

WHAT SHOULD I EAT?

This is *the* most common question I am asked. In a world full of food pyramids, fat-free cookies, and low-carb pizza, how in the world do you know what to eat? We have more food choices today than at any point in the history of mankind. There are several factors to consider in determining what diet is best for you.

Biochemical individuality simply means that we're all different. We all come from a mix of different ethnic backgrounds and diverse food cultures. The foods to which your ancestors were acclimated may be quite different than those of my predecessors. So foods that nourish and satisfy you may not work at all for someone else. Very few of us eat the way our grandparents ate. A hundred years ago, it was much easier to know what to eat. You ate what could be found where you lived. You grew your own vegetables and fruit and raised your own animals or traded services for them.

The Industrial Revolution changed all that. As urbanization began to change our landscape, people moved off the family farm and into cities. Their jobs changed from the physical labor of farming and ranching to sitting at a desk. They began to purchase food from a market and instead of eating fresh, seasonally-available, local foods, they began to eat processed and manufactured foods.

In the late 1800's the "Food Giants, large manufacturing companies like Kellogg, Nabisco, and Quaker, found that fresh, nutrient-dense food didn't last long on a grocery store shelf. Wanting to limit losses, they placed their focus on products that had a long shelf life. This move represents a huge shift in the way humans have traditionally nourished themselves.

To increase profits and minimize waste, the manufacturing conglomerates began the slow, insidious removal of nutrients from food. For example,

whole wheat has a relatively short shelf life, due to the living part of the grain - the bran and the germ. So they simply removed those parts. What remained was a food-like substance, completely void of nutrients. During World War II, hydrogenated fats were created in order to send non-perishable rations to soldiers overseas. In the United States, people were encouraged to switch from butter to margarine. Ease and convenience were the selling tools and, of course, women loved that idea! In the early 1950's, the U.S. government realized that the foods being manufactured contained almost no valuable nutrients and mandated that foods be "fortified", meaning that synthetic vitamins were added back into foods like cereals and milk. Not exactly what Mother Nature had in mind.

Today's food choices are even more profoundly unnatural. In addition to canned foods, we now have frozen meals, instant pudding, fast food outlets on every corner, exotic produce from all over the world, and aisles full of processed substances. It's no wonder people are confused about what to eat!

The good news is that there is a movement afoot that is reawakening our desire for real food. Alice Waters, Sally Fallon, Michael Pollan, and many others are leading the way back to traditional, nutrient-dense food. Farmer's markets, Community Supported Agriculture, the Slow Food Movement, and the Weston A. Price Foundation are all making healthful eating a simpler process.

But even with all these great resources, you may still need a helping hand. That's where I come in. There are a number of issues that make everyone unique and need to be addressed in order to develop an individual eating plan.

- [Metabolic Typing](#). This is the best way to determine which foods are best for you and what foods you should avoid, based on your genetic needs.
- It is vital to determine if you have food sensitivities. ([Leap - MRT](#)) I find the majority of people I test DO. This has a great deal to do with your ability to digest and absorb your food. (read [Digestion and Elimination](#), request a [GI Panel](#))

- Another factor is your current weight status. Is it your desire to lose weight? I can help you structure a healthy eating plan to do that.
- Do you have blood sugar issues? This is a huge issue today and one that must be addressed with diet. You need a specific plan to keep your blood glucose stable.

Many people today grew up in the age of frozen dinners and boxed macaroni and cheese. They simply have never learned to cook fresh food. Part of my service includes meal planning and food preparation. I can also help you source the best quality food available in your area.

Another lost connection is in the preparation of our food. Most of us are in such a hurry to get things done, that putting together a meal is just one more thing to cross off our list. But wait! Preparing food, for others or just for yourself, is much too important to approach with this attitude. Handling food you will eat and serve to others is an act of love. It requires your full attention. Focus on each step and appreciate the magic you are creating! Notice the colors and texture, inhale the aromas as they come. Try not to mentally wander anywhere else, just be with that food. Approach meal-making as something fun and inventive. Try new recipes, with foods you don't usually eat. Play your favorite music and make your time in the kitchen something you look forward to. Remember that selecting and preparing food is an important and sacred task. Transforming the way you approach the preparation of food will be one of the most important and positive changes you can make to better your health!

One final thought.....We have lost our ability to connect around the table. In the not-so-distant-past, mealtime provided not only nourishment, it also was a link to relationship. Eating together, with family and friends, engaging in conversation, and lingering over the table, feeds the body and the soul. So take a chance - invite some friends to share a meal you lovingly prepare. It's one of life's most precious gifts.