

Nutrition Foundations

Vivienne Bradshaw-Black cert. Ed. produced a health information course which is based on four foundational health laws and believes that the understanding of what causes health and what causes sickness can cut through the maze of confusion which dominates the sickness industry. Her desire is to teach this to those who choose health and offer contacts and support to individuals and groups taking responsibility for their own health choices. She can be contacted initially by email: VivshawUK@aol.com



The Nutrition Maze Part III - Brain Involvement

Good digestion is the ability to utilize nutrients from plant foods, either directly or through appropriate animal sources, by ingesting, digesting, absorbing and eliminating unwanted or unusable parts for the purpose of maintenance, growth or repair.

The processes which make this possible and efficient begin long before food is taken into the mouth. If you make an analogy of the human body to an apple, by removing the core with a cylindrical core remover leaving the apple intact but minus the core, creating a 'tube' through the middle of the apple, it's similar to the alimentary canal which starts at the mouth (top) and ends at the anus (bottom). This tube going through the middle of the body allows potential nutrition (food) to go in one end (mouth), pass through the body (stomach and intestines) and pass out the other end (bowel elimination).

Although food passes through the alimentary canal, it is not part of the 'body proper'. However, the digestive system is a very different thing. This system is responsible for the efficient selection and utilization of nutrition from foods ingested and it is intimately connected to all other bodily systems, including the immune system.

All aspects of human life, including digestion, are tagged to brain-mediated processes. Optimum digestive energy is available when restorative and physical energies are reduced. In practical terms this means that digestion takes place best when you are in good health, not physically active and in a mentally peaceful state. When these three aspects are present prior to eating, it allows the brain phase of digestion to start, unhindered. The smell of food or the hungry anticipation of food triggers the production of enzymes and fluids from the salivary glands to prepare for the thorough mastication of food. This also has a cascade effect on the digestive enzymes produced by the stomach and pancreas.

When food is rushed, 'eaten on the run' or eaten when the appetite does not call for it, the brain phase of digestion is inefficient and food tends not to be chewed thoroughly providing an opportunity for a potential chain of indigestion (inefficient use of nutrition in any digestive phase).

We eat to live, not live to eat but when eating is appropriate, healthy growth, maintenance or repair is the outcome, along with satisfaction and social enjoyment. Peaceful, properly timed and appropriate eating is particularly important during infancy and childhood¹ when food-emotion associations are established. A link to cancers and stress is universally posited and considering that stress is a factor which contributes to inefficiency in the brain phase of digestion, it is not unreasonable to suppose that inefficient digestion would be involved somewhere in cancer mechanisms. Many foods, drinks and toxins have been associated with cancers but there is little in comparison considered regarding their internal utilization regardless of the food/drink sources or toxin types.

Perhaps How we Digest is just as Important as What we Digest.

It is possible that even with the intake of toxins, an efficient elimination system and relaxed digestion could prevent the scales dipping on the side of ill health. However, treading as near as possible to the line of sickness without going over it is a very precarious, unwise way to live.

Sadly, 'being at peace' does not describe the normal state of mind for most people but it is a very important aspect of health. We operate best when the hypothalamus emits brain waves in cycles per second (cps) which are appropriate for activity. They operate at too high a level, for instance, in stressful states which can be appropriately termed 'screwed up' or 'pent up'. Such states are

not suitable for digestive activities, recovery or sleep. However, they would be appropriate for fight and flight activities. Both hyper- and hypo- conditions can indicate inappropriate brain wave level activity. Brain waves operate from 0.5 cps to 20+ cps in a 24-hour period. The overall ideal cps for health is about 10 cps which is the average obtained when activity is appropriate throughout the day.

This appropriate brain wave stability is essential for normal physiological processes, including digestion.

Adequate water and unrefined sea salt are needed for the brain to function properly. Where dehydration already exists and additional water is needed for digestive purposes, this would take further from that available for brain function creating a 'rob Peter to pay Paul' cycle between digestion and brain. Water is important for all phases of digestion, and long term dehydration can result in serious health problems, including digestive ones. Depression of mind and body can result from simple dehydration so this key factor should be remembered when considering problems in nutrition and digestion.

Making sound choices in nutrition and being able to handle those choices without complications is a huge step in the direction of good health. Complications can be caused in four major areas: toxicity, malnutrition, dehydration and brain-mediated disharmony, and because they all work together like interlocking puzzle pieces, each area deserves close attention.

References

- 1 Feeding Your Infant (IHC article).

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