

Food

Jan de Vries



Mainstream Publishing *eBooks*



Books available from the same author in the *By Appointment Only* series:

Stress and Nervous Disorders (seventh edition)
Multiple Sclerosis (fourth edition)
Traditional Home and Herbal Remedies (fourth edition)
Arthritis, Rheumatism and Psoriasis (fifth edition)
Neck and Back Problems (sixth edition)
Migraine and Epilepsy (fourth edition)
Cancer and Leukaemia (third edition)
Viruses, Allergies and the Immune System (fourth edition)
Realistic Weight Control (second edition)
Heart and Blood Circulatory Problems
Asthma and Bronchitis (second edition)
The Miracle of Life (second edition)

Books available from the same author in the *Nature's Gift* series:

Body Energy (third edition)
Water – Healer or Poison?

Also available from the same author in the *Well Woman* Series:

Pre-Menstrual Tension

Also available from the same author:

Who's Next?
Life without Arthritis – The Maori Way

FOOD

Natures Gift series

Jan de Vries



**MAINSTREAM
PUBLISHING**

EDINBURGH AND LONDON

This eBook is copyright material and must not be copied, reproduced, transferred, distributed, leased, licenced or publicly performed or used in any way except as specifically permitted in writing by the publishers, as allowed under the terms and conditions under which it was purchased or as strictly permitted by applicable copyright law. Any unauthorised distribution or use of this text may be a direct infringement of the author's and publisher's rights and those responsible may be liable in law accordingly.

Epub ISBN: 9781780570938

Version 1.0

www.mainstreampublishing.com

Copyright © Jan de Vries, 1992
All rights reserved
The moral right of the author has been asserted

First published in Great Britain in 1992 by
MAINSTREAM PUBLISHING COMPANY (EDINBURGH) LTD
7 Albany Street
Edinburgh EH1 3UG

ISBN 1 84018 628 3

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without written permission from the publisher, except by a reviewer who wishes to quote brief passages in connection with a review written for insertion in a magazine, newspaper or broadcast

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Truth, Power, Beauty lie in Simplicity.
(saying by Tagore)

Contents

1. Healthy Eating
 2. Fruit and Vegetables
 3. Pulses and Beans
 4. Nuts and Seeds
 5. Starch and Fibre
 6. Fats and Oils
 7. Fluids
 8. Proteins
 9. Carbohydrates
 10. Food Combining
 11. Vitamins, Minerals and Trace Elements
 12. Preservatives
 13. Food Irradiation
 14. Fasting - Detoxifying Diets
 15. Conclusion
- Bibliography

Healthy Eating

ONE MORNING, FULL of enthusiasm, I installed myself in my study to write the first pages of this, my latest book. I had been collecting facts, data and information for a long time and I was particularly keen on the idea of writing this book; as I love food, I was sure that it was going to be a pleasure dealing with this subject. My enthusiasm had increased during the time I had spent collecting and preparing the material for this study, partly because I came across so many misconceptions and incongruities concerning food. Yet it was also heartening to realise how many thoughts I shared with colleagues and other writers on this subject.

By lunchtime I had collated all the material I required from my researches. Without knowing that this was the day I had in mind for starting my book, my wife had prepared my favourite meal. It was actually very plain and ordinary, but delicious: an old-fashioned, typically Dutch meal – a hotpot of mashed potatoes with diced carrots and onions, with lots of lovely gravy; ideal nourishment for a cold winter's day. I thoroughly enjoyed it but once the meal was finished, I realised that I had overindulged! Reclining in an easy chair I began to ponder the risks we run by eating too much: although food definitely plays a vital role in our lives, yet we must not underestimate the danger of its becoming an obsession.

That afternoon I felt too lethargic to leave my comfortable chair and make the effort to move to my study to start writing. Moderation in all things, I was forced to conclude, is a wonderful aim and yet, when something is particularly tasty, it is all too easy to convince ourselves that there is no

harm in a little excess – hence the well-known saying: The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Yet we don't need to look far to recognise the signs and results of obesity. For instance, just consider the high incidence of heart disease in this country. And this is only one of many problems which can arise when the body stores excess food as fat without giving the digestive system a chance of performing its duty. If too much food is eaten it can never be digested or assimilated properly. On such occasions we must conclude that food has become too important in our lives, and our common sense has been overridden by our greed.

