



THE ELEMENTS OF HEALING

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THE PRESENT OF A RESILIENT BODY

The holidays present a window of opportunity for a new start. Consider the usual American habit of eating pounds of non-nutritious foods in November and December—sugar, unhealthy fats, and processed foods. This season, under pandemic conditions, eating immunity-raising fresh foods high in nutrients could become an important new holiday tradition.



Rather than loading up on unhealthy foods during these days of celebration, then dieting to undo the havoc wreaked on the body—consider the holidays as the time to give yourself the gift of self-love. For the folks you love, a basket of fresh fruit and nuts or a cookbook on healthy eating makes an ideal gift. And, consider that not wasting food by avoiding overeating and managing your own food supply contributes to the availability of food to the general population—also known as food justice.



Mindful Holidays

A commonly stated reason for not eating whole foods is spoilage in the refrigerator. In this issue, we continue the “why” of whole foods—like they look in nature—and how you can get the full benefit through freshness from them by preserving maximum nutrition.

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***High-level wellness is
within your reach with
mindful self-care.***

Give your body a break!



Tips for managing their care will lead you to optimal nutritional gain and minimized housework. In prior issues, the nutritional benefits of whole foods over prepared foods were emphasized. Processed foods are missing the nutritional content for many reasons.

- 1) New research findings indicate the beneficial bacteria present in fresh foods;
- 2) Dried, processed or packaged foods are missing the enzymes needed to unlock the nutrients abundant in whole foods; and
- 3) How the food was grown, from seed to soil enrichment, determines nutritional content.



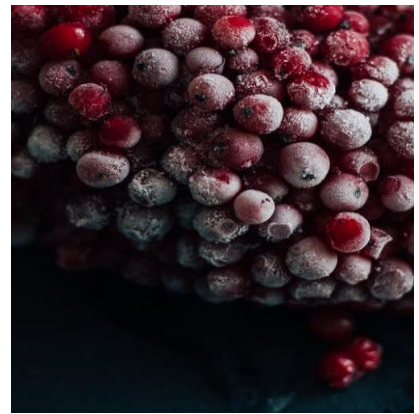
Nutritional benefit is reduced as the foods age. The ideal is the daily Old-World trip to market in the morning to shop. This isn't a practical solution for most Americans, although picking up fresh food once or twice a week at a farmers' market on the way home from work is an option for many.



On the whole, Americans waste 40% of our food supply. Much of that waste occurs in the restaurant business, so managing your food and carrying healthy lunches and snacks (see back issues) is one way to avoid contributing to the problem. Instead of wasting food, put the savings into buying good quality, fresh food.

Retaining Food Value

Knowing the difference in the value of the food you start with fits into the overall equation. A primary question to ask about your food is "how much nutritional value is lost by the form that reaches you?" Canning at high temperature results in a 60% to 80% high loss of nutrients due to high temperatures of foods immersed in water. Frozen foods lose 40% to 60% due to moisture expansion when frozen, causing food cells to rupture. Loss from freezing varies with the specific vitamin and the time length of storage.



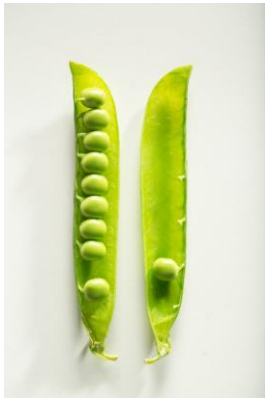
While there exists a debate over the nutritive value of frozen foods if they are picked very ripe and frozen quickly—notice how you feel after eating fresh versus frozen and decide for yourself. Dehydrated food tends to lose from 3% to 5% due to low heat during the drying cycle and gentle air flow, a better option. I vote for the fresh food route, with the minimal nutritional loss.



If you are deciding to eat the fresh food option to raise immunity and stay healthy, the next question about how long food keeps is “how far did your food travel?” Food locally grown keeps much longer than food imported from another state, country, or continent. Consider this question in your overall food costs. Imported cheap food is expensive not only in terms of transportation costs, but also in terms of the likelihood it will be thrown away, as well as the impacts on your health. Food imported 1,500 miles is often picked green, reducing nutritive value considerably.



A next critical question, related to the last is, “how long does food keep fresh, particularly in relation to retaining maximum nutritional value?” Storage in your refrigerator or in other places in your kitchen (preferably cool) should be short term. Buying for a one-week supply max is the target. Twice a week is optimal. Greens, the incredible healing foods, begin to wilt and lose vitamin content after 3 days. The best way to store fruits and vegetables like apples, oranges, grapefruit, potatoes and other produce is to keep the skin, rinds, and peelings intact.



