



It Isn't Only Vegetables

Healthy Eating Tips

by Billie A Williams

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Thank You, any questions or comments maybe sent via email to the author at wordcrafter123@gmail.com . Here's to your health and healthy eating.

Why Do We Allow Others to Affect Our Choice of Healthy Vs Unhealthy *Peer Pressure is it what its cracked up to be or an excuse?*

Cultivate a habit of making wise choices.

Excuses Begone (the title of a book by Guru Wayne Dyer) here I mean choices when it comes to your health. You are, or should be in the driver's seat. One major excuse we use to eat poorly is peer pressure. Of course, you want to be part of the crowd, but does that mean be a lemming or be ostracized by the group? No way! Let me give you a few clues as to how to circumvent or survive peer pressure.

Scenario # 1

You're at a party. Parties usually involve alcohol. Alcohol has no nutritional value and is loaded with empty calories. So what do you do? Opt to be designated driver for your group. Most people will honor and appreciate your abstinence in this case. If you aren't able to do that get a glass of ice water with a lemon or lime slice in it. You're drinking to your health and only you and the bartender need to know.

As for party entrées, choose only those foods that will allow you to maintain your healthy diet focus. Most every part has a relish tray or cheese and crackers, choose wisely.

Scenario #2

How about when you're on a deadline at work? The boss orders food in to keep the troops motivated and replenished, so the work can continue uninterrupted. If the choices are unhealthy, instead of giving into something you would rather not ingest, simply decline if there is no way to order a more healthy choice. Or, opt to eat a very small portion with water on the side to assuage your hunger and allow you to continue working without compromising your desire to eat healthy.

Scenario #3

Weddings, birthday parties, special events, face it—our culture thrives on celebrations. Gatherings feed our belongingness needs. So what to do about your healthy eating plans? You could rationalize that cake has all the ingredients of a good breakfast. Grains (wheat in the flour) eggs (for protein) milk (calcium) a little sugar for energy and so forth, sounds like a good deal right? Then there is the thick chocolate icing, oops there goes another rubber tree plant, as the song goes. I mean, well-intended goal has been derailed. Sometimes a little white lie may be in order. (I'm not condoning dishonesty) Truth is always the better choice than a lie. But until you grow your courage and conviction, feign unsteady stomach, not feeling quite up to par, which you won't be if you ingest an over abundance of sweets. You could of course say you have an allergic reaction to whatever the flavor of choice you are offered. Better still, thank you but I'm really working hard to eat healthy and cake and ice cream are not listed as one of those choices for me.

Do remember to eat something though. Refusing certain bad-for-you, foods is fine. But, your body needs sustenance. If you don't eat at all, dangerous eating habits and disorders

such as anorexia or bulimia and others can develop. It's okay to say no to peer pressure, but don't say no to food. Say yes to healthy eating.

Healthy Eating In Spite of Peer Pressure

Is peer pressure an excuse?

Healthy eating is important for maintaining bodily functions and living a disease free life. If you do not eat healthy at the moment, if you struggle with healthy eating because of your busy life style or whatever your current/preferred excuse is, you aren't alone.

If you often eat in a hurry, at odd times during the day, you grab what's easy and convenient. The way to defeat this instead of grabbing fast food on the fly, even though places like Arby's and Hardee's are trying to offer healthy alternatives, as well— you need to PLAN AHEAD and be vigilant in your resolve.

Take a bagged lunch. Then you control portion size, nutritional value/level and include your favorites. A salad loaded with preservatives is not a healthy alternative. Make your own with wise selections of washed vegetables. With insulated lunch carriers this is a simple, cost effective, alternative. You control quality and quantity.

Planning ahead includes your evening meals. If you don't cook ahead and freeze, have a glass/bottle of water and a veggie or fruit snack to take the edge off your hunger as you cook.

Breaking those unhealthy habits may seem difficult at first, but there is hope. Promise yourself to start making healthy choices today. Here are some tips to get you started.