Now I have confided in you that I like food, I must stipulate that I like *good* food. In truth, there was nothing wrong with the food I ate that day, as it was a healthy meal. But I over-indulged and by doing so my body was bombarded with too much of a good thing: energy was required and used which should have been channelled in other directions. It was utilised to overcome my lethargy and I wasted time before I could feel comfortable and regain my feeling of well-being: the result was that I lost a good part of that afternoon and pottered about without much achievement. Not succumbing to the temptation of over-eating, however, can sometimes seem almost impossible these days. We only need to look around our well-stocked supermarkets, delicatessen shops, restaurants, work canteens, coffee shops and snackbars to realise that we are spoilt for choice when it comes to food. What is not immediately obvious, however, is that these represent danger. Once we get used to the wrong foods or incorrect eating patterns it takes great determination to break the habit of over-indulgence, which we are all guilty of at times.

I often see this problem in patients who claim to be unable to control their cravings and over-eat on a regular basis. By doing so, they sometimes actually cause themselves discomfort, by unplanned weight gain or indigestion, but they also increase the possibility of contracting heart

disease. The heart in overweight people is overtaxed and has to work harder in order to perform its allotted and essential tasks. If we have partaken of a good meal, and have eaten in moderation, the results will be a feeling of healthy energy. We will feel replenished and ready to continue our work, not as I felt that day, when I felt depleted of the energy I needed to get on with the work I had planned.

The lesson I learnt at the outset of this book was worthwhile and it happened at a time when I could share my experiences with you. It reminded me that this is a widely recognised and experienced weakness, and I can share my concern with you. We must recognise the requirements of a sensible diet. A favourite saying of mine is: 'There is nothing common about common sense', and it is with common sense that we must approach the subject of food, an essential and pleasant part of everyday life. The word 'essential' readily calls up unpleasant images but eating a healthy meal can be just as enjoyable as eating a meal from which our health does not benefit.

Just before starting this book, I had an opportunity to look around Arnhem and Nijmegen, where I spent my youth during the Second World War. This brought back many memories, but I could not help but remember how thin the people were in those days, especially during the last twelve months of the war. In the Netherlands the winter of 1944-45 is always referred to as 'The Hunger-winter', because there was such a shortage of food. Even so, the tenacity and the energy of these people was much greater than you find in people today. I walked round a large supermarket in the town where I lived 48 years ago, and it was then, more than any other time, that I remembered the hunger and the emaciation of the people in the late war years. But when I looked around the supermarket at the shoppers and shop assistants, I knew that yet again the health of many of those I saw was endangered. However, this time it was self-

imposed. During the war, especially during the latter stages, I saw people die of starvation, while today they die of excess. They die not only because of too much, but because the food is too rich and therefore it lacks health-giving properties. It is indeed a changing world. Let us remember the fact that half the world's population suffers from starvation. This is the real reason why I suggest that together we look at the negative and positive aspects of food.

Without doubt, the body is a wonderful and unique machine, an expertly designed piece of equipment. There are endless possibilities and variations in the use and maintenance of this equipment. Inherent characteristics can be destroyed by either giving too little or too much fuel or power, or by providing a power supply from the wrong source, i.e. by eating the wrong foods. Fortunately, in our Western civilisation it is rarely the quantity of food that is at fault, but sadly our food often lacks quality. I never tire of emphasising that we need food that is 'alive'. Until recently relatively little was known about the subject of nutrition or nourishment, but we are learning as we go along. Life is a chemical process. It all depends on the kind of chemicals we put into that process. Any form of life is a constant renewal of cells or cell tissue, while degenerative diseases mean a relentless breakdown of this renewal process. In fact, our health and energy-levels depend on whether we use body builders or body breakers. This is the secret of life. Do we enhance cell renewal or, in our ignorance, do we encourage the erosion of life? The prime factor necessary for a well-functioning chemical process is that of high quality food and our diets should contain a good balance. Particularly in the case of illness and disease, a balanced diet is of prime importance. From the medical viewpoint we can hardly go wrong if we believe in the truth of the simple saying: food must be medicine and our medicine must be food.

