

That Precious “Organic” Label: Is it Hot or What?

By Linda Townsend

I am not a regular shopper of conventional grocery stores. I live a good distance from Life Grocery and, from time to time, I have needed an item or two that I did not have on hand. I used to have such mixed feelings when I walked into a nearby grocery store, ranging from an old feeling of familiarity to outright disgust. However, I now view it as an educational field trip; it is rather interesting to look at the foods so common in the American culture and, yet, have now become so foreign to me personally.

In recent years, many conventional grocery stores have made a small space for organic and natural food, precious space for which food manufacturers so highly compete. In fact, as some people walk past the organic foods, making light of their real value, more conventional food manufacturers are clambering to find ingenious ways to attract those who don't—even to the point of being nearly ridiculous! Did you know that a California company is now marketing a brand of certified organic cotton candy? Well, it is a nice novelty, but, really . . . how many times does one eat cotton candy? Isn't that something special we do at an amusement park or fair as just part of the experience? Someone please tell me that this is not a typical snack food in the American diet!

Popular snack food manufacturers are the ones that really get me. I visited one website of a very popular, well-known food manufacturer of hundreds of varieties of chips and other snacks. On the site menu was a category “Natural and Organic Snacks.” I clicked on that and I was taken to a list of “Natural” snacks. They have devoted themselves to making eleven . . . yes, merely eleven, products and not one of the eleven products listed was “Organic.” I looked further at the list of ingredients: four of the eleven had *some* organic ingredients and of those only two qualified to have the label read: “Made with certified organic corn,” which was in large print in its own banner under the product name, of course.

Let's take a look at the labeling laws for organic foods. According to the USDA website, certain labels have specific meanings.

- **100% Organic** - Products with this label must be exactly that: every single

ingredient is wholly certified as organic, with restrictions on processing, as well.

- **Organic** - Products must contain by weight, excluding water and salt, at least 95 percent organically produced raw or processed agricultural product. There are also restrictions on ingredients and processing. For instance, ionizing radiation disqualifies the product for this label.
- **Made with Organic Ingredients** - These products are multiple ingredient products, containing, by weight or fluid volume, between 70 and 95 percent organically produced raw or processed agricultural product excluding water and salt, with restrictions on processing. Up to three organically produced ingredients or food groups man made must be named in this phrase.
- **Products with less than 70 percent** - Products in this category are limited to listing organic ingredients on the information panel *only* and are not allowed to place any mention of organic ingredients on the front of the packaging.
- **Natural** - Products containing no artificial ingredients or added color and are only minimally processed, which would not fundamentally alter the product, may be labeled “natural” and the label must explain the use of the term, such as, no artificial ingredients or added coloring.

The last one really confuses my sensibilities. The term “natural” is a powerful word to me. It makes me think of feeling warmth of the sun or the cooling of a breeze on my skin, drinking pure water from a spring, picking an apple fresh from the tree that has been grown naturally far away from any pesticides or synthetic fertilizers, and so on. I think it might have the same

meaning to most other folks, as well, but the “natural” label on food has nothing to do with the product being truly natural; that is “organic.” Probably the majority of people, who regularly shop at conventional grocery stores, think that the term “natural” means better. (I suppose it is a small step in a better direction when compared to a store shelves full of food that is highly processed with preservatives and artificial coloring and flavors.)

Now let's take another look at those popular snack food products on that website. Of the eleven listed under the menu label of “Natural and Organic Snacks,” all eleven had “NATURAL” written in very large letters predominately *above* the product name—a real eye catcher!—with the addition of: No Preservatives - No Artificial Flavors - No Artificial Colors. Remember though, of all those “natural” products, only four had at least one organic ingredient and, of those four, only two had at least 70 percent organic ingredients.

I am thankful that more grocery stores are making a place for organic foods, but I cannot help but wonder why some of these companies with so many products being bought by the general public even bother to market a few products to those of us who value healthier and organic foods. Perhaps they are changing over to make truly healthier foods, or perhaps they place a few items in the stores so that organic shoppers will begin to buy their other products as well. Whatever the reason behind this marketing strategy, educating their customers about the difference between “organic” and “natural” labels at this time would not be in the best interest of conventional grocery stores or the food manufacturers.

While the occasional excursion to the big, conventional grocery store is interesting, I prefer the smaller, more personal Life Grocery, with its dedication to offering organic foods and its devotion to really educating its customers about diet and health. Oh, just one last thing, it is always a good idea to take time to really read the labels and the list of ingredients.

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When is Normal Cholesterol Not Normal?

By Don Bennett, DAS

For such a popular issue, there is a lot that people don't know about the subject of cholesterol. And, as I'm fond of saying, "It's what you don't know that can hurt you." That TV commercial for a cholesterol-lowering drug would have you believe that cholesterol "comes from two sources . . . your Grandma Maggie and Grandma Maggie's meatloaf," inferring that your genetics affect your cholesterol level and not just your diet. They'd like you to believe that the reason your dietary modifications didn't significantly lower your cholesterol level is because of your genetic predisposition to "high" cholesterol and that their drug addresses this. But, the reason most people's high cholesterol isn't reduced to a safe level is not the fault of their genetics or because of a deficiency in cholesterol lowering meds; it's due to insufficient dietary changes.

