Make a Fresh Start with Whole Foods

Transform Your Life with Nourishment

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Make a Fresh Start with Whole Foods

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Introduction

Welcome!

Thank you for visiting Au Naturale Nutrition and downloading your copy of “Make a Fresh Start with Whole Foods”. It is my pleasure and honor to be a part of your life as you transform your wellbeing by harnessing the power of whole-food nourishment.

The purpose of this book is twofold. Firstly, it is to teach my lovely readers (like you) about what whole foods really are and how beneficial they are to your health. That’s the easy part. Secondly, I address the more difficult challenge of how to change your behaviors and habits to make permanent dietary changes that are beneficial to your wellbeing.

What makes a behavior change permanent?

When you value your health! (more than your previous behavior)

The information in this book will hopefully inspire you to truly value your health and make you feel empowered to take your health into your own hands. You will be armed with valuable information and excited to transform your nutrition to greater heights! You will be a powerful example to others and the people you love.

There are no specific meal-plans. Because we all have our own bio-individuality, no one dietary plan is perfect for everyone. Every person, however, can benefit from eating whole foods.

So whether you’re a nutrition newbie, need a refresher, want a dietary overhaul, have a health goal to accomplish, or need some new tools to develop and keep healthy habits, you’re in the right place (and I’m so glad you’re here!) It’s time to make a fresh start with whole foods!
What are your wellness concerns?

Sometimes we just want to feel healthier, more vibrant, stronger, have more energy, or have a sharper mind. Sometimes a medical scare or condition leads to a new perspective on health. Maybe you want to get pregnant or teach your children healthy habits. Maybe you feel you’re aging faster than you should be. When it comes to food, I know many people have weight-loss goals.

Instead of looking at food as the enemy, or thinking of eating as just something you have to do, or not thinking about food at all, I challenge you to instead look at food as nourishment. Food then becomes your friend and source of wellbeing; your path to health and vitality. Improving your nutrition habits can help you achieve your goals. Try using food as medicine before you pop a pill bottle!

Many modern-day chronic diseases like obesity, diabetes, hypertension, mental and behavioral disorders, dementia, cancer, and heart disease are often directly related to a person’s dietary and lifestyle choices.

Choosing high quality, nutrient rich foods has helped countless individuals heal from conditions such as digestive issues, toxicity, sleep disturbances, stress, hormonal imbalances, thyroid disorders, acne and other skin ailments, autoimmune conditions, candida, weight issues, anxiety and depression, headaches, high blood pressure, ADD/ADHD, autism, allergies, asthma, eczema, energy dips, cravings, and arthritis, just to name a few.

It is likely that eliminating refined foods from your diet and replacing them with real, nutrient-rich whole foods will yield healthy benefits. Be proactive now. Avoid or improve chronic ailments, and you can live as healthy as possible. It’s never too late!
Benefits of Good Nutrition

The dictionary defines nutrition as:

_The act or process of nourishing or being nourished; specifically: the sum of the processes by which an animal or plant takes in and utilizes food substances and uses it for growth, metabolism/energy, and repair._

The benefits of good nutrition are numerable and often immeasurable.

Just some include:

- a sense of overall wellbeing and confidence
- a constant, high energy level
- clear, creative, and rational thinking
- weight maintenance
- deep, restorative sleep
- a healthy cardiovascular system
- strong, healthy body tissues
- a hearty immune system and resistance to disease
- low levels of inflammation
- glowing skin
- aging slowly and gracefully
- better digestive health
- healthy genetics and children
- a longer, happier, healthier life

This is certainly what we all want for ourselves and others. Nourishment is possible! The way to be truly nourished is to eat a nutrient-rich, whole-food diet. Let’s discuss what that means...
Choices for Better Health

What does real health mean?

**Health** encompasses the feelings of vibrancy, radiance, strength, resistance, resilience, and well-being. It’s the ability to physically, mentally, and spiritually enjoy your life and those with whom you share it.

The foods you eat can have both positive and negative consequences to your health. Your body contains a complex system of many biochemical processes that happen deep in your cells. The food you eat programs these cells to function. Therefore, every bite of food you take can lead you toward or away from health. It’s up to you!

We feel our healthiest when we make the choice to eat foods that are rich in nutrients that nourish our cells and allow them to function optimally. The human body is very intelligent, and if you supply it with unhealthy, toxic, and depletive foods, you may spend a great deal of time and money in a doctor’s office taking care of your body. If your body receives a rich supply of healthy nourishing foods, it will instead take care of you.

Which foods are the healthiest?

**Whole foods** are simple, complete foods that are found in nature. They are nourishing foods because they’re full of very important nutrients, such as vitamins and minerals. Whole foods contain these nutrients in proper proportions as nature intended. The nutrients work in synergy, helping each other in complex ways to nourish your body. They give your body the ability to run efficiently, repair and regenerate, fight infections, and combat stress.
Whole foods often come right from the garden, farm, or sea such as vegetables, tubers, fruits, nuts, fish, poultry, and meats. Whole foods are perishable, which is why they are often found in the refrigerated sections of the grocery store.

