If It’s Not Food, Don’t Eat It!

Written by Kelly Hayford, CNC
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No-Nonsense Guidelines for Creating an Eating-for-Health Lifestyle the Whole Family Can Enjoy.

When Brenda first started nutrition and health coaching she was depressed, overweight, extremely fatigued, had hypothyroidism, and severe PMS—among other things. In addition, her 11-year-old son had daily headaches that brought him to tears and frequently prevented him from playing; her 14-year-old daughter had dramatic mood swings and an attitude that was “unbearable” to live with; and her husband had debilitating digestive and eliminative disorders.

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Brenda knew that making dietary changes could be beneficial to your health. She was skeptical, however, as to whether doing so would work for her and her family and the many problems they were facing or not. She reluctantly sought nutritional consulting only because she was concerned about the increasing number of medications they were all taking, and the fact that matters were getting worse, not better.

Although skeptical at first, Brenda was delighted when, in just a few short weeks, she began to see significant improvements in her and her family members’ health. She had been able to stop taking all but one of her medications, had lost excess weight, had abundant energy, and was generally beginning to feel much better.

In addition, the excruciating headaches Brenda’s son had experienced his entire life completely stopped. Her blossoming teen daughter’s emotions had balanced out and she was “almost pleasant” to be around. And, her normally resistant husband was developing an enthusiastic curiosity about the changes taking place in the household cuisine, as his digestive problems had begun to subside as well.

What did Brenda do to achieve such dramatic results so quickly? She simply began to switch from the low-quality, chemical-laden, processed food she had been feeding her family for years, to higher quality, additive-free, natural food she bought at the local health food store. She also began to include a couple servings of fresh produce into their diet each day.

How can this be so? This is because the most popular brands of processed, packaged chemical-laden foods (pseudofoods) so widely consumed today, are injurious to the body. Aside from the obvious diet-related conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, or obesity, few people realize that poor nutrition in general, is the primary cause of all chronic dis-ease, including depression, fatigue, headaches, arthritis, sinus problems, digestive disorders, and more.
Like Brenda and her family, an increasing number of people are becoming aware of this relationship between diet and dis-ease and revamping their diets. Following is a brief overview of five Eating-for-Health Guidelines that can help you and your loved ones stay, or get back on the road to health—no matter what’s ailing you!

1) If it’s not food, don’t eat it! The very definition of “food” is that it is nourishing to the body. Consequently, anything that is not nourishing to the body (pseudofoods containing refined sugars, hydrogenated oils, and chemical additives such as MSG, artificial colorings and sweeteners, etc.) is not food—don’t eat it! And if you do, wait a long time before you do it again so your body can recover.

2) Eliminate or relegate stimulants to rare occasions. Stimulants or extreme foods send the body’s chemistry soaring out of balance causing a variety of symptoms including fatigue, brain fog, attention deficit, irritability, and weight gain. Stimulants include: sugars and other refined carbohydrates (high fructose corn syrup, white refined flour, etc.), refined salt, caffeine, and alcohol. Less stimulants equal more health, more energy, better attitudes, and fewer colds and flu.

3) Eat an abundance of whole, fresh, natural foods. Anything that comes in a box, can, or package is a processed food (with the exception of some unprocessed brown rice or legumes, for example). Whole, fresh, natural foods (preferably organic) such as produce, meats, fish, poultry, whole grains, legumes, and seeds are always the best choice for your family. When you do consume processed foods, natural brand foods are best, as they do not contain toxic, chemical additives.

4) Account for food allergies and sensitivities when making wise food choices. The most common food allergens (wheat, dairy, soy, corn, etc.) are notorious for causing a host of conditions, especially in youngsters, including digestive problems, diarrhea and constipation, sinusitus, recurrent ear infections, learning disabilities, and more. Most people today are allergic or sensitive to one or more of these foods—and most don’t know it! Follow a basic elimination diet to learn which foods may be affecting you or your family.
5) Account for ailments when making wise food choices. There isn’t any condition in the body that can’t be improved by improving your diet. As you start improving the quality of your family’s diet, you’ll all start feeling better and improve the overall quality of your health. Also, learn which foods exacerbate or improve any specific conditions in order to give each individual every opportunity to heal.

When applied consistently over time, these five Eating-for-Health Guidelines produce “amazing” results as Brenda can attest. It’s miraculous what the body can do when fueled properly—energy is restored, excess weight is shed, body systems are regenerated, moods and emotions become balanced, disease is reversed, and headaches, and nagging symptoms in general, disappear.

To help your family regain equilibrium, start with the basics: *if it's not food, don't eat it!*

**The Standard American Diet**

In America between 1980 and 1997, the average per capita consumption of major food commodities per person, per year included:

- 111lbs. red meat
- 580lbs. dairy products
- 29lbs. ice cream
- 53gallons soft drinks
- 66lbs. fats and oils
- 39gallons alcohol
- 150lbs. wheat
- 24 gallons coffee
- 154lbs. sugar

US Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract 1999
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