Food ought to be eaten while it is fresh and it is important that it can be easily digested and absorbed. Especially in the case of degenerative diseases, the process of absorption is of great importance. Food should be seen as the fuel from which the body derives its energy. To the body, food is what coal is to a fire. The heat which is released in the body when food is being assimilated is spoken of in terms of calories. There are many different opinions on the permitted number of calories advisable to maintain good health and weight. On average it is thought that a person needs 2500-3000 calories a day, but it depends totally on the metabolism of the individual. Therefore I prefer a balanced diet which is worked out on an individual basis, according to one's individual characteristics and circumstances. I have patients with an excellent digestive system, who perform strenuous physical work, and they require in excess of 4000 calories a day. By the same token I have advised others to restrict their calorific intake to 500-800 calories per day. It all depends on the individual's lifestyle and his use and requirement of energy. For more detailed dietary information I have decided to deal with fats, carbohydrates and proteins in separate chapters in this book.

Healthy eating means that we look for what will be advantageous to our own health. It is imperative that this is decided on an individual basis. Let me give you a simple example. The Italian diet contains much pasta, while the average Dutch diet contains a great deal of carbohydrate in combination with fats. This knowledge gives us an immediate indication of the likely cause of the many cholesterol-related problems in these countries. The British are well-known for their sweet tooth, the Germans eat a lot of meat and sausages, whilst the French drink a lot of wine and the Americans have a weakness for beefburgers. Sometimes I sit in amazement in restaurants or hotel dining-rooms watching the eating habits of other diners and I have come to understand how such a large number of people

have actively encouraged their bodies to become diseased. Adults, by not adhering to a sensible diet, actually solicit health problems, and there is no way that they can shirk the responsibility and lay the blame at someone else's door.

Carbohydrates are necessary and so are proteins, because they help the body to function well. But the body also requires food that contains vitamins, minerals and trace elements, and we often see that organically grown foods appear to enhance the body's well-being. Healthy eating is the result of rational and sensible thinking and some basic and essential nutritional knowledge. In my lectures to medical students I sometimes built up a picture of my imaginary house which I call 'The House of Health'. This is topped by the mind, as out of necessity this must be, and often is, stronger than the body.

With great interest I read recently excellent new book called *Save the Earth*, by Jonathan Porritt. Reading through this, I was again horrified how, through the ages, we have set about destroying Mother Earth. I could not help but compare *Save the Earth* to other books on a similar subject, like Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, and the excellent publication by Gunther Schwabe, *Dance with the Devil*. I then realised that many things have changed since the earlier two books were written, and events across the world are progressively eroding human health. One message came across very strongly, and this I noted as I was determined to mention it in this book. Jonathan Porritt confirmed my belief that the mind is stronger than the body and a healthy mind will make a body as strong. Like me, he looked at the survivors. Even in time of famine and hardship, the person with a determined character and inner strength often comes through such experiences a much stronger person. Good examples of such people were the survivors of the concentration camps at the end of World War II. Those who had the will to live often did so against the most dreadful and tragic background of human

suffering. As far back as the days of the Old Testament, it was claimed that a strong mind could often overcome bodily needs. I firmly believe that a positive mind may help to overcome the influences of an incorrect diet. I have seen patients who survived serious diseases such as cancer, because their minds were strong and determined and they were willing and able to adapt to a healthy diet.

Healthy eating is more important now than ever before. When the first people on earth received the message to be fruitful, to multiply and to replenish the earth, they were also told 'to subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth'. As a naturopath I believe the most important aspect of life to be nutrition, and nature has supplied us with an abundance of first-class foods: fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, grains, herbs, etc. I have told you how I visualise my 'House of Health', topped by the mind. I have drawn a picture of a triangular roof for the house and have named the three angular sides as follows: mental, physical, emotional. Concentrating on these three factors should give us a healthy balance. Also, the house rests upon some very important pillars, five in all: nutrition, digestion, elimination, circulation and relaxation - working together these factors will provide an excellent chemical balance.

Healthy eating - how is it possible to emphasise its importance to our younger generation when they look to adults to set them an example? The many excesses witnessed among young children arise because their elders have seen fit to forget the laws of nature. I call upon mothers and grandmothers especially, and implore them to give their little ones 'live' food: forget the candies, sweeties and chocolates, and have a happy and healthy child. I never tire of emphasising this subject as it is very close to my heart. Thanks to my research work on a special project, I have had some close involvement with prisoners and have seen some of the repercussions of an unbalanced diet at

close quarters. Many a criminal career has been launched when, as a child, a whine, a cry or a tantrum has been seen to produce a sweetie, resulting in a brief energy boost. If a child can continue this process somehow or another during its formative years and in later life, the sudden upsurge in energy as a result of adrenaline, sugars, alcohol or drugs can result in a bout of mischief, vandalism, etc., which eventually all too often results in a criminal record. This pattern of behaviour may have occurred during a person's youth and he may have grown out of it during his teens or twenties. If this is not the case he may have all the makings of a hardened criminal. Extensive research work on the aspects of crime related to diet has taken place in the United States, and is still ongoing. Dietary changes in institutions for young offenders, or borstals, have been established and the results are quite amazing.

