

# **What, When & Water**

**A Nutrition Guide for  
Weight Loss & Wellness**

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# Prologue

## **Better nutrition results in a better life**

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that over half of the global disease burden is due to non-communicable diseases, mainly associated with the consumption of processed foods. We are at a crossroads where more death occurs from over-nutrition (mainly from tasty, cheap, and convenient foods) than from under-nutrition. That we slowly kill ourselves from instant gratification on a global scale is no surprise when you consider that newborn infants reduce their crying more when their mouth contains a sugar sucker than their mother's breast. The reward response in the brain to sugar, fats, and satiety is powerful...in mice the combination of sugar and fats being as powerful as cocaine. What this means for the WHO and the rest of us is that we have an uphill battle against ourselves. Our survival instinct to consume calories is so strong that we are willing to shorten our lives for a short-term illusion of survival, just like drug use. Without such a strong survival response to calories we would never have been able to detect low levels of calories in wild foods surrounding us in our past; we would have died out. That powerful response is our own undoing as we surround ourselves with foods that, in effect, give us a drug illusion of survival instead of the real thing.

In the grocery store, the cereal aisle is essentially a dessert aisle, oatmeal and yogurt is almost all sugared, the bread is laced with sweeteners, and it's all at low cost. Morbid obesity is on sale in America and much of the developing world. As our grocery stores transition to food-drugstores, we vote with our wallets to keep things going in that direction, just like we vote with our wallets to grow fast food chains. If we voted for salad there would be dispensers on every street corner, but instead they dispense carbonated sugar water to hold us over between sugary fatty meals. As the developing world becomes the entire world, this problem will continue to increase, not decrease, because we will become busier. We know we need a change if we want to stay alive, and we are willing to take some action, but the complete elimination of our cheap tasty food with its powerful drug response is not sustainable for anyone or society as a whole. Fortunately for us, there is much scientific research supporting the view of including unhealthy foods in combination with healthier foods timed properly through the day to show us a path forward. This is good news for me personally since I love the same foods as everyone else. But I also have the same vitality goals as everyone else.

Put more directly to you personally, whether your goals are greater health, energy, weight loss, or all of the above, nutrition goals always target experiencing life with greater vitality. Without a potential pay off in terms of quality of life, our food choices would be based entirely on what we want from moment to moment. We have a conflict between our immediate goals of enjoyment and our long-term goals of vitality (more energy this afternoon, less disease in a decade, longer life in several decades).

Healthy foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables are tasty and can be made convenient and cheap, especially when you consider the reduced medical complications and bills in the long term from reduced disease risk. But much of our food environment supplies us more fast foods than health foods. As a result, if you are not careful about what you put into your body, convenient foods will reduce your vitality noticeably in just a few years, if not immediately after eating a particularly unhealthy meal (such as when you feel tired after lunch). When trying on some clothes you used to wear, or visiting your doctor, you may suddenly discover that you have been paying a higher price than you realized for the cheap tasty convenience foods, and this might increase your motivation to eat healthy. But what is a “healthy diet” and is there a simple way of implementing such a diet into your life in a sustainable way, meaning without giving up the foods you love most so you don’t feel deprived?

In theory, healthy eating is simple: Eat a balance of natural foods, by which I mean unprocessed foods with one ingredient, such as apples, lettuce, chicken, almonds, oats, etc. We all have an innate sense that eating a balance of such foods is good for our body, and that the rise of disease in America and throughout the developing world is due to the rise of processed foods driven by our desires for them. But we are often too busy to act or follow through on our own common sense, and we have gotten used to meals being extra tasty, often with dessert (sugar) mixed in. We like soda, deep-fried food, ribs, hamburgers, fries and ice cream, and often don’t stop eating until we are stuffed or the container is empty. How much of this stuff can we eat without a detrimental impact on our vitality? We don’t want to give unhealthy food up completely because they contribute enjoyment to our lives, but at what point do their effects become more harmful than we are willing to tolerate? The goal of this book is to help you find that balance by engineering your nutrition to improve your vitality using the foods you love, including junk food. This approach puts what you enjoy at the very center of your nutrition, as opposed to just a treat after a tortured day of lettuce. You will find that timing and coordinating food groups dramatically improves their physiological effects, even when including the same unhealthy items we love as before. This approach puts you (your personality, what you like and want you want right now) at the very center of your nutrition, and then engineers the timing and add-ons from there.