**Should I buy organic?**

Yes! **Organic foods** are plant and animal products certified by the USDA that are produced without pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, bioengineering (GMOs), or ionizing radiation. They are also not treated with antibiotics or growth hormones. The farmers who use organic practices emphasize the use of renewable resources and the conservation of soil and water to enhance the environment for the future. Organic foods are especially nourishing because their micronutrients (vitamins, plus minerals and flavonoids) are much greater in number than in non-organic foods. Buying organic foods reduces your exposure to health-robbing toxins and you show care for the earth, too.

**Which foods are not so healthy?**

**Processed foods** can be tricky. They can be nourishing, or empty in nutritional value, or may even deplete the body if its own nutrients. When foods are altered by simply cooking or juicing, they still may be very nourishing and retain the nutrients found in the whole food. An example is olive oil, which is processed from whole olives, and contains large amounts of plant-derived antioxidants and vitamins E and K. However, the more a food is processed, the greater likelihood it’s lacking the nutrients found in the original whole foods.
**Refined foods** are the most highly-processed foods. They have had the nutrients mechanically or chemically removed and have little or no nutritional value. Unfortunately, they are also quite common in the standard American diet. Refined foods can actually be a negative energy source in your body because your body has to work hard to process them. These depleting “junk” foods rob your body of stored nutrients. Some of the most common refined foods consumed today are white sugar, bleached flour, and industrial oils. They are highly-processed, void of nutrients, and cause many modern day health issues and weight gain.

Processed and packaged foods often contain harmful added chemicals such as preservatives, flavorings, food dyes, chemical sweeteners, harmful hydrogenated fats, synthetic vitamins, and toxic plastics. Your body may not respond favorably to these additives. Processed foods often have a long list of ingredients, many of which may be chemicals that are difficult to pronounce. Processed foods are commonly advertised in TV commercials and are found on shelves in the middle of the grocery store in packaged boxes, bottles, or cans.

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**Ok, so what should I drink?**

**Water, water, water!** Adequate water in the body is vital to health and wellbeing. Many nutrients dissolve in water and are absorbed in the digestive tract. Water is the primary component in all bodily fluids and is involved in nearly every bodily function. Water carries the major electrolytes throughout the body, which are mineral rich ions that contain health promoting and healing properties. In fact, lack of adequate hydration has been linked to many chronic diseases.

Drinking purified water is preferred to other liquids such as those containing stimulating caffeine, excessive sugars such as juices and soft drinks, and alcohol. Herbal teas are also a healthy option.
Know Thy Food

Nutrient Density

Foods that supply generous amounts of one or more nutrients compared to the number of calories they supply are called “nutrient dense”. The more nutrients in your foods, and the wider the variety, the healthier you’ll be.

Macronutrients

Macronutrients are the carbohydrates (carbs), fats, and proteins found in varying proportions in your food.

**Carbohydrates** are used by your body for quick-burning fuel. Fiber is a type of complex carb that slows down the burning process.

**Fats** are a slower burning fuel for your body. They also provide lubrication for your body, make up most of your brain, and help the body make hormones.

**Proteins** build the entire structure of your body.

Every meal should include nutrient-dense carbohydrates, fats, and proteins (in a balance that feels healthy to you) to help keep you feeling nourished, energetic, satiated, and to keep your blood sugar levels balanced and cravings in check.

The balance of macronutrients and overall dietary needs vary for each individual. They may depend on many factors including age, genetics, present health status, weight goals, hormone levels, activity level, muscle mass, stress level, and health goals.
Micronutrients

These are the substances your body needs to carry out its many important functions. There are thousands of them that contribute to health. A wide variety of natural, fresh foods is vital in order to obtain these micronutrients.

**Vitamins** serve as catalysts in your body that speed up chemical reactions. They are essential for growth, vitality, and health. They are helpful in digestion, elimination, and resistance to disease.

**Minerals** are elements that come from the earth’s soil and water. They make up a part of your body’s enzymes, which are necessary for the production of energy and your metabolism. They facilitate the transfer of nutrients across cell membranes with assistance from vitamins.

**Amino acids** are the building blocks your body uses for function, growth, and repair. They come from eating protein. They can help you feel vibrant and strong. All animal protein sources should be from animals raised in a healthy, natural environment.

**Fatty acids** are the primary components of fats and oils. They make up every outer cell membrane in your body. They are also needed for a strong immune system, managing inflammation, oxygen transport, brain function, skin health, energy production, and much more.

**Phytonutrients** are responsible for the color, taste, smell, and unique characteristics of plants and botanicals. They are found in fruits, berries, vegetables from the land and sea, herbs, spices, sprouts, fresh juices, and green powders. “Phyto” means: plant. These plants and botanicals provide unique, potent, medicinal effects. They build resistance to disease and aging by affecting your immune system, inflammation, detoxification, and your hormones.
Refined Foods to Eliminate

Need a little push? I encourage you to make this a 14 or 21-day challenge for yourself. Maybe do it with a friend, a spouse, or as a family. Teach your kids about nutrition during this period and set a good example. Transition slowly or jump right in. It’s up to you.