Nowadays our health is under attack from so many different angles, due to environmental, traumatic, degenerative, genetic, viral and allergic influences. The 'House of Health' is attacked in many ways and yet common sense should allow us to approach this subject from the correct angle. The body triggers an alarm signal when there is something out of sorts. If there is a headache, there is bound to be a cause for it. When there is wind or flatulence this will most likely be due to indigestion, which is a sure sign that something is wrong. Such deductions do not require a great deal of intelligence or medical knowledge. In the case of digestive problems the cause usually is found in the food that passes through the mouth, into the stomach, and through the duodenum. Our food must contain such ingredients as amino acids, glucose and essential fatty acids, which will make sure of good absorption and which, in the intestines, will separate into residual waste or influence the circulation. Blood, liver, heart, and in fact all internal organs, are dependent on healthy and wholesome food. It is an enormously complex chemical process which is involved

here and a process which we should respect and learn to discipline. If we put our minds to it, we ourselves will be the first to realise how much better we feel on a change of diet and an added bonus can be the extra weight loss.

I have worked with people from all walks of life and among many famous people from the medical field, from the sports world and from the entertainment sector. Whenever I have felt that there might be something amiss with an individual's chemical process I have looked for possible problems in the cell renewal process, which would be a sure sign that his or her dietary management was defective. I have advised many people on the use of wholesome food, which must contain the essential nutrients, such as amino acids, glucose, essential fatty acids, enzymes, vitamins, minerals and oxygen. Once I am able to trace the missing factor(s), it is child's play to advise on solving the primary problem. It is simply a matter of introducing food containing the nutrients that are found wanting. With an improved diet the body will be encouraged to dispose more effectively of its waste material, the blood will be clearer, elimination will be improved, and the kidneys and lungs will work to our advantage. Our skin reflects what goes into our bodies and it also shows outwardly how healthy we are.

Sometimes I hear complaints that good food or health foods are so expensive. Let me assure you that they will always compare favourably with the cost of meat, which actually is a poor source of nutrition. Let me stress that in particular the older and the younger generation have a great need of wholesome food, in order to overcome tiredness, depression, poor complexion, digestive and absorption problems. Healthy eating also means regular meal times and proper mastication of our food. Saliva is the best digestive aid there is, but sometimes little or no time is allowed for our meals and food is hurriedly forced down with no proper chewing taking place.

The principles of correct food combining are very important and, even though I have stated this in some of my earlier books, I cannot resist the opportunity to re-emphasise that I have often seen digestive problems which were caused by eating carbohydrates together with proteins. There should be a break in between so that the body can easily digest these different nutrients. To eat a healthy diet is not really too difficult. Mostly it is a matter of mere common sense and the rewards will be more than worth our while. Overall life begins as a desire. To create a new lifestyle is an excellent desire to take better care. Nutrition is a subject that is vital to all of us: we are what we eat, and we are what we drink. The changes in nutritional value over the years have been dramatic, and many of us have lost the way.

When lecturing I hear questions such as: 'Why do you people all contradict each other?' It is then pointed out to me that there are so many dietary books which all lay claim to different methods to benefit one's health. Different speakers with excellent knowledge and qualifications in the field of nutrition are listened to and yet their advice always differs. I am fully aware of the confusing information, but a major yardstick must be that healthy food is food that is kept as natural as possible. We are being brainwashed by advertising in the press and the media, extolling the virtues of more and more cooked meals or half-cooked meals, which are supposed to be the answer to every housewife's prayers. Remember though: for food to be at its best it must be as natural as possible. When people are prepared to change their dietary habits and when they have followed my advice on specific dietary changes, they are delighted at the improvement in their condition. Take the example of my advice to arthritic patients who drink a few cups of coffee every day. When they follow my instructions and indeed stop drinking coffee, even if this is done for a trial period only, they come back and admit their disbelief that such a