



## *Are Your Food Choices ... Nourishing or Depleting?*

### *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.

### *What kinds of 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 of 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.

### ***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.