1. Rid your home of all foods that do not fit into healthy eating calories
2. Keep junk foods, sugar and calorie laden soft drinks out of your house so they cannot tempt you.
3. Everyone gets hungry, some between meals. It's okay to snack, just make sure you have something on hand to assuage that empty feeling. If you are into soft and creamy try yogurt. Need crunch, carrot sticks and fresh fruit will fill the bill. Clean, easy one hand eating while you work, how about grapes or whole wheat crackers like wheat thins. Is chocolate your passion? Chocolate may sabotage your good efforts. You can lick that too. Instead of arguing with yourself, how about nibbling on a few chocolate covered raisins or plain chocolate chips. Limit yourself of course, to small amounts occasionally. That won't sabotage your healthy eating plans.
4. Learn about the foods you eat and like. Which are the healthiest choices? Learn about the nutrients, what do they offer your body? Sure, fruits and veggies, milk are all good for you, but there are more. Become a detective. Find out why and how much you need. Uncover your own mystery to boundless energy, sharp mind and the bonus of a good physical body. When you understand how specific nutrients work in the body, you'll be more inclined to make wise choices. Someone once said "Knowledge is power," when it comes to your health there could be no truer statement.

Start with small steps. Mount Everest wasn't climbed in one leap. If a small step is replacing one soda a day with a glass of water, that is progress. If you eat fast food for lunch everyday, try substituting a nutritious, healthy lunch for at least half of that. You are already improving your health and calorie intake if you follow just these two simple steps.

When you try anything new, when you are on a mission to break any undesirable habit, it takes time and perseverance. Don't give up if you slide back into your old ways. Pick yourself up where you left off and begin again. One small step at a time.

Keep that goal in front of you at all times. A healthy body, an alert mind, living to a ripe old age should be your focus. Longevity will do you no good if you're too ill and incapacitated to enjoy it. Getting healthy now, is a wise choice. You can do it, one step at a time! Just choose it! Bon Appetite.

Restaurants How to Make Choices Without sabotaging your focus on Health

Menu choices and health

Just because you love to eat out regularly doesn't mean you have to give up eating good-for-you healthy food. It's all about making intelligent choices. Learning about the nutritional value of foods and those that your body and mind need to stay healthy both physically and mentally is the first order of business in a healthy life style.

Being happy, physically healthy, mentally stable and physically active should be enough incentive to learn what you need to know to make those decisions about what you are willing to put into your body.

Let's start with the menu and the wait person's first words to you. "Could I get you anything from the bar, or could I get you anything to drink?" You know the routine. Supper clubs and some restaurants do include alcoholic beverages on their menus. The occasion to eat out may suggest a beverage before or with your meal. Remember, alcohol in general, is full of empty calories. Your choice, if you decide you want a drink, should be red wine. Even though it is empty alcoholic calories at least it has potential benefits for your heart. It is believed it can help prevent heart disease. However, limit yourself to a single glass.

Skip the appetizers unless it's to order a side salad. Generally speaking, appetizers at most restaurants are meant to increase your craving for more of the same high-fat foods those appetizers usually are. If your meal out wouldn't be the same without the appetizer choose a single serving portion to share with your table.

Ideally, you will, instead, focus on your main course. Your attention should be directed to what ingredients in the dish are. Avoid anything with cream sauces or high fat meats. Pass up potatoes and onion rings. Order side dishes such as vegetables or ask for just the main dish.

Note also, portion sizes, they count toward healthy or obese. Order off the smaller proportioned lunch menu whenever possible, or ask for a take home container (doggie bag/box or whatever they are called in your area) right away and plan to save half of the meal for another meal. If you divide your entrée in half before you start, you won't be tempted to eat it all. Restaurants always seem to allow over generous proportions, at least enough for two, maybe even three meals.

At the end of your meal, skip the dessert menu for the same reason you skipped the appetizer. Many fancy desserts at restaurants have more calories than your entire meal. On special occasions you may decide falling off the healthy eating wagon just a bit, is totally in order. Go ahead, just don't let it become a habit. Healthy eating requires a lot of "won't Power" sometimes, the I won't sabotage my healthy life style for this is a high energy, mentally and physically alert you for just saying no to temptation!