Before the modern industrial age, most of the refined foods and chemicals you’ll eliminate didn’t even exist. So, there’s no reason you can’t make whole foods a complete lifestyle – forever.

Refined Grains and Packaged Snacks

Refined grains act just like sugar in your body and have no nutritional value. In fact, grains also have components called “anti-nutrients” that can bind to minerals like zinc, calcium, and iron, preventing your body from using them properly. Many foods that claim to contain “whole” grains are actually mostly refined. Gluten-free alternatives are usually refined, also.

Eliminate:
breads  muffins  scones  croissants
tortillas  burritos  tacos  English muffins
corn chips  pancakes  waffles  pasta
pita bread  bagels  danishes  donuts
 crackers  cannoli  cakes  burger buns
 pizza  cereals  Pop-Tarts®  cookies
pretzels  chips  breakfast bars  etc.
**Better Alternatives:** You may feel the need for a starch, especially after a workout. This is the time to eat whole-food carbohydrates:

- yams
- rice
- potatoes
- sweet potatoes
- beans
- legumes
- squash
- sprouted grains
- carrots
- onions
- beets
- quinoa

plus many, many more fruits and vegetables!

Try baked goods made from flax meal, coconut, or almond flour.

**Concerns:** You may already anticipate that going without refined grains and refined packaged foods will be difficult. They may make up a large part of your diet. Deep down you probably know that these foods can be highly addictive and cause weight gain and poor health. The sugars and the synthetic chemicals they contain can make you continuously crave for more, even though your health could suffer as a result. Try distracting yourself; drink water, eat a healthier alternative, or go for a walk. Once you conquer the cravings, you’ll feel less and less hooked on junk foods. You can do it!

**A Note on Gluten:** Gluten is a protein found in the grains wheat, barley, and rye. Gluten inflames and damages the gut lining and allows toxins to enter your bloodstream. It’s associated with many underlying, chronic conditions both inside and outside the digestive tract – including people who DON’T have celiac disease! Even “whole” grains contain gluten.

If you have been wondering if you might benefit from a diet without gluten, challenge yourself to eliminate gluten for 21 days. This is a perfect opportunity for you to try it out! Many people report amazing (and fast) health benefits from eliminating gluten. Beware of hidden sources of gluten in many, many products. A real gluten-free challenge is 100% gluten free (no moderation here).
Refined Sugars

There are dozens of types of sugars used in processed foods; sometimes several in the same product! Refined sugar is the epitome of an “empty calorie.” Your body has to expend energy and stored nutrients to process it. Sugar causes dramatic blood sugar spikes and crashes, which can lead to cravings, weight gain, and energy slumps… a recipe for a health disaster!

Hidden sugars are prolific, especially in processed foods. Read ingredient labels for hidden added sugars in sauces, spice packets, condiments, peanut butter, juices, alcohol, fast foods, diet foods, bouillon cubes, hot dogs, lunch meats, canned soups, vitamins, and prepared foods.

When it comes to sugar and sweeteners, the amount you eat may be even more important than the type you eat. They all can raise blood sugar, which causes inflammation, creates energy and metabolism issues, suppresses the immune system, and harms your health. Mixing sugars with foods that contain fiber, fats, and proteins can lessen sugar’s health-depleting effects.

Eliminate:

- sugar (white & brown)
- barley malt
- brown rice syrup
- high fructose corn syrup
- corn sweetener
- corn syrup
- agave nectar
- dextrin
- dextrose
- fruit juice concentrate
- invert sugar
- polydextrose
- glucose
- sucrose
- turbinado sugar
- and many, many others...
sugars to eliminate cont. ...

- Foods ending in –ol, -ose, and -ide are sugars.
- Artificial chemical sugars like Truvia®, Splenda®, and aspartame, to name a few, often found in diet sodas, are also refined and should be eliminated.
- Any beverage that contains sugar or refined syrup is refined.

**Better Alternatives:** Some natural sugars (to be used sparingly):

- molasses
- real Stevia
- coconut sugar
- real maple syrup
- dates
- raw honey
- sucanat
- xylitol (non-GMO)
- luo han guo (real monk fruit)
Every cell in your body has a lipid (fat) layer around it, so the saying “you are what you eat” is really true when it comes to fats. Some are very healthy and some are definitely not. Make a fresh start with your fats!

The benefits of healthy fats are numerous. Good fats are a wonderful source of long-burning fuel for your muscles, particularly the heart. Your brain is mostly fat; it keeps your thinking clear, helps regulate healthy hormone levels, and puts you in a good mood. Fats allow you to absorb nutrients from food, especially vitamins A, D, E, and K. Healthy fats make your complexion glow. Fats keep you feeling full after a meal. Contrary to popular belief, healthy fats will most likely NOT make you gain weight – just healthier. It’s time to think of healthy fats as your good friend.

Unhealthy fats and oils, on the other hand, will oxidize (degrade) quickly. Rust on a car is oxidation. That’s what can happen to your cells when you eat unhealthy fats! They contain excessive Omega-6 fats which cause inflammation in your body (and inflammation is the root cause of chronic disease). Most prepared, packaged foods and restaurant foods are cooked in these oxidation-prone oils.