The drug company's suggestion of "When diet's not enough, talk to your doctor about Vytorin" can certainly appeal to those with high cholesterol who'd rather have it managed by popping a pill than by changing their diet. And, if it was a case of six-of-one, half-dozen-of-the-other, then there would be no need for this article. But, there's some important information that you need to know, that you're not going to hear from the folks who brought you Vytorin.

Results from a study were recently released that showed that, although Vytorin did lower cholesterol, it did *not* reduce the clogging of your arteries, which is the real risk factor for heart attack and stroke! Many people were shocked by this finding, for it had long been thought that having normal cholesterol reduced ones risk of coronary artery disease, and now this major risk factor (clogged arteries) was found not to be helped by this drug. I was shocked, too, but not by these findings. What startled me was that the study, which was done by the makers of Vytorin, was completed two years ago, yet was only just now becoming public knowledge! As a result of these findings becoming public, Vytorin's manufacturer stopped advertising this product. No more will we see those cute comparisons of food and family . . . the "two sources of cholesterol." But since it *is* true that a normal cholesterol level is directly correlated with a lower risk of coronary artery disease and stroke, why do these findings seem to dispute this? It's because using a drug to create a "normal" cholesterol level is not the same as giving you a normal cholesterol level the natural way.

Let's do something that people with vested interests in drug sales don't do; let's look at the big picture and put things in perspective. There are not two, but *three* issues that have to do with cholesterol. Yes, your body does manufacture it, and yes that production, relative to someone elses, can be affected by your heredity, but this issue is tiny when compared to the other issues. The makers of Vytorin are fond of mentioning, "You've heard it said: cholesterol comes from food. What you may not have heard is that your cholesterol also has a lot to do with your family history." But since high cholesterol has a lot *more* to do with food than with genetics, this clever wording could be deemed by some to be misleading.

The second part to this is diet. Humans are not designed to intake foods that contain cholesterol, so when we do, it's not too hard to understand that this practice can raise our cholesterol levels. And, it is significantly reducing or eliminating this source of cholesterol that

can have a truly positive impact on our health. True, you can artificially lower your cholesterol level with a pill, but if you're still *consuming* cholesterol, you're also consuming some other artery-clogging substances that the cholesterol lowering meds don't address. Is this fact lost on those who were shocked by that study's findings? Do they think that lowering cholesterol, whether by a drug or by meaningful dietary modifications, would yield the same results health-wise? If the makers of Vytorin, along with all those who were shocked by that study (like the FDA) really are this clueless, it just goes to show how much less is known about truly effective healthful practices the further away we as a society stray from our true nature.

Another aspect of this subject revolves around one of cholesterol's jobs. The body uses cholesterol to repair damage to the inner walls of your arteries (the dreaded "plaque" we hear so much about). The more damage done, the more repair needed, and the more cholesterol used (and the more cholesterol produced). The good news is that not only is your cholesterol level lowered by eating healthier (foods that contain no cholesterol), less damage is done to your arteries (and your body in general) when you significantly improve your lifestyle practices, diet being one of them.

So don't let anyone convince you that your genetics is just as significant a factor as your diet when it comes to your cholesterol level; the two are as different, effective, as night and day. And don't let anyone persuade you into believing that lowering your cholesterol via artificial means (a pill) is no different than getting those same results through effective dietary modifications. The more fruits and green leafy vegetables you eat, and the less cholesterol-containing food you consume, the healthier you can be (in addition to heart health, this includes lowering risks of cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis, Alzheimers, etc). Real health comes from healthful living and not from a pill. And, truly effective health information comes from unbiased knowledgeable sources and not from clever TV advertising.

Don Bennett is a Disease Avoidance Specialist, author, lecturer, and the Director of the Health 101 Institute. Don's new book, How to Have the BEST Odds of Avoiding Degenerative Disease is now available in the Life Grocery book department. Visit health101.org/book for details.

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If you have any comments about any articles in this newsletter, or would like to submit a letter to the Editor, please address these to:

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Vitamin A and the Vegan Diet (and Other Supplement Questions Answered)

By Dr. Joe Esposito, DC

Recently, someone read an article on the importance of Vitamin A. He asked me to read it and give my opinion. The article stated that the best sources of Vitamin A were from animal products such as fish and milk. I get questions like this a lot. When someone reads a news story about a vitamin or supplement that they don't use, they feel that it could be the end of the world.

Now, we all have health issues, yet most times we rely on doctors who might have less knowledge about health than we have. Most doctors (not all, so don't send me nasty e-mails), are experts on dealing with sickness. When it comes to dealing with health, be sure to find someone who is an expert in getting well and staying well, not someone who is an expert in just covering up the symptoms.