Are Organic, Natural, Hormone free Advertising Hype or Healthy Labels? *Is it automatically better for you?*

Shopping for products like meat, fish, eggs, milk can be a lesson in frustration. What do you choose? If something is labeled natural, organic, preservative free or any number of other healthy sounding tags, what is the difference? What do the words the advertiser's choose really mean? Are they synonymous with healthy? Or, are they all the same?

Your informational arsenal will tell you whether you should spend the extra money on a particular product, or is it simply a marketing ploy to separate you from your money.

Let's first examine the reference to natural. This always makes me laugh because it usually refers to fruits and vegetables. Well, my goodness fellow, aren't fruits and vegetables always natural? This may not be absolute truth anymore since they started messing with the unnatural process of creating uurber tomatoes.

But, generally speaking, unless it's a new kind of food that has been developed and processed via some man-conceived device, produce is a natural food. You are more likely looking for those that specify they are organically grown fruits and vegetables. That means those that are grown without chemical pesticides or fertilizer. Why organic? The two main benefits are:

1. You are helping the environment because you aren't contributing to the spread of chemicals into our air or water supplies
2. You are not ingesting potentially harmful chemicals into your body by eating the foods sprayed with chemical pesticides or fertilizer.

Organic products are usually more expensive. You can conserve by not buying organic, but choose those products that you will peel before eating. By not eating the pee on such things as Oranges, grapefruits, cucumbers, and others you are safe in buying the cheaper and just removing the peels before you serve them.

Even if you buy organic fruits and vegetables that you plan to eat peelings and all, be sure to wash them before eating. Ridding the produce from any dirt or contaminants that they may have been exposed to in their trek from field or orchard to market, to you.

Milk or meat products sometimes contain the words, "no hormones". Think about it all animals naturally produce hormones. What the label really means is that no hormones were induced into the animal by artificial means. This was some times used to increase milk production in cows.

Labels on eggs and meat can indicate whether the animal was penned, caged or a free range animal or fowl. Nutritionally, the end product is supposedly the same. However, humane treatment suggests free range would be the more respectful of the life of the fowl or animal.

Reading and interpreting all the labels consumers are flooded with is sometimes confusing. Making wise choices, healthy choices are your responsibility. Be informed

and when in doubt ask, investigate, read, research and live along healthy productive life,
from your choices.

Safe Handling Tips To Prevent Food Borne Illnesses

Healthy Eating Starts With Storing, Preparing, and Handling Products Properly

Eating healthy foods will help you to boost your immune system, however not if the food makes you sick? Food borne illness can cause food poisoning and a variety of other more dangerous diseases, a real threat to our bodies. Following safety tips when handling, preparing and storing food is essential.

First and foremost, the temperature of your foods should be carefully considered. When cooking meat it is a good idea to use a meat thermometer to insure that the internal temperature of the meat is at the required degree of heat to insure safe eating. Hot foods should be kept at temperatures above 140 degrees Fahrenheit. Cold foods are best kept at temperatures of below 40 degrees Fahrenheit. The range between those ideal hot and cold temperatures is where bacteria can, and usually does grow.

Beef can be safely served rare. However, ground beef and other loaf meats formed into patties or loafs should not be eaten rare. The bacteria are found inside the meat as well as on the surface. You are at risk if you do not cook these meats for a long enough period of time to heat it thoroughly, thus killing any bacteria.

Cross contamination is preventable if you use a little common sense when handling and preparing your food for storage, since raw, uncooked meats are a prime target for bacterial growth. Cross contamination is basically the moving of bacteria from one dish to another. Do not use dirty cutting boards, a board that has been used to cut chicken into portions for the freezer, should not be used immediately to cut vegetables or another meat without first thoroughly washing that cutting board. A better choice is to use a clean board for each process of cutting that you do. Also, do not reuse an unwashed cutting board after you remove your cooked food from the stove and cut it preparing to serve it. The same rules apply to using a knife for more then one purpose between washings. In the case of preparing chicken, some of the bacteria may have remained on cutting board or knife making cross contamination a fairly certain possibility. Also, make sure that you are using a clean work space. Along with clean tools and clean hands these are part of your arsenal of safe, healthy eating.