**Eliminate:** These oils have been refined by an industrial process, which involves chemical extraction and deodorization.

- margarine
- shortening
- canola/rapeseed oil
- vegetable oil
- grapeseed oil
- sunflower oil
- rice bran oil
- safflower oil
- corn oil
- soybean oil
- cottonseed oil
- hydrogenated oil & partially hydrogenated oil (trans fats)
Better Alternatives: The healthiest fats and oils have labels stating they are organic, unrefined, extra-virgin, or cold-pressed.

Fats from plants sources include:

- coconut oil
- palm oil
- cocoa butter

Fats from animal sources include:

- butter
- lard
- tallow/suet
- ghee

These are healthy options if they are from healthy animals. They are rich in heart-healthy Omega-3 fats.

Fats for WARM/COLD uses include:

- macadamia oil
- olive oil
- sesame oil
- avocado oil
- flax oil
- peanut oil

While healthy, these particular fats are more prone to oxidation and should never be heated to their smoke point. Cold is better.

Fats from healthy food sources include:

- full-fat dairy
- eggs yolks
- avocados

Nuts and seeds (not roasted in unhealthy oil)

Fatty fish like wild-caught salmon and sardines

Grass-fed beef, lamb, and other wild game
Refined Dairy

Most modern dairy is derived from unhealthy, antibiotic- and hormone-supplemented cows; then stripped of all nutrients.

**Eliminate:** Pasteurized, homogenized, refined dairy, including: milk, cheese, yogurt, cottage cheese, ice cream, and frozen yogurt.

**Better Alternatives:** Full-fat & organic dairy is better. Grass-fed, raw dairy is best (if you tolerate it). Try goat’s milk. Coconut milk, almond milk, and other non-dairy milks are good option, too.

Refined Table Salt

**Eliminate:** The white table salt that we commonly use is refined and processed, which removes its lovely trace minerals. After salt is refined, several chemicals are added, including aluminum and ammonium, to extend its shelf life. Prepared foods are loaded with refined salt.

**Better Alternatives:** Unrefined Himalayan & natural sea salts are very different because they still have all of their lovely natural minerals from the sea. Consider it a health food. Switch to the pink salt.

What about Alcoholic Drinks?

Technically, yes, beer, wine, and other alcoholic drinks are refined. Some are much more sugary than others. Many contain gluten. They also prevent your liver from detoxifying properly. However, some drinks, like dark red wines, have healthy properties. “Making a Fresh Start with Whole Foods” is meant to be a positive experience. So, perhaps cut down to only imbibing on weekends, if needed, and make smarter choices. (Adults only!)
Guidelines for Eliminating Refined Foods

Anything sold in a can, box, or bag should probably be eliminated.

*Eat WHOLE fresh foods that are from a farm, not a factory.*

Foods fortified with added synthetic vitamins have been stripped of nature’s intended nutrients in their proper proportions.

*Allow yourself the luxury of enjoying food as nature intended.*

Any food with an ingredient list that sounds like a chemistry experiment should be eliminated.

*Eat REAL foods, not “food-like” substances or “Frankenfoods”.*

Ban foods with additives such as flavors, colors, waxes, preservatives, or artificial anything.

*REAL foods are naturally colorful and flavorful. They’re perishable and will usually be found around the perimeter of the grocery store.*
Foods with TV commercials are usually refined. Don’t fall for marketing ploys such as “diet”, “lite”, “low-fat”, or “sugar-free”. These foods have synthetic chemicals added to replace what was taken out.

*Put your dollars toward buying WHOLE foods from the local farmers in your community, not toward an advertising budget.*

Foods purchased from a drive-thru should be eliminated.

*Nature’s fast foods include vegetables, fruits, nuts, and seeds.*

*HOME-MADE from WHOLE food is better.*

Plates loaded with refined foods are usually boring beige.

*Give up “the white stuff”. Eat a rainbow of colors.*

Refined foods are void of nutrients. Refined foods can cause a decline in your health over time. Junk foods cause junk moods.

*Of utmost importance is FOOD QUALITY.*

*Healthy WHOLE foods nourish your body and mind.*
Which Foods are the Most Important to Buy Organic?

The Environmental Working Group (www.ewg.org) makes a list every year of “The Dirty Dozen”, which contains the produce most highly contaminated with pesticides. These can be exceptionally toxic to the nervous system. In contrast, the EWG’s list of “The Clean 15” outlines the least contaminated produce.

Eating any fruits and vegetables is much better than not eating them at all. Be sure to wash all produce thoroughly.

