have somebody to do it with. Plan exercise into your weekly schedule. You don't forget to eat, so you should not forget to exercise.

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Finally, how are you?

No, really, how are you mentally and emotionally? You can eat healthy and exercise daily but still be tired and sick if you are constantly in an intense emotional state. Stress comes from many different avenues: family, relationships, work, money. No matter the source, stress wreaks havoc within the body. If you are feeling stressed try some stress-relief techniques. Among the many methods available, Yoga, with its three structures of exercise, deep breathing and meditation, is said to be extremely beneficial in relieving stress. Through different poses and breathing technique, Yoga works on the union of the body, mind and spirit. Many people experience great benefits when practicing Yoga, including increased circulation, increased flexibility, weight loss and a greater amount of energy.

If you really want to feel better, think holistically when it comes to health. Exercise, nutrition, and emotional health all work with each other and while all are good, you can't have complete health when you are missing one.

Hippocrates was the greatest physician of his time and he strongly believed in treatment of the whole person. From now on, you can treat the whole you by using lifestyle and food as your medicine. By making small and simple changes often, you will find yourself on a path to wellness – and you will feel great every day!

– Svea Gordon received her Bachelor's degree from Central Michigan University in Exercise Physiology, with an emphasis in nutrition. She is also a certified Natural Health Educator through the Naturopathic Institute of Therapies and Education in Mount Pleasant, Michigan, and is currently working toward becoming a Certified Naturopath and Naturopathic Doctor. Gordon enjoys teaching free health classes within the community as well as healthy living classes for children. Her passions include: aromatherapy, live and raw food preparation, herbology, healthy eating, and self-sustained living. At the moment Gordon is compiling natural first aid kits with hand-made herbal salves, and is constantly learning new remedies and therapies. To learn more about the therapies and consultations Gordon offers, visit her website at www.myjourneytohealth.net.

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