Along with using a clean environment, you should wash your hands regularly. Every time you touch raw foods, you should use disinfecting hand soap and hot water to be certain no bacteria remain on your hands.

Making sure that your food is safe is one of the most important parts of healthy eating, so don't overlook this step the next time you shop, prepare to store, or prepare a meal. Cleanliness should be paramount in preparing, serving and storing foods safely. Clean habits create healthy eating.

Shopping 101 For Your Health

Eating healthy is your first link to healthy mind and body.

Healthy eating starts with shopping wisely. When you go to the grocery store your first avenue of attack is or should be to have a plan – or at least a list.

If you take the time to plan a week's worth of menus before you make your list, you will know what you will need and it will translate into making your list that much easier and efficient.

Make an inventory of your cupboards or pantry, your refrigerator and freezer to see what foods you actually need to replenish your stock. If you keep a list of regularly used items on your refrigerator and/or freezer check them when they are low or out you can add the item to list rather quickly when necessary.

To make up your list consult the sales flyer for the store you are planning to shop to find the products that are on sale. If you can shop for a week or two at one time you will save money. It is a known fact that if you make multiple trips to the grocery store every week, you are bound to pick up items not on your list, many of these items chosen as you are on your way home from work or in a hurry, will be from the snack section. Once again, reflecting on your choices they will invariably be hard on the healthy diet and the pocket book.

While you are shopping it is important to read labels. If you avoid purchasing brand name items solely because of the brand name—which are usually the most expensive—or the store brand because they are the cheapest, instead picking those with the most bang for your buck. Those in sizes that your family will use, with the nutritional value and the organically based choices you've decided to make will be the wisest choices. What you are after here is getting the most nutritional value, the nutrients for your money. Once you have decided on the brand that does this for you, next time you go for that brand and you won't need to compare the labels for nutritional value again for a while. When you eat higher quality foods, you'll feel fuller and in turn eat less. In reality, this is the best way to shop both for your family's health and for your financial health. What you would call a win win situation.

If you shop with your husband or significant other, with children old enough to read and with caution of course; give them each a part of your list and ask them to get exactly what is on your list, no substitutions and no side trips down the junk isle. This will keep them from begging for this and that and distracting you from your mission. Plus, you'll spend a lot less time and probably money while shopping. The authorities, (you know those elusive 'they') say the longer you spend in the store wandering up and down all the isles the more you will spend.

When you are single, living alone; don't grab a shopping cart, take a basket instead. You'll be less likely to drop things into the basket that will take up room meant for things

you really need or intended to buy. The biggest problem with health and grocer shopping is impulse junk food items that you don't need. If you have a small basket you simply won't have room Twinkies, Fudge Ice Cream, or some sort of salty Chip or Tostitos. This is one time when passing up a bargain, is good for you.

We've spent a good deal of time on food, but don't forget to consider drinks you drop into your cart or basket that may adversely affect your healthy eating choices. How many calories, empty sugar-filled calories are in that soda, punch, or beer you normally put in your cart or basket without considering the choice. Instead, give diet drinks, water, sports drinks or natural fruit juices a good label read. You don't need to sacrifice taste for health. Some drinks take a bit to get used to when you are used to the bite of Coke, decaffeinated diet coke may have a different flavor that you can't tolerate. Don't stop their test the other diet sodas – a clear soda like diet Mountain Dew may be just the ticket. Natural fruit juices like apple are always certain favorites. Test taste by buying smaller size cans or bottles. (Most manufacturers now make those one cup serving cans instead of the 10 or 12 ounce sizes.) Try then buy what your taste buds tell you.

With these tips, healthy eating and shopping should be much easier.

Tricks and Tips To Helping Your Child Get all The Nutrients He or She Needs.

How To Get Picky Eaters To Eat Healthy Foods.