My friend asked for my opinion on the Vitamin A article and how it relates to vegans. I agree that good sources of Vitamin A are the animal sources listed in the article. However, this is a very narrow approach to nutrition. A good source of one supplement might have many other adverse effects that must be considered. We cannot look at any biological function in a test tube; we must look at the big picture.

The animal sources listed are potentially toxic or are not practical. For example, the article suggests raw milk as one source of Vitamin A. It is illegal to purchase raw milk for human consumption in the state of Georgia. There is also the risk of dangerous pathogens (viruses, germs, bacteria, and/or fungi). Milk, even raw organic milk, will contain some steroids, chemicals, and hormones that are not compatible with good human

health. If you have non-organic milk, you can add antibiotics, pesticides, and herbicides to the list of unwanted components. There is also the risk from saturated fats, allergic reactions, mucus production, and pus cells in your milk (no more than 750,000 pus and/or red blood cells in about 8 drops of milk, according to the FDA regulations). If you would like more information on all dairy products, go to my website, drjoesposito.com and click on "articles" or "Dr Joe's Radio show" and look up the title "Got Milk? I hope not!" and listen or read.

Fish products are always a risk due to heavy metals, like mercury and lead, as well as other chemicals the fish have been exposed to such as PVC's, a known carcinogenic. The more fat a fish has and the bigger and older it is, the more potential exposure it has had to these and other toxins. If you are going to supplement with fish oil, make sure it is certified by European standards, which are much more stringent than US standards. Nordic Naturals is one brand that is pretty good and is available at Life Grocery.

Getting your Vitamin A from plant sources is not a bad idea, assuming you have a good diet and a good digestive system. The article states that the plant source of Vitamin A is beta carotene and that it must be converted to the biologically available form in the small intestine. If you have a healthy digestive system, this is an easy task. If you are eating a good diet, which will contain lots of fruits, veggies, certain grains, nuts and seeds, you are getting more than enough beta carotene to convert to Vitamin A. The goal should be to have a

good diet and a good digestive system so you can absorb your nutrients. In order to have good health, you must have a normally functioning nervous system, which controls everything else. You must also have a normally functioning digestive system so you can absorb your nutrients and pass out your waste products. Of course you must have a good diet. It is cheaper and easier to eat well than it is to eat poorly. For more information on how to obtain and maintain good health, tune in to my radio show on Saturdays at 9:00 am on WNIV 970 AM, on Saturdays at 10:00 am on WGUN 1010 AM, and on Sundays at 7:00 am on WGKA 920 AM. You can visit my website and access about 250 shows that you can listen to at any time, absolutely free.

The concept that one supplement is going to solve a problem is a very narrow way of looking at things. All nutrients must work in conjunction with other nutrients in order to have the body function properly; nothing works on its own. This is why a healthy lifestyle is what gets the best results, and that includes quality supplements, a good diet, a properly functioning digestive system, and a properly functioning nervous system.

I could go on for hours, but I think you get the idea.

Dr. Joe Esposito is a chiropractor, licensed dietician, author, syndicated radio show host of HEALTH TALK ATLANTA, and the director of Health Plus Chiropractic Center. For more information or to speak to him personally, call 770-427-7387. Mention Life Grocery and get an exam, consultation, x-rays, and doctor's report of findings for only \$50!

Breast Health

By Marcia Jones

The statistics are grim. In 2003, according to the American Cancer Society, 200,000 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer and approximately 46,000 women will die from it. In 1974, when Nixon declared war on cancer, a woman's lifetime chance of getting breast cancer was 1-in-20; today it's 1-in-4.

The statistics are staggering considering the hundreds of millions of dollars spent fighting the disease. In fact, since the "war" was declared, more women have died of breast cancer in the United States than the total number of American military members who lost their lives in World Wars I and II, the Korean conflict, and the war in Vietnam combined. Clearly, the allopathic community is losing the "war."

The facts, however, are much more encouraging and, as always, education is our best defense. Did you know that only 5% of all breast cancers are genetic? The good news is that even genetic predisposition does not mean that you will develop breast cancer. Most of us have precancerous cells in our bodies, but a healthy immune system will get rid of them. Ninety-five percent of the cancers are promoted environmentally and, thus, most risk factors are within a woman's control. Current theory is that cancer cells develop from these "promotions."

Take control. Get to know your body and your breasts by forming a friendship with them. Initially, examine them daily until you become totally familiar with them. Pay attention to the way the skin and tissue underneath feels and notice the subtle changes in your breasts throughout the month. Between ovulation and menstruation, many women find that the size of their breasts change as much as a cup size as hormone levels rise. Some find that their nipples become more sensitive. Moderate changes are normal, but for instance, if nipple sensitivity reaches the painful level, estrogen dominance is indicated. Perhaps your body is not processing

estrogen properly. Once you are familiar with your breasts, examine them once a month, sometime between ovulation and the beginning of menstruation.