Prepping food ahead (i.e, washing and cutting) can save you that amount of time needed to eat well, when you feel too tired to cook. Then, the question becomes “how long before nutritional loss?” Once the protective peels or coverings of fruits and vegetables are cut, the fruits and vegetables begin to degrade and lose Vitamin C. Use within three days to reduce the chance of loss, to a maximum of five to six days. Major vitamin loss is minimized as long as cut fruits and veggies are stored in air tight refrigerator containers. After this time, fruits have been shown to lose 10 to 25% of Vitamin C.

The ideal is walking out to your garden, picking and then cooking immediately. I feel an “internal glow” eating this way, sensing a certain energy gain from the nutrients in freshly picked food. The body says Y-E-S! This just might be Qi, the Chinese concept of energy flow. A second-best strategy is a CSA. Simple and cost-effective. Get your weekly share, then eat it down during the next week. Farm to table, fresh, fresh, nutrient rich.



Keeping It Fresh

Now to the essential and mundane, the solutions! A little tending saves time and money. Refrigerator maintenance taking only two or three extra minutes a day makes up for lost time later spent sorting and cleaning the refrigerator. Regard this as a break-even in time.

- Think through a one-week supply for you and your family. This can vary from a rough calculation of meals to menu planning. Once you observe the quantity of food it really takes, make notes for your next shopping. Keeping grains, beans, and legumes on hand simplifies the complements to vegetables.
- Pay for food with cash, increasing the perception of “real costs.” This is particularly helpful at the Farmer’s Market.
- Organize your refrigerator either to type of food or when you will eat it. Keeping a shelf for “what to eat next,” is useful. Yes, vegetable bins serve a purpose, both in terms of organizing and preserving longer.
- Keep ready-made ingredients to a minimum in the refrigerator to further visibility of fresh foods in your fridge. (i.e. eat leftovers in a timely manner).

- If you have leftovers or bring home extras from a restaurant, eat them the next day to avoid nutrient loss, refrigerator clutter and waste.
- Keep foods visible. Clear refrigerator dishes, such as Pyrex, lend a clear view of the contents.
- Quick check the refrigerator every two days to see if foods are aging or rotting. If remembering what to eat is challenging, **keep a list of what to eat next**, then cross off the list. Remove spoiled foods immediately so decay cannot pass to other foods. At minimum, look prior to your shopping day.
- If you have an overabundance, make frozen dinners stored in a clear, rectangular Pyrex container to thaw and eat later.
- Designate one shelf to put the foods that need to be eaten soon.
- Track your real expenses for food. This will create awareness of costs minus food waste. A fast-food meal is more expensive than a home cooked organic meal, if meat portions are kept reasonable.

With a food dehydrator in the kitchen, you can preserve an extra supply of food, before it ages and loses nutritional value. And, lastly, if you do have some waste, composting and returning the nutrients to your garden is a wise use of resources.



Vote with Your Fork

In summary, buy the best quality possible and take excellent care of it. Why is nutritional content so important? This relates to maintaining a healthy weight as well as daily healing in the body.

“Depending on how we spend them, our food dollars can either go to support a food industry devoted to quantity and convenience and “value” or they can nourish a food chain organized around values—values like quality and health. Yes, shopping this way takes more money and effort, but as soon you begin to treat that expenditure not just as shopping but also as a kind of vote—a vote for health in the largest sense—food no longer seems like the smartest place to economize.”

— **Michael Pollan, [In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto](#)**

ABOUT DR. GEORGE MANDEL

Dr. Mandel is a National Board-Certified Diplomate, certified by the National Council for the Certification of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine, and is also a trained detoxification specialist, certified by the National Acupuncture Detoxification Association. George Mandel has practiced as a Reiki master since 1998. He has studied with the late Vera Hirano in Santa Fe, NM, and has worked extensively with clients suffering from anxiety, depression, and muscular and joint injuries. Reiki is a Japanese technique for stress reduction and relaxation that also promotes healing and wellness, treating the mind/body/spirit. Benefits of Reiki include feelings of peace, security, and well-being.

Dr. Mandel is a trained practitioner of Traditional Chinese Medicine, and has studied at the International Acupuncture Training Center, located in Beijing, China. He is knowledgeable in a variety of healing modalities that together constitute Oriental Medicine. This includes acupuncture, Chinese and Japanese diagnostic techniques, pulse and tongue assessment, moxibustion, tuina (Chinese medical massage), herbal formulas, and Chinese nutritional therapy.

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ABOUT SUSAN GUYETTE

Susan Guyette, Ph.D, is co-writer of *The Elements of Healing*. She is an experienced trainer, conference speaker, and has more than 30 years of experience in community planning work, particularly with rural Hispanics and Native American tribes in New Mexico. She is an Integrative Nutrition Health Coach, has written the newspaper column "Everyday Green" for the Green Fire Times for the past ten years, and has five published books. Susan is of Métis heritage (Micmac Indian/Acadian French).

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