

The Malnourished American

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When we think of malnutrition, we may picture a child of skin and bones in a remote place in Africa. This child is most likely suffering from starvation. Malnutrition is defined as a lack of proper nutrition; inadequate or unbalanced nutrition.¹ Malnutrition comes from not eating enough of the right things or unable to utilize the food eaten. Much of the United States suffers from malnutrition. Our social structure has changed our taste buds; laziness or excessive busyness has created bad health habits of drive-thrus, take outs, pizza and doughnuts that translates into a malnutrition bomb waiting to go off. We don't always detect the trouble these tongue tingling processed fast foods have in the body until years later when they have robbed us of the vital minerals and nutrients that the body needs to carry out processes. Dr. Christopher's original first course was called, Be Your Own Doctor (now known as the Family Herbalist). Do you realize that each time you step into the grocery store, you truly can be your own doctor? Hippocrates said, "Let thy food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food."²

Foods contain three basic macronutrients: carbohydrates, proteins and fats and within these macronutrients are minerals and vitamins that are vital to sustain us.

Carbohydrates supply simple and complex sugars which give our body energy to function and can be found in foods such as legumes, grains, fruits, vegetables and more.

Proteins are complex molecules made of amino acids, aka the building blocks of life. Proteins help to build muscles, skin, form hormones, enzymes, aid processes in the body and are found in foods such as nuts, seeds, dark leafy green vegetables, legumes, animal products, etc.

Fats are a slow burning energy and energy storage in time of need. Fats are vital for healthy brain function, absorbing non-water-soluble vitamins, hormone balance, anti-inflammatory, etc. Some healthy fats are olive oil, coconut oil, avocados, nuts, seeds, etc.

Essential Omega 3 Fatty Acids regulate genetic function and contribute to cell membranes and receptors. The body can't make them but it's found in nuts, flax, chia, purslane, kelp, etc.

Essential Omega 6 fatty acids contribute to cell membranes and receptors and can be translated into omega 3's but not efficiently. These acids are found in fish, poultry, meat, soybeans, eggs, some nuts and seeds. Too much of these fatty acids cause inflammation.

Macrominerals are minerals needed in larger amounts for the day to day functions of our body: **calcium, sodium, magnesium, potassium, chloride, and phosphorus**. Most of these minerals are called electrolytes. Systems like our sodium potassium pump cause gradients of negative and positive ions to be pumped back and forth assisting in nerve response, regulating fluid pressure, proper pH, and body hydration. Other **trace minerals** such as **iodine, cobalt, iron, copper, manganese, selenium, and zinc** are needed by our body in smaller amounts. These trace minerals help chemical reactions to take place in the body.

Vitamins provide vital nutrients and antioxidants our body needs to perform its functions. Some vitamins are water soluble and some are non-water soluble.³

How we obtain these minerals and vitamins is so critical. Norman Walker has said, "In order to regain and maintain the proper balance of health, most of the food we eat must contain live, vital, organic elements. These elements are found in fresh-raw vegetables, fruits, nuts and seeds. Oxygen is one of the most essential elements. As soon as food is cooked, its oxygen is lost. The enzymes are destroyed at 130°F and most of the vital force needed for nourishment is dissipated."⁴ "The great Law of Life is replenishment. If we do not eat, we die. Just as surely, as

if we do not eat the kind of food which will nourish the body constructively, we not only die prematurely but we suffer along the way". 4

Let us not suffer, but thrive by feeding our bodies fresh, live produce full of the nutrients, minerals and vitamins that our body needs. Be happy and eat fresh!

Kelly Pomeroy is a Master Herbalist graduate and Adviser for The School of Natural Healing. She is also a certified Foot Zone instructor. She is passionate about learning about the body and plants and loves to help others live healthy. She lives in Utah with her four wonderful children.

References

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