This will dispel many fears you may have. Fear is the opposite of what is needed to create and maintain health. We've all heard, "You are what you eat." In much the same way, "You are what you think." Think health. You have ultimate control over most factors associated with how long and how well you'll live.

One of the first things you can do is reach for cruciferous vegetables—broccoli, kale, cabbage, Brussels sprouts. These wonderful veggies contain a phyto-chemical, known as indole-3-carbinol, that changes the way your body metabolizes estrogen to prevent cancers. Next, reach for soy products. Soy is a phyto-estrogen that actually binds to estrogen receptor sites, thus, preventing carcinogenic estrogen from entering cells. It also contains five anti-cancer agents.

Cultures with diets high in soy products tend to have a much lower incidence of breast cancer. However, these same cultures show an increased incidence of endometriosis and fibroids due to increased estrogen levels. Although the estrogen in these cultures is derived from soy products, it still impacts negatively when overdone. So be sensible in your use of soy: some is good, but more is not better.

Regular exercise also changes estrogen processing, serotonin and dopamine levels, and self-concept. Exercise works for you on several important levels. Most are aware that women athletes often lose their periods. That, of course, is not desirable or healthy. The point is that exercise can be one of your greatest tools in lowering high estrogen levels.

Next, ease up on sweets. Studies show a link between high sugar consumption and breast cancer. (S. Seely, "Diet and Breast Cancer: The Possible Connection with Sugar Consumption," Medical Hypothesis, 1983; M. Lender et al., "Diabetes and Breast Cancer," Lancet Journal, May 21, 1977.) As an added bonus, you'll lose unwanted weight and cut your risk of developing Type-II diabetes.

Two of the most important lifestyle components are well known to members of Life:

(1) Consume certified organic produce when possible.

(2) Eliminate or limit consumption of commercial animal protein. Commercial husbanders routinely implant estradiol pellets (one of the most carcinogenic of the three estrogens) under the animal's skin. This brings them to market weight faster, with less care and feed, thus, increasing profits. (For this same reason, be wary of hormone replacement prescribed by many doctors.) To increase profits, commercial farmers also spray crops with pesticides, which tend to act as estrogens in the body and concentrate in breast (and other) tissues.

Nutritional supplements can further decrease risks of all cancers. RDA's can be compared to minimum wage. Nobody envisions minimum health as their pinnacle of success or their goal, so be good to yourself with vitamins, minerals, and anti-oxidants. In this world, we need them for a good life and optimum health.

No article on breast health would be complete without addressing mammograms. Many experts recommend them periodically in an effort to detect abnormalities; other experts think that the radiographics and compression required for successful mammograms are invasive and potentially harmful to the breast. Each woman must make an informed decision based on available information and the recommendation of her health care practitioner. *How to Prevent Breast Cancer and Its Recurrence*, by Ross Pelton, Taffy Clarke Pelton, and Vinton C. Vint, and *The Estrogen Alternative*, by Raquel Martin and Judi Gerstung, D.C., will provide the necessary information in making this decision.

Marcia Jones, National Director of the Dixie PMS and Menopause Center, networks with holistic healthcare providers across the country and internationally. E-mail jones@tidesoflife.com for info.

Five Keys to Success with Raw Food

By Chef Jenya Hampton

Six years ago, when I first came across the raw food diet, there weren't too many resources available. One really had to be very diligent in searching out the information and the supplies.

Fast forward to six years later, and there seems to be a plethora of information and products. New raw food books seem to appear on store shelves daily. There are You-Tube videos on nutrition and preparation of raw food. There are raw food blogs and newsletters, retreats, restaurants, and DVD's. Oprah, Good Morning America, and many other popular mainstream programs have featured the benefits of raw food. The raw food awareness is growing in leaps and bounds; this is a wonderful evolution in health, wellness, and spirituality. However, this evolution is bringing with it a myriad of raw food experts and gurus eager to get out their own information, good information—unfortunately, often conflicting information.

Lately, what I've noticed is people new to raw food are excited to get started. Then they start reading and researching and end up throwing in the towel, because they don't know what the best way is to proceed. They literally get frozen, and that is what I want to address here.

Every expert who writes a book, or offers a new program, seems to have arrived at their own conclusions for the right way and the wrong way to eat raw. The new information is good, but, to a beginner, it can be very overwhelming. The questions I have been hearing lately from people new to raw food are: *How do I proceed? Where do I start? Who do I listen to? Do you drink water only or juices only? Which is better, juices or smoothies? Should I eat only fruit or no fruit at all? What about alkalinity? Are nightshade foods safe to eat? What about mono meals? Should I eat raw meat and fish? Do I need protein*

supplementation? What about eating a low glycemic diet? Should I incorporate dehydrated foods or eliminate eating dehydrated foods? Does raw chocolate have caffeine and should I eat it? Do I need algae? Which minerals do I need and how much? How do I make food combining work? Should I get my probiotics from food or supplements? Is 80% raw better than 100%? Etc, etc, etc. There is just so much confusion.