### The Dirty Dozen
(best to buy organic)

- Apples
- Celery
- Cherry tomatoes
- Cucumbers
- Grapes
- Hot peppers
- Nectarines (imported)
- Peaches
- Potatoes
- Spinach
- Strawberries
- Sweet bell peppers
- Plus...
- Kale/collard greens*
- Summer squash*

*pesticides of special concern

### The Clean 15
(ok to buy non-organic)

- Asparagus
- Avocado
- Cabbage
- Cantaloupe
- Corn
- Eggplant
- Grapefruit
- Kiwi
- Mangos
- Mushrooms
- Onions
- Papayas
- Pineapples
- Sweet peas (frozen)
- Sweet potatoes
# Refined to Whole Food Substitutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instead of...</th>
<th>Try...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>margarine</td>
<td>real butter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corn, canola, or soy oil</td>
<td>olive oil or coconut oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sugar or corn syrup</td>
<td>honey or maple syrup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>caged eggs</td>
<td>organic or free range eggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feed-lot meats</td>
<td>organic or grass fed meats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conventional produce</td>
<td>organic or local produce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>farmed fish</td>
<td>wild caught fish</td>
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<tr>
<td>processed meats</td>
<td>preservative free, uncured meats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>canned &amp; boxed foods</td>
<td>fresh foods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pre-packaged or fast food</td>
<td>home cooked meals</td>
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<tr>
<td>refined white flour</td>
<td>coconut or almond flour, flax meal</td>
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<tr>
<td>dinner rolls</td>
<td>extra vegetables</td>
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<tr>
<td>wraps &amp; tortillas</td>
<td>whole romaine leaves</td>
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<tr>
<td>sandwich bread</td>
<td>Ezekiel/sprouted grain bread</td>
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<tr>
<td>hamburger buns</td>
<td>portobello mushrooms</td>
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<tr>
<td>pasta</td>
<td>zucchini noodles</td>
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<tr>
<td>breakfast cereals</td>
<td>homemade granola</td>
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<tr>
<td>instant oatmeal</td>
<td>steel-cut or old-fashioned oats</td>
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<tr>
<td>processed peanut butters</td>
<td>100% natural nut butters</td>
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<tr>
<td>bakery sweets</td>
<td>fruit slices and berries</td>
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<td>soft drinks</td>
<td>mineral water or unsweet tea</td>
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<tr>
<td>table salt</td>
<td>real Himalayan or sea salt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spice packets</td>
<td>fresh herbs and organic spices</td>
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<tr>
<td>canned broth</td>
<td>homemade broth</td>
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<tr>
<td>canned fruits/tomatoes</td>
<td>fresh fruits &amp; jarred tomatoes</td>
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<tr>
<td>low-fat dairy</td>
<td>organic, full-fat, whole dairy</td>
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<tr>
<td>refined milk</td>
<td>coconut/algmond milk (unsweetened)</td>
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<tr>
<td>chips and crackers</td>
<td>raw nuts, vegetable sticks, kale chips</td>
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<tr>
<td>cookies &amp; brownies</td>
<td>organic dark chocolate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>croutons</td>
<td>nuts, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>soy sauce</td>
<td>organic tamari sauce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>store bought salad dressing</td>
<td>homemade dressing with olive oil</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Overall, Remember this General Rule:

If you wonder if a food is refined... it probably IS!

You may have noticed that many of the foods that you thought were healthy are actually refined foods. These might include foods labeled “diet”, “lite”, “fat-free”, “low in saturated fat”, “with real whole grains”, “heart healthy”, “fortified”, “all natural”, and other slick (and unregulated) marketing techniques.

**What the labels should say:**

“Loaded with Chemicals”

“Full of Disguised Sugar”

“Highly Inflammatory”

“Engineered so You’ll Become Addicted to This”

“Utterly Toxic”

“We Care More about Our Profits than Your Health”

“We Replaced Natural Vitamins with Synthetic Chemicals”

“This Will Be Detrimental to Your Kids’ Development”

**Whole foods have whole-food ingredients!**
Organic Leeks $2.79/lb

Organic Satsuma 3.59/lb

Organic Pink Lady Apple 3.79/lb
Buying and Cooking Strategies

Now that you understand that there is a direct relationship between the food you eat and your health and wellbeing, you can put this new knowledge into practice!

Practical Matters

Avoid the aisles, which contain mostly refined foods, and shop the perimeter of the grocery store.

Load up your shopping cart with a colorful array of fruits, vegetables, and fresh herbs. Bonus points for organic!

Shop your Farmer’s Market for the freshest in-season produce.

Choose a variety of meats. More bonus points for grass-fed or organic! Pick lean cuts if non-organic. Get to know your butcher. Learn where your food comes from. Try nutrient-rich organ meats.

As far as lunchmeats and bacon, uncured are healthier options. Choose nitrite and BHA/BHT-free prepared meats.

Eggs are a wonderfully nutrient rich food. Organic and cage-free are best.

Try grass-fed butter; you’ll see what you’ve been missing!

Nuts and seeds make great snacks. To avoid refined oils, it’s best to buy them raw and roast in your home oven. 350 degrees for about 12 minutes. Don’t forget the sea salt!
Sometimes healthy options cost more. It’s better to spend the money on quality food than spending it on doctors’ bills!

Because whole foods are perishable, you may need to shop more often. Many whole foods freeze well.

Sip 1-2 tsp. of organic apple cider vinegar in a glass of water to help with digestion of foods.

As always, avoid foods you may be allergic or sensitive to.

