



## Eating for Optimal Health

Everyday our bodies are working hard to make all the things that we do possible. Getting up, going to work, going to school, running after children, exercising and all the other activities we do each day all take energy. This energy is produced by the body using the nutrients that we take in. Even our very cells are made up of the food that we eat. The question is, what do you want your cells to be made up of?

The truth of the matter is that the key to optimal health, both physical and emotional, lies in eating a variety of whole, nutrient-rich foods every day. These kinds of foods contain vitamins, minerals, fibre, fatty acids, and a variety of different phytonutrients, like flavonoids and carotenoids, that all work synergistically to provide us with the right nutrients in the right balance.

Another important step in eating for optimal health is to reduce and avoid your exposure to pesticides and herbicides. Eating organic food is not just a fad. While governments assure us that the majority pesticides currently used in farming do not pose major health risks to us, there are few studies available to show the long-term effects of a multitude of these chemicals in our bodies. Because many pesticides are systemic (meaning that they are not merely sprayed onto the plant but rather taken up by the roots) washing and peeling are not effective ways of reducing exposure to pesticides. The other downside to peeling is that there are many valuable nutrients in the skin and close to the surface layers. If budget restraints prevent you from eating organic exclusively there are still ways that you can incorporate organic produce into your life. Government testing has shown that certain produce consistently tests positive for higher pesticide residues than others. The Environmental Working Group has assembled a list of 45 commonly eaten foods ranked in order of pesticide residue. The worst offenders on the list include:

- Peaches
- Apples
- Sweet Bell Peppers
- Celery
- Nectarines
- Strawberries
- Cherries
- Lettuce
- Grapes - Imported
- Pears
- Spinach
- Potatoes
- Carrots
- Green Beans
- Hot Peppers
- Cucumbers
- Raspberries
- Plums
- Oranges
- Grapes-Domestic

By focusing on eating these foods organically you will do a lot to reduce your overall pesticide load. If you eat meat and fish, it is equally as important to eat as much organic and/or naturally-raised meat as possible, and stick with wild fish. This includes milk and eggs. This is not only because pesticide residues are concentrated in animal fats, but because factory farming of animals and fish includes the use of antibiotics and growth hormones to promote faster growth which then make their way into our bodies upon consumption. There are numerous other reasons to choose naturally-raised meat, not the least of which is the way in which the animals are treated throughout their life, up to and including the manner in which they are slaughtered.

By trying to eat the cleanest, freshest food possible you will be providing your body with the best foundation for health and vitality.



## Touchstone Naturopathic Centre

### What to Eat: *Optimal Health Diet*

#### Foods to Eat:

##### *Fresh whole fruit*

- ✓ As wide a variety as possible

##### *Fresh vegetables*

- ✓ Raw, steamed, stir fried, juiced, as soups, in salads

##### *Grains*

- ✓ Brown rice, quinoa, millet, barley, spelt, kamut, amaranth

##### *Protein*

- ✓ Eggs
- ✓ Coldwater fish – salmon, trout, halibut, mackerel, sardines
- ✓ Poultry, lamb, lean beef (small portions)
- ✓ Tofu (cooked – in moderation), tempeh
- ✓ Legumes of all types
- ✓ Protein powder – whey, hemp

##### *Dairy*

- ✓ Goat cheese, sheep cheese
- ✓ Yoghurt – organic, no artificial sweeteners

##### *Nuts & Seeds*

- ✓ Almonds, walnuts, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, cashews, pine nuts, hazelnuts, sesame seeds
- ✓ Nut butters – almond, organic peanut, hazelnut, tahini

##### *Good Fats*

- ✓ Cold pressed extra virgin olive oil
- ✓ Coconut oil
- ✓ Organic butter
- ✓ Avocado
- ✓ Flax oil, walnut oil, pumpkin oil – DO NOT COOK with these oils, use for salad dressings

##### *Dairy Substitutes*

- ✓ Almond milk, soy milk, rice milk, hemp milk – and their related products (cheese, frozen desserts, etc.)
- ✓ Potato cheese

##### *Sweeteners (to be used in moderation)*

- ✓ Honey
- ✓ Maple syrup
- ✓ Agave

##### *Seasoning*

- ✓ Sea salt, herbs, cayenne pepper, turmeric, ginger... limited only by your imagination

#### Foods to Avoid:

##### *Sweeteners*

- ✗ Sugar in any form
- ✗ Artificial sweeteners and products that contain them

##### *Grains*

- ✗ Limit wheat intake

##### *Protein*

- ✗ Pork
- ✗ Shellfish
- ✗ Tuna, farmed fish (salmon, trout, etc.)
- ✗ Non-organic red meat

##### *Dairy*

- ✗ Cow's milk dairy (especially non-organic)

##### *Processed Foods*

- ✗ Processed foods
- ✗ Anything with additives, preservatives and dyes

##### *Fats*

- ✗ Oils other than olive, flax, walnut, pumpkin
- ✗ Fried foods
- ✗ Vegetable oils (sunflower, canola, etc), margarine

##### *Other*

- ✗ Sulphured dried fruit (if original colour retained, then sulphur used)
- ✗ Carbonated beverages – pop, mineral water
- ✗ Coffee, tea
- ✗ Alcohol –take in moderation

#### Other Good Foods to Include:

- Unsweetened applesauce with ground flaxseed
- Greens drink (Greens+, etc.) daily in the morning, or late afternoon
- Lecithin granules – use in a smoothie
- Fermented foods like miso, kefir and sauerkraut
- Good snacks – hummus and other bean spreads, nut/seed crackers, raw nuts/seeds, fruits and vegetables, etc.