

(201) 792 3544

50 Harrison Street Suite 316
Hoboken, NJ 07030

Newsletter

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The Truly Balanced Diet.

In 1979, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) developed “A Daily Food Guide,” creating the four “food groups” and suggested daily recommended servings for each age group. In 1992, they launched the food pyramid. Hoping to simplify the message they split the “fruit and vegetable group” and added a “Fats, Oils & Sweets” group. In 2011, they launched “The Plate and the Moon”. This concept takes the dinner plate and divides it into the easy to remember four food groups (still splitting fruits and vegetables into their own groups) and adding an “orbiting dairy moon”. It’s simple, uncomplicated and wrong.

Since 1916, when the USDA first launched their nutrition guidelines, all seven, including this latest, operates under the premise that fat makes us fat, which simply isn’t true. Unhealthy starches and carbohydrates are responsible for our expanding waistlines.

The Big Debate

Dr. Joseph Mercola, one of the most popular voices in natural health, has lamented the fact that the debate over the validity of low carbohydrate diets being healthier has primarily been waged in the media and lay publications but not in the scientific journals. Unfortunately, many of the more popular books that promote this diet are gimmicky and lack scientific references. However, Dr. Mercola believes that at their core is a valuable concept. The truth is that limiting carbohydrates (especially cereal grains and starches) will improve human health.

The Glycemic Index

Beyond the debate of starches versus fats is the argument regarding the Glycemic Index (GI). In a nutshell, the higher the GI, the faster a food item will raise your blood sugar. For people with diabetes or insulin resistance, these foods must be avoided. Foods such as potatoes, rice and wheat flour, among others.

However, besides the rapid increase in blood sugar, high GI foods have another nasty side-effect. A recent study found that a diet rich in starchy carbohydrates actually made the meal unsatisfying.

Another study found that a high GI meal promotes excessive food intake in those who are already obese. In other words, not only will eating foods that are high on the Glycemic Index make it difficult to lose weight but will actually cause the dieter to eat more food, which is extremely counter-productive.

What to Eat

According to government figures, 96% of children in the UK do not get enough fruit and vegetables in their diet, and in the US and Canada, children are eating less than half of what the government recommends. This is a major problem.

Phytonutrients, also called phytochemicals, are the chemicals in plants that are beneficial to the body; the higher and richer the color of the vegetables, the greater the phytonutrient content. Dark green vegetables should be the majority of what children are eating in a day as they contain the most vital nutrients, vitamins and minerals.

Dividing the Plate the Right Way

Perhaps the USDA was on the right track by encouraging us to divide our plate, but they were off a little on how to properly do so.

Our bodies are made up of cells: brain cells, skin cells, etc. On a daily basis those cells die and are replaced by new cells. The vitamins, minerals, amino and fatty acids that make up the foods

we eat are what make up those new cells. The saying, “You are what you eat,” is absolutely true in this case and thus we should be conscious of what we’re eating and especially what we’re feeding our children.

Vegetables

The majority of our plate, at least 50%, should be vegetables. Whether it’s all one vegetable or two different vegetables, it’s important that they take up half the plate and it’s best if they are one or a combination of the following:

- Spinach
- Broccoli
- Turnip Greens
- Collard Greens
- Mustard Greens
- Beet Greens
- Cabbage
- Kale
- Brussel Sprouts
- Asparagus
- Bok Choy

Remember that what we think of as vegetables are sometimes actually starches and grains; so they should be avoided. These include but are not limited to the following:

- Beans
- Beets
- Carrots
- Corn
- Sweet Peas
- Parsnips
- Sweet Potatoes
- Potatoes
- Yams

There are several other vegetables that fall between these two categories. Be sure to ask your Family Wellness Chiropractor if a vegetable is beneficial for your family or not.

Proteins

Two thirds of the remaining half of your plate (about 1/3 of your overall plate) should be protein. When thinking about protein remember that fat does not make you fat. Consider the healthy omega fats.

These are found in fish. The proteins that should make up 1/3 of your plate include fish, poultry and lean beef.

Salmon is probably the most beneficial fish since it is high in both omega 3 and omega 6, which are essential fatty acids. Tuna and other similar fish are also extremely healthy. Chicken and turkey are an excellent source of protein, and many cuts of beef are a good source as well.

Healthy Carbs

The last 1/3 of the remaining half (about 1/6 of the entire plate) can be reserved for healthy carbohydrates. Obviously we want to limit these to unrefined and non-processed whole grains, vegetables, fruits and beans. These can include but are not limited to: whole grain pasta; brown rice; squashes or other starchy vegetables; strawberries, sliced tomatoes or apples; and any cooked beans.

Carbohydrates from cereals, white bread or white rice, pastries, sodas and other highly processed foods must be avoided. This means only whole grain or brown rice, non-processed and unbleached whole grain pasta, and any other grain that has not been bleached, processed or enriched. Each of these processes destroy any value found in the food item.

In Summary

If you consider your body to be a high-powered machine then consider the fuel it's being provided. We don't want to try to run on garbage like a composter, we want to run on healthy, living foods, like the living organism that we are.

If you have any questions about a particular favorite family recipe or food item, take a moment to talk to your Family Wellness Chiropractor today and fuel your family right.