**Buying Packaged Foods**

Some packaged foods can be healthy and contain whole food ingredients. However, you should scrutinize anything that’s not straight from the farm. **READ INGREDIENT LABELS CAREFULLY.** Choose packages that have as few ingredients as possible; perhaps 5 or less. If you can’t pronounce or identify the chemical ingredients, put it back on the shelf.

With a little detective work, you will probably be able to find healthy options for lunchmeats (uncured & nitrite free), sausages, pasta sauce, salsa, flax crackers, nut butters, spices, and salad dressings in the health-food section of your grocery store. For example, Bragg® salad dressings and Larabars® have whole food ingredients.
Cooking

Preparing whole foods at home can take longer than heating up or buying ready-made foods. Allow time. You’re worth it!

Waking up just 10 minutes earlier to prepare a nutritious breakfast will reap rewards throughout the day.

Get your family involved in meal preparation. It’s a great way to bond and teach them about the benefits of eating whole foods.

Chop and dice lots of ingredients at one time. Store for later.

Use a slow cooker. Make dinner in the morning!

Make batch meals. Double, triple, or quadruple recipes. Freeze for later meals, or when you’re too tired or busy to cook.

Invest in a good knife set, iron skillets, and other kitchen tools to foster a fantastic cooking experience.

Use cooking as a creative outlet. Alter your old recipes into new, healthy, whole-food versions.

Experiment with new ingredients, food combinations, cultural foods, and spices.

Take a cooking course to learn new techniques.

Remember to defrost meat for dinner by putting it in the fridge the night before. Planning is key!
**Your plate**

Vegetables (from both the land and sea) are sometimes ignored, but they pack an exceptionally big punch when it comes to nutrition. They’re some of the most nutrient-dense foods and are quite rich in antioxidants. Herbs and berries, too. Ideally, 2/3 of your plate should be vegetables at every meal. Your plate will be a rainbow of natural colors!

Five (5) total servings of vegetables per day is fantastic and your health will benefit. Even more is outstanding! Try new varieties; you’ll probably love them. Vegetables can be eaten raw or cooked, which is great. Add some healthy fats, too, like real butter or almond butter, to help absorb the nutrients in your vegetables.

**Breakfast**

There is no hard & fast rule that says you have to eat “breakfast food” for breakfast. Anything goes! Even still, eggs are one of nature’s most perfect foods and can be made in many ways. Try scrambling them with leftovers from last night’s dinner. High-quality, uncured bacon is always delicious. And don’t forget the fruits and veggies!

There are many yummy recipes on Au Naturale Nutrition for muffins, waffles, and coffeecake. They’re all made with whole-food ingredients. They can be a part of a healthy breakfast (or a nice snack), but are not a meal in themselves. Add protein, too.

Don’t skip breakfast. A good breakfast revs up your metabolism and gives your body and brain energy to conquer the day ahead. Skipping breakfast leads to making poor food choices when you’re ravenous later on.
**Lunch**

Leftovers make a fast and easy lunch. Bring them to work and save lots of money. Or, have a second breakfast. Salads are a great option, too. Combine some protein, the chopped veggies in your fridge, and some olive oil and you have an easy feast!

A tip: real olive oil solidifies in the refrigerator. Test yours. If it stays liquid after a day, it’s been combined with some other poor quality refined oil. Return it or throw it out.

**Dinner**

Dinnertime is when you need not feel rushed and can enjoy quality time in the kitchen. You can make precious memories with your kids and teach them healthy whole-food habits and lead by example. Or, make it real quality time with your spouse.

Be mindful and savor the experience of the whole meal preparation process. Smell and taste the spices, feel the water on your hands, listen to the knife chop. Appreciate how your food nourishes you and how amazing your body is.

Try new recipes, new seasonings, new meats, and new foods from different cultures. Take recipes that are family-favorites and make healthier versions of them.

A little planning ahead is what’s vital to eliminate dinner-time stress. Make a list of 10 dinner recipes that you can choose from quickly. Always try to have their primary ingredients on hand.
Snacks

Keep healthy snack foods on hand for a mid-morning or mid-afternoon energy boost. They are also good as a healthy appetizer before a meal; keeping you from choosing a less healthy option when you’re getting hungry.

Absolutely any food can be a snack. Vegetables and fruits are fantastic and should be your #1 choice. Hard-boiled eggs are great, too. Some store bought ideas are: Larabars®, organic beef jerky, nuts and nut butters, pumpkin seeds, pickles, raw cheese, flaxseed crackers, and organic dark chocolate.

Snacking is often done as mindless eating. Don’t let this happen to you. Portion out your snacks on a plate or in a bowl (don’t bury your hand in a bag of chips.) Savor every bite and be present with your food.

Going out

Eating at home is usually the healthiest option and where you should cook and enjoy the majority of your meals. However, eating out is certainly a pleasure of life and it’s always fun to have someone create a gorgeous meal for you.

