

Food Is the Basis of Health

By Dr. Kivette Parkes

“Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food.” This famous quote by Hippocrates rings even more true today than when he said it in 400 BC. Hippocrates’s first-hand observations of the effects of diet and lifestyle on overall health led him to create the philosophical foundation upon which modern medicine was founded.

Lifestyles and medicine have changed a lot since the time of Hippocrates. In fact, modern medicine has never been further away from nature. In order for a medication to be patented and prescribed for the treatment of disease it legally cannot be natural because there cannot be a patent on a naturally occurring thing. As a result, we are very far removed from the foundations established by Hippocrates.

Drugs are commonly prescribed over food and lifestyle modifications. In fact, for many physicians and medical researchers, food has no therapeutic value beyond providing calories for energy. The blatant disconnect between nutrition and health is so severe in medicine nowadays, that many physicians don’t even ask their patients about their daily food intake before treating them.

What hasn’t changed, over the past 2,500 years, is our basic anatomy and physiology. Our bodies are still made of the same organs and systems and cells. Each cell still has the same nutritional needs today as it did in the days of Hippocrates. The cell is the most basic level of life and our bodies are made of millions of them. Each cell is like a tiny biochemical machine performing different jobs depending on where it is located in the body. It takes raw materials from the food we eat and uses them to make hormones, brain chemicals, enzymes, new cells, and a host of other essential substances.

In fact, most cells in our bodies are replaced by newer cells at least every few years. If the quality of the raw materials used to make these new cells is poor, over time the overall health of these new cells decreases



and the aging process is accelerated. Imagine a body made from candy bars, French fries, and diet sodas; compare that to a body made from fresh fruit, organic kale and spinach, and lots of pure water. Do you think there would be a distinct difference in the quality and health of the cells and organs between the two bodies? There would absolutely be a difference.

If the health of the cells and organs in our bodies is affected by the type and quality of food we eat, it stands to reason that the food we eat has a direct impact on how we feel—physically and emotionally. It will determine if our bodies work properly or if we will be susceptible to heart disease, cancer, diabetes, thyroid diseases, depression, digestive disorders, and other diseases and issues not ordinarily associated with diet.

As evident in our society, food can cause as much harm as good. According to the Centers for Disease Control, close to 70 percent of all U.S. deaths are related to diet and lifestyle. As a Naturopathic Physician, at the Carolina Partners Wellness Center, my main goal is to make sure that the basic nutritional requirements for each patient are

being met. At our office, we don’t just look at symptoms; we do a comprehensive evaluation of each patient’s medical history, family/genetic history, exercise routine, stress levels, and all the major body systems. This ensures that we provide the best holistic individual food plan for each patient.

JUST TWO FOOD GROUPS

The type and quality of food we eat is extremely important. I place a direct focus on whole food nutrition. My patients are always encouraged to eat foods that occur naturally in nature as close to their natural state as possible and avoid processed and synthetic foods. In fact, my philosophy is that there are only two basic food groups: *real, natural whole foods* that you can recognize just by looking at them; and *synthetic food products* that do not occur in nature and you will need to read a list of ingredients to figure out exactly what you are eating. Eating from the first group is always preferred. It is a simple philosophy that makes sense of nutrition in this very technical and complicated world. It eliminates the need to count calories, grams of sodium, grams of fat, and all the other unhealthy additives found in processed or synthetic food. Natural food comes perfectly packaged and balanced by nature. If we eat a good colorful variety of organic fruits, vegetables, and some lean animal protein, we provide our bodies with what they need to maintain, improve, and preserve our health. **h&h**

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