Now I don't pretend to be an expert. I can only offer what I have personally experienced and/or have seen from the people I have worked with who have experienced success with transitioning and remaining on raw food while maintaining a busy lifestyle.

The following is a list of five keys to your success:

1. Raw food is not a religion. Don't worry about messing up, like missing a day or pigging out on all the wrong foods. Forgive yourself, then recommit to doing better, and move on.
2. It's not an all or nothing. Anything you do to increase the amount of fresh organic fruits and veggies in your diet is a step in the right direction.
3. Raw food is not a diet, it is a lifestyle. That means it is just one part of a whole. It is a large part, but still just a part. If you are stressed about work, relationships, or your diet, this stress will tend to negate all of the benefits of eating well. You will experience weight gain, lack of energy, and all the ills that stress brings on. So relax and take the time to learn and develop techniques to manage stress.
4. Don't wait until everything is perfect, just start with baby steps. Learn a few recipes, and become proficient at preparing them with ease

and consistency. Then add to your repertoire. Your success will largely depend on the ease and proficiency with which you are able to continue this lifestyle.

5. Make time to preplan and organize your week with menus and shopping so that you have enough good food at your fingertips to make it easy to stay on track. You are worth it!

At the end of the day, remember the most important key to success is that there is no one right diet for everyone; you need to pay attention to your own body. The most amazing thing is as you continue eating raw, organic, maximally nutritious whole food, your body will speak louder and louder as to what it wants. You will literally FEEL the effects of what it does not want.

Commit to incorporate the above five simple steps to success with raw food into your daily routine for at least twenty-one days. Studies show that it takes twenty one to forty eight days to develop a new habit or break an old one. So go easy on yourself and just do it! Once you are proficient for twenty-one days, you can start to expand your knowledge and incorporate new information.

Here's to your success!

Chef Jenya offers a wide variety of raw food specialty classes. To learn more about her classes, free recipes, and other services visit www.essentialenergycuisine.com or call 404-925-3428.

Stop Trying to Lose Weight!

By Brian Murray

So you lost 10 pounds. Big deal. Most likely, you just made yourself fatter. Here's why.

The conventional method for losing weight is to eat fewer calories. This is good. Without a calorie deficit your fat cells won't shrink. This practice is usually combined with the standard 60 minutes of "cardio" activity or no exercise at all. This is where the problem lies.

In the absence of significant stress on your muscles (read: high intensity strength training with VERY heavy weight), most of the body weight lost in the initial stages of a weight loss plan will be from water and lean tissue—two valuable components of a healthy, fit body—while very little will come from fat stores. (Fat doesn't have a high energy demand. Muscle does. Your body is a master of economics. If the muscle isn't serving a purpose, it goes first.)

When the weight of the lean tissue component of your body composition goes down and the weight of the body fat component doesn't change much at all, your body fat percentage goes UP! So, even though your jeans fit looser, you effectively make yourself a fatter, softer, weaker, and more injury-prone person. I would now classify you as *skinny-fat*. But the worst is yet to come.

Sadly, you are now heading for a ride on the weight loss/fat gain roller coaster. Do you remember the *Atkins*

Diet craze? Is anyone still on that diet? How many of the people who tried it kept their weight off? I would bet none. Sooner or later, you are going to go off your diet and when you do the weight is coming back. What comes back is all FAT. Your body fat percentage goes even HIGHER. Yikes! So the next time you want to lose weight, your battle is going to be tougher. And, that is the story of millions of Americans.

Let's do things a different way.

The goal now is to lose FAT. You are still going to eat less and lift weights that seriously challenge your muscles. Now your body has a reason to keep the muscle. Oh no, you get on the scale and you have gained two pounds. Don't freak out. The gain is from lean tissue. This is GOOD weight gain. You just permanently raised your metabolism, reshaped your body, and gave your energy level a turbo boost.

A few weeks later, you notice that the pounds of body fat you lost exceeds the pounds of body weight you lost. How did that happen? You gained lean tissue. Its calorie burning power helped vaporize the excess fat. So, you lost 10 pounds, but you look like you lost 20. Your muscle/fat ratio has now gone UP and your body fat percentage has gone down significantly. The body weight you did lose was 100% FAT.

Doesn't that sound like a better way?

Stop trying to lose weight. The process only makes

you fatter. Keep the muscle, lose the fat, and you will be thrilled.

Brian Murray is the founder of mPower, home of the once a week no cardio no sweat workout that will change your life. To learn more about mPower and the mBody six-week fat loss plan, please visit www.strengthforlife.net, then call 404-459-0270 to schedule your consultation.