Healthy eating is important from the birth of your child right on through adulthood. Talk to your pediatrician to find out proportions and types of foods you should be introducing to your child and when. Also ask for his/her expert opinion, or tips or tricks, for getting those foods into the toddler that is busier with mud pies than thoughts of nutrition.

If your child does not get the right nutrients in his or her food, it is possible the child will become ill or his/her growth could be stunted. Eating healthy does not need to be a royal battle at every mealtime.

A great way to teach your children new skills, as you are well aware, is to involve them in the planning and making of whatever it is you are hoping to instill in them. If you want to show them how to tie their shoes maybe you make a big stuffed shoe with over sized laces to help them. If you want them to know how to brush their teeth properly you take great pains to get a toothbrush in their favorite color, get some of the new pre-mouthwash that lets them see areas of the teeth where they need to brush or where they didn't brush good enough. You jump through all sorts of hoops to get the right habits, the right skills into their lives. Why should healthful eating be any different? Get them involved in planning, cooking, serving meals you may just see a new attitude.

Children as young as three or four love to help with simple things like stirring and pouring, while older children can learn to crack eggs (be sure this is over a separate bowl, if shells get into the bowl you can easily remove them with the egg shell itself, saving the food you were preparing to put the egg in.), they can measure ingredients, and teens can help to cut vegetables and cook entire meals. When a child sees what is going into the food, he or she will be more likely to eat it, and because they are proud of their accomplishments they and you can rave over the flavor to make it even more special and enjoyable.

While you are shopping for or preparing meals is a great time to discuss what vitamins, minerals and nutrients are in the food. What part of the body it benefits. What help it brings to the immune system and more. Create a simple chart, or draw a human figure, or better yet trace your child's outline on a large piece of butcher paper. Use this life size poster to show the food you've chosen for this particular meal and use a color crayon to show where it goes or what organ, muscle or place it helps keep in tip top shape. Make it a game. Be sure to check that night whatever spot on the body the food helped. Ask the child if he can tell how much better, stronger, or vigorous that part feels.

Remember Popeye with his spinach? The child actually sees Popeye grow a big muscle with his spinach eating. Was it an advertiser, a doctor, or the parent of a reluctant eater who created this character? Can you come up with your own similar hero for your child's least favorite food, to turn it into a super hero for your child?

Another helpful idea is Never use mealtimes to discuss the child's failures, bad behavior, bad report card, whatever they have messed up for the day. Save that for another time later. When Mealtimes are for comfortable chatting, sharing the good of the day, enjoying each other's company, instead of being a battlefield with your child or children, eating becomes a pleasant time in their lives. Focus on the good in your day and their day. It improves the mood, aids in good digestion and the child's association with food as good in more ways than one.

Kid friendly options for snacking are more and more available then ever. Low-fat string cheese is a healthy snack and fun to eat. A serving size bag of a favorite (not pre-sweetened) cereal like honey nut cheerios, or chex is a good choice, it is clean easy-eating and travel friendly. There are powdered drinks, and other enriched foods that you can give your child to up the anti on the nutrients.

If you are still worried that your child isn't getting enough of the proper nutrients he or she needs for daily life, you can also find vitamin supplements to fill out their needs. They come in kid friendly shapes, sizes, doses some even chewable. Just be certain that you store them out of reach of children, because they are fun to eat, they take them eagerly, but you don't want them to think they are candy and eat them by the handfuls when you aren't supervising them.

The bottom line is that you need to make eating fun while making sure your child is staying safe and healthy, no matter how picky they may be. If your child refuses to eat a specific food, his/or her taste buds may not have developed a taste for it yet. Keep offering it on occasion, but never demand that the item is eaten. Ask them to taste one bite of it each time it is offered, that is enough to gradually introduce a change and perhaps a new favorite. However, if he or she is refusing most foods, you need to be firm about eating nutritious foods and perhaps design some clever strategy to get food to be a good thing.

