

THE HEALTH NUGGET



JANUARY 2004

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Filling the Hungry With Good Things

There was a time when I was in college that the majority of my thoughts centered around food. As soon as I had finished one meal, I was planning the when and what of the next. My mental “I’m full” trigger, otherwise known as the *satiety control center* in the brain, was out of whack. Upon leaving the cafeteria with a full stomach, I would still head straight to my dorm room to eat some of the Swiss chocolate tucked away in my dresser. Food to me meant more than just satisfying physical hunger and meeting nutritional needs. And I know I was not alone in this behavior.

Thankfully, it didn’t last long. The self-control I developed around food felt a whole lot better than indulging. My desire to eat good food became an enjoyable opportunity to *learn about* good food. To most of us, good nutrition sounds boring, sterile, dull, and downright punishing. Man was made to experience pleasure, and food happens to be one of those aspects of life from which we derive a great deal of pleasure. Our bodies hunger for and even crave what will satisfy. But something has gone wrong.

Much of what people crave and consume shouldn’t even be categorized as food, in my opinion. Bread with meager amounts of nutrition, fruit juice containing only 10% real juice (if any), diluted chemicals and sweeteners labeled beverages, pharmacological doses of sugar wrapped in enticing packages, fat- and sugar-free versions of baked goods that mothers used to make, and ground-up

portions of nonspecific animal parts contaminated with hidden organisms and sold as good sources of protein list a few.

What motivates our choices of what and how much we eat? We like to blame our sense of taste, but many times the core of the issue goes deeper than that. Allow me to share with you some enlightening information that can empower your self-control.

Amazingly, many of the foods we choose to eat do not truly enhance our sense of well-being. Some have a drug-like effect on mind and body. Others promote disease, encourage weight gain, damage the digestive tract or cause our energy to sag during the day, resulting in tension, fatigue, and irritability. We may choose foods because they are convenient—they don’t crumble, drip or spoil. Or we may choose them because they are quick to grab on the run, timesaving to prepare, or inexpensive. But the price will eventually be paid.

Science affirms that the best foods for mind and body are whole foods. The term *whole foods* generally refers to foods that are grown, such as fruits and vegetables, or foods that have been minimally processed, such as dried beans, and whole grains and flour. There are several reasons why these types of foods should make up the majority of our diet. One important reason pertains to the health risk of overeating.

Self-control is a major factor in our eating habits. It determines the amount and types of foods we choose and, inversely, the amount and types of

foods we choose impact the strength of our self-control. For example, giving your body the nutrients it needs prevents ravenous cravings for junk food and the desire to overeat. High-calorie, highly processed “fast” food confuses and overwhelms the regulatory processes of our bodies and brains. “John Blundell, Research Chair in Psychobiology at the University of Leeds, has studied appetite mechanisms for 25 years and has come to the conclusion that the typical junk-food fare with its dense package of sugar and fat calories overrides the body’s appetite control mechanisms and its ability to sense satiety.”¹ In other words, the result of eating highly processed foods is that we lose our sense of feeling full. Calories we get aplenty, but we try to satisfy our nutritional hunger by eating still more.

An experiment was conducted that demonstrated just how sugar influences daily food choices. Dr. C. P. Richter “separated a number of the nutritive components out of animal chow, such as vitamins, minerals, fats, carbohydrates, and proteins, and put them in separate dishes. He included a water supply to provide for fluid needs. He then turned healthy rats loose in this cafeteria cage.” Amazingly, the rats selectively ate of the different chow dishes, getting their needed nutrition for life by eating a balanced diet! Then a 10% sugar solution was substituted for the water. The rats grew accustomed to this new “soft drink,” preferring to drink it only and refusing to eat their rat chow altogether. They developed the sugar habit. “Their naturally healthy appetites had become perverted, and these animals literally drank themselves to death, choosing nutrient deprivation rather than denial of their sweet tooth.”²

Is it possible that our tastes and desires can be altered in such a dramatic way? Apparently, yes.

Refined carbohydrates such as white bread and pastries do not provide the body with the means to maintain stable blood sugar levels, sustained energy and adequate nutrition. On the other hand, whole foods such as complex carbohydrates that are rich in nutrients and fiber bring a more gradual, steady rise in blood sugar and leave us feeling truly satisfied. Uncontrollable cravings disappear. For this reason, whole foods are the most excellent fuel for body, brain and soul.

Listen to this amazing question: “Why do you spend money for that which is not bread? Why do you labor for that which does not satisfy?”³ We are not just spending our money. We are squandering our vitality—our life force—on foods that do not satisfy our true needs. We have been duped. Consequently, we are never truly satisfied, never content, and we struggle to sense fullness. “For they eat and yet have not enough.”⁴

The Bible says that Jesus “hungered.”⁵ He had strong desires and needs that weren’t being met. He understood the feeling. But He also knew where to go to find complete fulfillment. The ancient proverb says, “The righteous eat to the satisfying of his soul: but the belly of the wicked shall want.”⁶ The righteous are simply those who depend 100% on the Life Giver—the Source of love, happiness and contentment.

“For He satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness.”⁷ The promise is for all who recognize their soul hunger and thirst: “He hath filled the hungry with good things. . . .”⁸

¹ *Food for Thought*, p. 61.

² *Ibid.*, p. 70.

³ Isaiah 55:2

⁴ Hosea 4:10

⁵ Luke 4:2

⁶ Proverbs 13:25

⁷ Psalms 107:9

⁸ Luke 1:53