Restaurants can be tricky because you’re rarely in control of the ingredients in your food. Most places use refined oils, like soybean or canola, in the kitchen. Many spice mixes have hidden chemical ingredients, gluten, and sugars. Be very clear to your server about your dietary wishes. Have them check the ingredient labels in the kitchen for you. Use the word “allergy” (fib) if you have to. When eating out, skip the dinner rolls or tortilla chips (both refined and probably cooked with unhealthy oils) and ask for extra vegetables instead. If your restaurant is a chain, they likely have a website with the menu’s ingredient list. Take a look before you go so you can make an informed healthy meal choice.
Forming Good Habits

Forming good habits can be the key to your success. However, changing habits is very difficult. Here are some great tips on how you can succeed in forming healthy habits and achieve your health goals.

- **Your environment plays a big part in your success.** Visual clues impact your behaviors. Remove any items (like refined foods) from your home, or quarantine them. Put healthy foods front-and-center.

- **Focus on what you CAN have vs. what you can’t have.** You can have all the REAL foods you want, it’s the fake and “food-like” refined products you choose not to eat! The word “can’t” is restrictive. Instead use the word “don’t”, which is empowering.

- **If you don’t have the desired habits pinned down yet, work on the related goals first.** Little by little, build the identity of the person you want to be by achieving the goals you set. Every bite you take can either help or harm your health.

- **Building habits forms who you are.** This is very true when it comes to nutrition, because you are what you eat!

- **Don’t compare yourself to others in attaining goals.** Did you eat healthier today than yesterday? Are YOU on the path toward health? That’s what matters.

- **Do not set goals with unrealistic expectations.** Don’t strive for perfection, because you’d be setting up a no-win situation. Give yourself a break. Don’t be overly strict in your eating plan that you miss out on the joys of life!
Follow the 85/15 Way of Eating

The 85/15 way of eating is a low-stress method you can use to achieve a healthy state of physical wellbeing. It focuses on eating a nutrient rich diet, yet also allows for some wiggle room in your diet for unhealthy” junk” foods like refined foods.

The numbers 85/15 are percentages representing the amounts of nourishing foods (85% healthy) and depleting foods (15% unhealthy) you allow in your diet.

There is NO need to ask, “Is _____ allowed?”

The theory is that if the large majority of foods in your diet are nourishing and whole, then having a small amount of depleting refined foods will not do much harm because your body will have ample stored reserves of vitamins, minerals, and enzymes.

This may eliminate any feelings of deprivation, guilt, compulsions, or stress associated with your food choices. The 85/15 way of eating allows room for exceptions on special occasions and alleviates feelings of social isolation due to diet choices.

Life is about enjoyment!

Little by little...
Try to increase your daily percentage of healthy whole foods.
The Non-Stressful Way to Adopt a Healthy Diet

A tier system works because it helps you from feeling overwhelmed by new nutritional information. It also helps you to reconnect with the pleasures and appreciation of good, wholesome food and respects your unique health needs and goals.

Progress though the tiers at your own pace.

Tier One: Clear Out the Debris

In this crucial first step, you set goals, make a commitment, and strive for self-accountability. Your read food labels now and eliminate any zero-nutrition foods from your diet, especially items like trans fats, chemical sweeteners, and MSG. This may mean confronting some addictions and attachments. In tier one, you aim to send a clear message to your body about what is & is not acceptable regarding the food you eat. Make small substitutions, such as tea for soda and butter for margarine. Start adding in more servings of fruits and vegetables.

Tier Two: Creative Substitutions

In tier two, you really focus on food quality in making lateral food substitutions and use creative ways to replace the foods you eliminated with more nutrient dense foods. Here you will really break some old habits, but you will not feel deprived, because the food you choose is better, healthier, and tastier than what you left behind. In this tier you may try new foods, cook more at home, and expand your cooking skills.
Tier Three: A Deeper Commitment

The next step involves moving beyond mere substitutions toward finding more options, increasing diversity in your diet, and a more entertaining and interesting diet. Here is where your sense of adventure and excitement are the keys to your success. Shopping for foods becomes more fun as you try new foods and really, truly appreciate the nutrient value in the foods you buy.

Your consumption of high quality, antioxidant rich fruits and vegetables continues to grow. Here you appreciate the phytonutrients, vitamins, minerals, and enzymes and how they nourish your body. You may find your palate is fine tuned to the subtle flavors in whole foods. You expect your food to be of the utmost quality and find true value in choosing organic substitutions. You are well on your way to a nutrient-dense diet.

Tier Four: Subtle Fine Tuning

In this stage, you learn and appreciate that the process toward a healthy diet is ongoing. It involves ever-fine-tuning your choices, and paying attention to the little details that make a big difference. You are quite confident now and do not let your standards slide. But a little treat now and then doesn't derail or stress you. You follow the 85/15 rule. You're serious about your new health status and way of eating; it's not vigilant, but instead a source of ease and pleasure.

As the months go by, you begin to understand how to “eat with the seasons”, honoring the shifting availability of foods. Now, the small touches in your diet involve increases in nutrient density with traditional foods not commonly heard of in the standard American diet. Nutritional density is your new lifestyle now, and you appreciate the benefits of your hard work and reap the health rewards.

You’re a health rockstar!!
The Daily Journal

A daily journal is important when making a dietary change. It’s instrumental in order to develop good habits and recognize unhealthy habits. Note any trends, too.