Keeping Your Snacking on the Right Track

Good for you snacking

Snacking is the downfall of many otherwise healthy diets. The good news is that you can learn to control this snacking that attacks your good sense. There are ways in which you can snack without killing your healthy diet. Staying on track with your diet when you like to snack might be hard but it is worth that extra effort because it keeps your body healthy.

You can help to stop your snacking simply by removing temptation. Before you reach for a snack, ask yourself if you are honestly hungry or if you are just eating because you are bored, because the food is one of your favorite taste choices, or because you feel compelled to eat when you are doing a certain activity, like watching television or a movie? If you are snacking because you are really hungry choose healthy. If you are snacking for another reason, you should try to remove the temptation. Simply rid your house of junk food.

Removing temptation begins at the grocery store. Do not shop when you are hungry. Purchase healthy snacks. Think about the snacks you are accustomed to eating. Would they fit easily into a food group such as fruit, vegetable, grain, dairy or protein? If the answer is no, then the snack is probably not good for you, i.e., not a healthy choice. For example, celery sticks (vegetable), yogurt or low-fat cheese (dairy), or whole wheat crackers such as wheat thins (grains) work better for snacks than candy, potato chips or other high-in-calories and other fatty foods. Think empty calories. An overload of fats, starches (that turn to sugar) and sugars should not be on your list of snacks.

When you snack, remember to consider your beverages as well. Drinks like soda, fruit punch, iced tea, lemonade and juice boxes can contain unnatural ingredients and lots of sugar. In short, they are high caloric, low nutrient foods. Instead why not opt for drinks that supplement your healthy diet. Choose water most of the time or drinks that are made with natural fruits. Low-fat milk and sports drinks, apple juice are good choices. Stay away from most kinds of alcohol. Red wine is the only exception since this can provide heart health benefits, even then, limit yourself to one glass. Alcohol in your system turns to sugar as well as negating your reflexes, reaction times and thinking power.

When you eat your meals, eat slower chewing your food thoroughly before swallowing it. Drink water with your meals and engage in pleasant conversation. This will slow you down, let your stomach realize it's full before you stretch it by over eating, and you will sate your hunger for a longer period of time.

Mushroom Surprises

Do you know about Mushrooms benefits?

When it comes to surprises mushrooms are one of the big ones. There are classes at various community colleges and County Extension offices to help you be an alive and well mushroom gatherer...I've wondered why people would do that and not leave it to the experts. Well, where do those experts come from, people who learn how to go out and gather their own mushrooms. Duh! I still think I would feel safer buying one of those kits that you can use to grow mushrooms in your basement or something. So your question is probably why bother? You could buy the from the supermarket of course, but as gardeners we know that satisfaction of doing it ourselves, being in control of the soil, the vitamins we feed them and the pesticide/insecticide deterrents.

Why would we care if mushrooms are part of our culinary choices? How about

Health Benefits

Mushrooms, make that edible – mushrooms, the safe ones, are a right up there with other super-foods in the forefront right now such as green tea and broccoli. Did you know that the first antibiotics were extracted from fungi.

Mushrooms are 80-90% water, and therefore are low in calories high in fiber. We all know the health benefits of enough moisture and fiber in our diets. Now add on the fact that they are fat-free, cholesterol-free, and low in sodium (especially good for those on a hypertensive diet). If that isn't enough for you here are some other reasons to get more mushrooms into your cooking:

- Phytonutrients found in mushrooms have been at the center of anti-cancer research for decades. In many countries, medicinal mushrooms are used as an adjunct to other cancer treatments.
- Recent studies have shown that white mushrooms can reduce the risk of breast and prostate cancer
- Mushrooms are considered probiotic, meaning that they help the body to strengthen itself and ward off illness. The nutrient riboflavin is part of mushrooms' probiotic ability. Mushrooms have a high percentage of that nutrient.
- A great source of potassium, a mineral which helps lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of stroke is another benefit of the lowly mushroom. A medium portabella mushroom has more potassium than a glass of orange juice or a banana.

What do you say? Shall we grow ourselves some delicious mushrooms. If you fry them in butter with some onions just until the onions are transparent they taste like steak. Imagine steak with a bunch of healthy side benefits.



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