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A Practical Buzzword for Real People—Best Foodism

By Traci and Kal Sellers, MH

We, Traci and Kal Sellers, MH, coined the phrase “Best Foodist” when we wrote *Traci’s Transformational Health Principles* and *Traci’s Transformational Kitchen Cookbook*. The need arose when we became well-known enough that we started teaching classes and consulting with people struggling with health problems. There was not a word that described what we teach, so the idea of Best Foodism appeared.

Let us introduce you to the Best Foodism philosophy: Best Foodists believe in making the best possible choices in a given situation. They consider the following:

- The ideal diet plan
- Social situation and the value of social health
- Spiritual values
- Consciousness of the moment
- Available fare
- Cost
- Personal readiness
- Ability to relax and enjoy the food
- Health needs and goals
- Personal situation (i.e. food reactions, conditions, activity level, etc.)

Best Foodists enjoy several key benefits of this philosophy:

- Best Foodists don’t fall off the wagon, because they understand that they are just having a less conscious moment and that they are always doing their best.
- Best Foodists don’t have guilt! That is right, no guilt is necessary. First, this is because choosing guilt is not the best thing to do to yourself. Second, this is because they understand that they are doing the best they can in any given moment, which might mean being a complete raw foodist or it might mean eating a corn dog.
- Best Foodists live in a real world. Not that complete raw foodism, breatharianism, an hour of meditation per day, or nothing but smiles for every situation and person cannot be real. Indeed, Best Foodists are looking for that kind of life and consciousness in themselves. It is just that between now and then, most people need a range to operate in, rather than an absolute.
- Best Foodists see health objectively, understanding that there is a range that gradually moves down from ideal foods, thinking, and living—much of which is very positive and beneficial. Divergence from the ideal does not equate harm or injury. Often, rigidity to the ideal does mean harm or injury,

depending on the consciousness of the moment.

- Best Foodists can enjoy any setting because they understand the art and science of choosing the Best Foods in any setting. They factor in social values, spiritual values, personal stress, current level of consciousness (we all have moments that are less than our best), state of mind, and symbolism of their choices when choosing what foods to eat or not eat.
- Best Foodists understand what choices are really harmful and which standards are really important, so that they can indulge in a moment of weakness without devastating consequences. Consequently, they entertain great recipes for raw and live plant foods, as well as whole, natural treat foods and comfort foods that are sweet, savory, and cooked (basically whole and the least toxic possible for the situation).
- Best Foodists are keen observers of Nature and watch what nature says about foods. They turn to science to understand nature better, never to decide if nature is right or wrong. (How weird would that be?)
- Best Foodists are well read and study science often. They believe whatever is discovered that matches what they observe in nature.
- Best Foodists are supple in the sense that they are always learning and never so attached to any one idea or belief that they cannot learn a better one.
- Best Foodists believe that the ideal diet is raw plant food that grows in the sun. They are not given to speculation (based on human science) about elitism among foods, but believe that a healthy plant cell makes a healthy human cell.
- Best Foodists believe strongly in healing one’s life as part of changing one’s diet.
- Best Foodists are interested in what Nature teaches or suggests that a naturally living human should do.
- Finally, Best Foodists are interested in the best choices they can make at a given time. They are also working toward the ideal choices as much as possible. Best Foodists make the best of what Nature provides and enjoy the best things with gratitude and peace.

We have been teaching people how to make the best choices in food, supplements, condiments, and seasonings for seven years. We hope you enjoy the fruits of our labors. Following, we have included a completely

raw (depending on the sweetener you use), sprouted recipe from *Traci’s Transformational Kitchen Cookbook*.

Raw and Sprouted Buckwheat ‘Groat’-Meal

This cereal reminds me a lot of the little packages of cinnamon and spice instant oatmeal I used to eat as a kid. My kids think it is great. Because it is only warmed, not cooked, it is considered a raw cereal.

2 c sprouted buckwheat
6 T maple syrup or agave nectar
4 T light olive oil
¼ c water to blend
1 t cinnamon (optional)
¼ t sea salt (optional)

1. Soak and minimally sprout buckwheat (very short tails on the grain—see “Instructions for Sprouting” in *Traci’s Transformational Health Principles Book*—available for free as a download from www.bestfoodist.com).
2. Measure out 2 cups of the sprouted grain.
3. Combine all ingredients in a food processor or blender and process briefly, just to break up grains. Mixture should be fairly lumpy.
4. Scrape mixture into a saucepan and just warm it to serving temperature, *do not cook, or cereal will clump into a solid*. Add additional water to prevent sticking as necessary.
5. Serve immediately.

Variations: Omit the cinnamon and swirl in fresh, frozen, or dried fruits at the table. Some complimentary flavors we like are: blueberries, raspberries, elderberries, dried strawberries, dried peaches and nutmeg; dried apples and cinnamon; or raisins and cinnamon.

