

Eat yourself HEALTHY

By Linda Powers

Hippocrates said "Let food be your medicine." Could there be a place for such a comment in the everyday life of mainstream America? How about in the lives of Baby Boomers living on the Eastern Shore of Maryland? Magazines are full of articles on nutrition that run the gamut from the latest "superfoods," to the best way to get rid of belly fat. However when the word "nutrition" is used today, most people think "weight." Many people do not make the connection that nutrition is very much related to other health issues including aging.



Linda Powers

A look at the relationship between foods consumed and overall health does reveal a connection and Baby Boomers especially would be wise to take note. Consider for a moment that the foods one consumes are a huge factor in determining that person's activity level as well as how good that person feels.

Bob Green, trainer to the rich and famous, recently said during his radio show, "Without health and fitness, a person cannot live a fulfilled life." Is this a modern revision of Hippocrates? If it is, then perhaps the common man/woman would want to know which foods affect the body positively and which ones negatively.

As the body ages, it is not uncommon to see people develop sluggish metabolisms. That becomes abundantly

clear as belt buckles grunt and pants of preference change to those with elastic bands that keep stretching. But the habits and the foods that helped a person pack on the pounds are also doing something to that body's internal organs, joints and skin. Even those who are not overweight may be dealing with arthritic pain, high cholesterol and blood pressure and spiked blood glucose levels. So what are some options? Health professionals generally mention two; medication and/or a change in lifestyle. But there are downsides to both. Medications may cause side effects and a change in lifestyle is not always easy.

As motivational speaker Tony Robbins says, "You have to get disturbed before you can decide to make a change in your life." That is especially true of people wanting or needing to make a lifestyle change. One lifestyle which is particularly beneficial to boomers is a low glycemic eating program. There has been a lot of press about low glycemic eating which is based on the Mediterranean style of eating. But some of the information is daunting. The glycemic index (GI) measures the impact carbs have on blood glucose levels. Eat high GI foods and blood sugar rises quickly. As a result, the pancreas has to send out a surge of insulin. When that happens bodies go into fat storage mode slowing down metabolism and creating an inflammatory state around vital organs. When the insulin surges, blood glucose levels plummet creating cravings along with other symptoms and the tendency is to recharge quickly by eating more high GI foods and the process repeats. Do that enough and before too long the metabolism shuts down and the norm then becomes one where fat continues to accumulate and inflammation is a constant companion.

Eat low GI foods however and blood glucose rises slowly and insulin is released at a comparative pace. That allows the metabolism to work efficiently to burn fat and the antioxidants in those low GI foods help lower cholesterol and blood pressure and they help reduce the inflammation that can lead to all sorts of diseases and to arthritic pain. Can such a change in lifestyle happen overnight? No. But taking that step is worth it if it buys time to postpone the need for medications. When people change their eating habits their doctors are

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sometimes able to reduce or even eliminate their medications because their new eating habits have had such a positive effect on their health issues. Research has also shown that working with a buddy or a coach can help. A coach can provide education and guidance to help a person meet his or her own personal needs and those who are accountable to another person tend to be significantly more successful than those working alone.

So what kinds of foods are low glycemic index foods? Generally Low GI foods are unprocessed foods such as whole foods, plant foods, lean protein, good carbs and good fats. Whole foods are foods in their natural state: a chicken breast not a chicken nugget. Whole foods nourish. Dead foods on the other hand, like starches, fats and simple sugars contain empty calories and little or no nutritional value. They make the body fat and cause inflammation.



Good Carbs

- Fruit
- Vegetables
- Whole grains
- Legumes

Good Fats

- Olive oil
- Flaxseed
- Walnuts
- Almonds
- Avocado

Plant foods are full of phytonutrients. These are vegetables and fruit. They are nutrient-dense and add necessary fiber that aids the digestive process and helps balance glucose levels and lower cholesterol. They also help de-stress the liver and along with lean protein they make up a perfect combination which builds muscle and helps condition the metabolism and suppress cravings.

The body needs carbs and fat for fuel, energy and mental

alertness and there are lots of good ones from which to choose. Examples of good carbs include fruit, vegetables, whole grains and legumes while good fats are found in olive oil, flaxseed, walnuts, almonds and avocados.

Does making a lifestyle change take effort? Yes! But with the right foods and exercise even a metabolism that has been hibernating for a good while can find itself waking up to a more productive role in the body's journey to better natural health.

Maybe Hippocrates and Bob Green did have it right. Only one way to find out! Give it a try and see if you can "eat yourself healthy!"

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Answers

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|--------------------------|----------------|
| 2009 - Romania | 4. Iran |
| 2008 - Bolivia | 5. a |
| 2007 - Hue | 6. b |
| 2006- Cambrian Mountains | 7. c |
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