Journaling keeps you mindful of your health goals, which brings greater success! When you “Make a Fresh Start with Whole Foods”, your goal is to replace many of the health-depleting refined foods in your diet with nutrient-rich whole foods.

Each journal page is for 2 days. Make copies for yourself & keep in a convenient place.

Writing in Your Journal

- On the left side, keep track of the FOODS you eat for meals, snacks, and beverages. After the food, write “W” for whole, and “R” for refined foods.

- On the right side, write about your HABITS: How you feel right before OR right after you eat (bored, stressed, tired, happy, satisfied, guilty, etc.) OR why you ate (“not hungry but felt like eating: “out with friends who offered me dessert”, “time of day”, etc.)

- On the bottom, jot down anything notable regarding changes in your: Mood, Digestion, Energy, and Cravings.

- Write down any other comments, questions, successes, or concerns.

** Please take the time to use the journal **
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<th>Habits (HOW you felt, WHY you ate)</th>
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**Will this help with daily detox or weight loss?**

**Odds are high that it will!**

A standard American diet, with a high amount of additives and processed foods, will produce a large amount of toxic waste that gets stored in your liver and fat cells, year after year. This causes real illness and disease and can exacerbate weight issues.

However, when you focus on a whole food diet that is dense with nutrients to feed your body, mind, and spirit, improvements in health and weight loss often happen naturally. As a bonus, you're less inflamed, less stressed, your thinking is clear, and you feel happier. Nourishment is the best feeling in the world!

So, if you've been eating a standard American diet, when you “Make a Fresh Start with Whole Foods”, your body may undergo a natural detoxification process as your body eliminates toxic chemicals. Sometimes you may feel worse before you feel better.

All the nutrient-rich whole foods you eat, with lots of fiber-rich veggies, and drinking plenty of water will help the detox process along and keep things moving. Phytonutrients from green plant foods help to boost your detox pathways. Adequate protein is also needed to supply the building blocks for our detoxification system, especially the most critical antioxidant, glutathione. (That’s why strict juice cleanses are a bad idea.)

As you become healthier, or lose weight, you make need to consult with your personal physician about changing the dosages of any prescription medications you take.
Final Words of Wisdom

When you “Make a Fresh Start with Whole Foods”, it’s meant to be a pleasurable and nourishing experience. Now is a time to have fun experimenting with your food choices and re-examining your relationship with food. This will be an opportunity to get to know yourself better by listening to your body’s cues.

STRESS can do even more damage to your body than a poor diet. Stress causes inflammation; inflammation causes disease. Do NOT stress about having a “perfect” diet; just do your very best to reduce the amount of refined foods you eat. Eat slowly and mindfully. Enjoy your meals in a relaxed atmosphere to digest properly. Allow your body to absorb the nutrients to restore and heal.

Be ready for people to treat you differently, because you will be different (and improved)! You’ll be breaking old habits and making different choices, so expect some push-back from others. Have a game plan for when it happens. Ask yourself: "Do I really need to explain my choices to anyone?" YOU know what's best for YOU!

Have patience. If you’re trying to reverse years of damage from an unhealthy diet, that can’t be reversed overnight. But, the little changes you make every day will add up to big improvements over time. If you take a step backwards, recognize it and move forward again. Life is filled with new beginnings!

Please return to my website regularly for many more informative health articles and delicious recipes. And, if you enjoyed this book, please encourage your friends to download a copy at AuNaturaleNutrition.com. Thank you, my lovelies!

Jenny
Websites with more Information

AuNaturaleNutrition.com
A personal favorite! ;-) 

BalancedBites.com
Fantastic nutrition guides, blog, recipes, and podcast.

WestonAPrice.org
Extensive information about traditional diets.

MarksDailyApple.com
Holistic lifestyle and natural fitness techniques. Great Q&A.

Re-FindHealth.com
Articles about holistic wellness by medical professionals.

MetabolicEffect.com
Hormone & fat loss advice using a whole foods approach.

WellnessMama.com
Great blog about wellness and raising healthy kids.

TheWholeJourney.com
A holistic health coach practice in CA. Great videos.

ThePaleoMom.com
Excellent health research & articles, recipes, autoimmune protocols.

ElenasPantry.com, AgainstAllGrain.com, NomNomPaleo.com
Recipe websites for a whole foods lifestyle.
Reference List


About the Author

Jenny Yelle, MHNE, is a Holistic Wellness Educator with a degree in Health and Nutrition Education from Hawthorn University. Jenny brings glamour to the realm of holistic wellness and believes in taking a nutritional approach to beauty and aging gracefully. Her wish is that everyone can feel and look beautiful, and live a beautiful, vibrant life; simply by using the power of nutrient-rich foods and living a natural lifestyle. Radiating Beautiful Health!

Jenny is also the founder of the popular website Au Naturale Nutrition, where she shares her delicious whole-food recipes and healthy living articles. Jenny lives in the Nashville, TN, area with her husband. Together they have raised two children. Jenny enjoys yoga, community volunteer work, and is an avid tennis player.

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