Traci and Kal Sellers, MH, run a school for Holistic Healing and Herbal Medicine in Powder Springs, Georgia. Kal is a Master Herbalist available for consultations and health-related therapies. Traci and Kal have written two books, [Traci’s Transformational Health Principles](#) and [Traci’s Transformational Kitchen Cookbook](#). Further information is available at www.BestFoodist.com. Kal also offers training materials, free info, and free educational newsletters through www.KalsSchool.com. Contact him directly at 706-473-4375 or by email through www.KalsSchool.com.

Healthy You!

I hope this newsletter finds you healthy and well. If you are not, I’ve got some tips to help you on your way to health. Many people find themselves sick with colds, the flu, coughs, sinus infections, hayfever, etc. To remove excess mucus from your body, take one half teaspoon of freshly minced horseradish mixed with fresh lemon juice; chew for a minute and then swallow. Repeat this twice a day until you no longer have a burning sensation. The burning sensation is the horseradish reacting with mucus. Depending on how much mucus you have in your sinuses, throat, and digestive tract, you may need to do this for a month or two before you have no burning.

Drinking hot water with lemon juice first thing in the morning will clear out mucus as well. Drink hot teas with

By Dr. Kim Strickland, ND

decongestive herbs like peppermint and mullein. Hot broths are nourishing and especially so if they still contain live enzymes. If you have a VitaMix, use it to make soups that are warming with ginger, garlic, and turmeric. Garlic is, of course, a well known aid for winter ailments. Chew one clove of garlic and chase with water to ward off illness. I make garlic lemonade for my small boys. Chop 4-5 cloves of garlic and steep them with boiling water for about 30 minutes. Add the juice of one or two lemons and sweeten with honey or stevia. Drink liberally.

Life Grocery also has tinctures such as echinacea, goldenseal, and mullein that will aid you in returning to health. Remember that Vitamin C helps the body fight infection. The supplement department has many forms

of Vitamin C available from which to choose. Eat lots of grapefruit, as well. Rosehips contain lots of Vitamin C and make a nice tea. Fresh juices such as carrot, carrot/spinach, carrot/beet/cucumber, and pineapple juice restore health and break up mucus. Freshly made organic vegetable and fruit juices are available to order at Café Life. If you’d like to juice at home, purchase your organic produce at Life Grocery. Stock up and be healthy!

Dr. Kim Strickland earned a Doctorate of Natural Health from Clayton College in 2005. Her special interests are maintaining health through proper nutrition and diet and the wellbeing of children. For questions, call 770-218-3952 or email mk_strickland@bellsouth.net.

Positive Changes Equal a Better Life

By Dr. Brenda Cobb

Change is inevitable; it's the way we all evolve and become better. It takes real effort to make positive changes. Think of a time when you were working towards something you really wanted. Didn't it feel great when you achieved your goal? It had meaning and value.

Would you like to have good health, but those same old excuses keep coming up? Do you think you are too busy to eat right and exercise? If you are feeling overwhelmed and procrastinating about taking care of yourself, there is no time like the present to make a change. When you take care of your health, everything in your life improves.

A tired, stressed out body is more illness prone. Unfortunately, Americans are some of the sickest people on earth, plagued with high cholesterol, heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, cancer, obesity, clogged arteries, and severe toxicity and deficiency. This relates directly to eating food with little or no nutritional value. Most people eat "bad" food out of habit, but poor nutrition leads to poor health. If you don't have good health, you can't really enjoy life. Your health impacts everything.

Today, you can take the first step to doing better by eating more organic raw vegetables and fruits and living sprouts. Make yourself a big salad for lunch instead of eating pizza. Eat an apple rather than a candy bar. It's the little steps that begin to lead to good results.

To help you on your quest for a better life, it is important to have support and to become educated about what foods are best for you. Become involved with others who have similar goals. Get a buddy and encourage each other to do better each day. It's more fun when you can do things with other people. Many times having another person watching your progress will help you to stay on track.

Eat organic. It's the only way to go. Give yourself the optimum nutrition when you eat fresh fruits and vegetables that are free of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Eat at least 80% of your food uncooked. Fresh raw vegetables and fruits have living enzymes, vitamins, and minerals. Eat lots of sprouts, the living foods. Sunflower sprouts, buckwheat sprouts, and broccoli sprouts are supercharged with nutrition and will help you create or maintain great health.

If you haven't been eating nutritious food in the past, just remember an old habit can be broken and a new one put in its place if you're really motivated. Set your goals. Make a plan. Become educated and act responsibly. If you don't care about your health, who will? Don't wait until you are diagnosed with a serious disease to make changes. Do something good for yourself today. It's all up to you, and you are definitely worth it!

Cinnamon Applesauce

6 apples, peeled and cored
½ c medjool dates
½ c raisins
1 t cinnamon

- Put the dates, cinnamon, and apples in the food processor and blend until smooth.
- Fold in the raisins.

It's quick and easy and oh so good.

