

NUTRITION – The first of the Eight Treasures

Today we want to consider four simple questions:

WHY do we eat?

WHAT should we eat?

WHEN do we eat?

HOW MUCH should be eat?

1. **WHY** is it necessary for us to study nutrition?

As we take our food every day, day after day, several times a day, have we ever stop for a moment and ask ourselves this question.

Have we ever pondered the fact that we ARE what we eat? Yes, what we put inside this mouth of ours has much to do with the size, weight, composition, and working of our body. More than that, it has to do with our dispositions, our thinking, and our acting.

Food is necessary for survival.

Dr. Stare, one of the leading authorities in nutrition, considers nutrition as the cornerstone of health. It is the first requisite in attaining life. It was for his reason that in eating, and drinking, as in everything else, we need to give thanks to God.

2. The next question we have to answer is **WHAT** shall we eat?

But first, do you know that God gave us original diet for survival? Someone has said: “Grains, fruits, nuts, and vegetables constitute the diet chosen for us by God. These foods, prepared in as simple and natural a manner as possible, are the most healthful and nourishing. They impart a strength, a power of endurance, and a vigor of intellect.” I think I kind of agree with the Writer.

Generally, there are three major groups of food.

The first is food that gives us **ENERGY**. These are foods necessary for us to move, walk, and work.

Examples of these energy-giving foods are rice, bread, sweet potatoes, yams, corn, and all types of noodles, including pasta. Fats and oils are also a very rich source of energy however, they should be used sparingly, for they are the most difficult for the body to digest.

How do we know how many servings of these foods to take everyday? Your size and the kind of work you do helps you to decide that. If you are working in the office, or if your daily activities do not require too much body movement such as lifting, running, etc., then you need only about one serving per meal from this group. On the other hand, a farmer or a carpenter will need to eat more of these foods because their bodies need more energy for all the extra movements they have to make.

Remember that the rule of “enough but not too much” holds here. If you find you are putting on pounds, you need to cut down on your energy foods. You are giving your body more than it needs, and it is storing it as dangerous fat.

The second group of food is called **BUILDING FOODS**.

These are protein-rich foods and work mostly in repairing our worn-out cells and tissues. Most people think of meat, fish, and fowl when they think of these. Actually, these are second class building foods. They are rich in cholesterol and fats which eventually will harm our body. We have much better first-class sources in such things as eggs, milk, nuts, tofu, gluten, cheese and all the many and various kinds of dried beans we can buy.

The third and last group of food which is far more important is known as **PROTECTIVE** foods. By the word “protective” means that these foods give us immunity against diseases. These are the foods rich in vitamins and minerals. Yes, you guessed it right: Fruits and Vegetables!

How much should we eat of these protective foods?

- Vegetables: 2 or more kinds everyday, and one of these should be green leafy, or yellow.
- Fruits: 2 or more kinds everyday. Include one yellow colored fruit (or vegetable) everyday.

3. Our next question is WHEN do we eat?

Some people eat three meals a day. Some eat two meals a day. Some only one meal a day because they are eating the whole day long!

The true answer is simple: Whether we eat two or three meals a day, those meals should be at a regular time, there would be at least 5-6 hours between, and there should be no eating whatever between meals. If supper is taken, it should be early, and very light. It should be taken early enough so that the stomach can get rest while you are sleeping. This means that supper needs to be 3-4 hours before going to bed.

4. Our last question is HOW MUCH? Some people eat like a bird. Some people eat like a pig! Some eat much at one meal, and not so much at other meals. Here is a wonderful guide to remember:

Eat breakfast like a KING

Eat lunch like a QUEEN

Eat supper like a PUAPER (poor man)

This means that for most of us we need to make breakfast a much better meal than it is at the present! A good diet for the day begins with a good breakfast. Breakfast breaks the fast of the hours between supper and the first meal of the day. This is the time when the body is in greater need of food than at any other time. Also, the body is better able to digest and absorb a hearty meal after a good night's rest.

So, let us arrange the morning program so that the family can gather around the table and give thanks for and enjoy a good breakfast. "Well begun is half done," truly applies to the activities of the day when an adequate breakfast is eaten by the entire family.

When a good breakfast is eaten:

1. Between meals snacks will not be needed.
2. The digestive system is not abused.
3. The money spent for snacks can be used wisely for preparing wholesome meals.

Our question also included **MODERATION**. This is an important rule in a proper diet. Over eating clogs the system and dulls the brain. It is another form of gluttony.

The answers to our four questions are all based on sound health principles, and on scientific facts. Wishing you a good and healthy meal!