Chunky Guacamole

3 ripe avocados
1 roma tomato
3 green onions, including the tops
1 large clove garlic
½ t. cumin powder
1 c fresh cilantro

1 T fresh lime juice
½ t Celtic sea salt

- Cut avocados in half and remove the seed.
- Peel the skin off the flesh or scoop the avocado flesh out with a spoon. Put flesh into a bowl.
- Mash the avocado with a fork until mushy and creamy. It's okay to have some small chunks in this. It doesn't have to be completely smooth.
- Chop the tomatoes, green onions, cilantro, and garlic by hand and combine with the avocado.
- Add the lime juice, cumin powder, and sea salt. Mix all together.

Enjoy your yummy creation.

Cilantro Lime Salad

1 bunch fresh cilantro
2 c mixed baby greens
3 T fresh lime juice
2 T flax seed oil
1 clove garlic
1 t powdered kelp

- Chop the cilantro leaves and stems and the garlic by hand into minced small pieces.
- Combine all the rest of the ingredients and toss until well coated.

Feast away.

Brenda Cobb is founder of The Living Foods Institute and author of The Living Foods Lifestyle® and 101 Raw and Living Food Recipes. She teaches a 10 and 12 Day Healthy Lifestyle Raw and Living Food Course at Living Foods Institute, 1530 Dekalb Avenue, Atlanta, Ga. 30307. For further information on classes and free seminars, call 404-524-4488 or visit www.livingfoodsinstitute.com.

Building a Culture of Excellence

By Michael A. Scimeca, D.C.

People just don't care. That is what high school children are saying about their peers. Whether we are talking about academics, sports, music, or the arts, we have numbed ourselves as a culture such that our up and coming leaders are graduating from the class of mediocrity. As a society, we are becoming more and more apathetic about tapping our full potential, being extraordinary, and achieving excellence. Perhaps this is a wake-up call.

To address the severity of what we are facing as a culture demands honesty. In practical terms, we must instantly raise our standards regarding how we treat each other and what we expect from ourselves. The key to raising the bar involves a little known art form called visionary leadership. Instead of handing down a bunch of rules to be broken, we instantly implement a system where people receive quick, concise, honest feedback regarding their use of choice. By making this immediate and conscious connection between action and result, we highlight the power we all have to steer the course of success. Unfortunately, an apathetic attitude is the antithesis to having such a valuable feedback system in place.

Taking the role as visionary leader requires a belief in one's ability to elevate his or her own life. The aptitude to live as a leader simply insists that we live as role models, that we demonstrate integrity in how we raise ourselves. The fundamental thought-provoking probe then becomes: Are we accepting mediocrity for ourselves? Mediocrity runs rampant throughout many businesses. The size of a company has relatively little to do with the functionality or production of an organization to succeed in meeting specific goals and objectives. To combat mediocrity, however, we need not go beyond ourselves and our home lives.

What does success look like? What does success feel like? These are questions we need to ask ourselves far more often than we currently do as a family and as a culture. In simply recognizing excellence, we instantly raise the bar. In fact, by having a vision of success, we also have access to the road map that helps us find our way to success. Without having this vision, we have nothing of value to share with our loved ones, nothing of significance to exchange with our partners in life. When we see that the mediocrity we are foolishly accepting from ourselves is nothing but the result of having a lack of vision, we can begin to take back our power. More importantly, we take our rightful places as leaders and begin to share something of great value, the look and feel of success.

So the next time we hear or feel, "People just don't care," we can instantly demand more from ourselves. We can set up a support system of success where the people closest to us become part of an organizational success network. We do not silently and foolishly expect perfection from ourselves and others. We, instead, expect that we be present to the feedback we receive from life to elevate that life, to elevate the bar that makes us great.

Dr. Michael A. Scimeca is a chiropractor, life coach, motivational speaker, and a passionate advocate for wellness, who works with individuals, couples, and children. To learn more about Dr. Scimeca and what he can do for you or your business, call 770-912-9197 or visit www.scimeca.com.

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How to Build a Raised-Bed Garden and Survive the Process

By Betsy Bearden

Springtime! Time to focus on emerging flowers, blossoming trees, the migration of birds from the South; the world around you is blooming in Technicolor and it's also time to focus on the ol' vegetable garden.

This is generally an easy thing for most people, but when you are married to a man such as my husband, Steven, not just any garden will do. No—it has to be a spectacular, extraordinary, get out the slide rule, compass, protractor, level, kind of thing. And, not just a flat area of 20 square yards of Georgia Red Clay all tilled up with organic compost blended in. Nope, it has to be a grandiose raised-bed garden kind of thing, or nothing. So, for ten years, we had no garden.

In Steven's defense, it would be a moderately expensive project, and a time-consuming one at that. As luck would have it, while we were taking a walk one day, we happened across a pile of landscape timbers lying in a heap at a utility trailer business. The timbers were eight-by-eight's, in good shape, but were riddled with two-foot long rods of rebar. After asking the store manager about them, he told us that the timbers had been abandoned by someone whose trailer had been involved in an accident. We gave him our phone number and asked him to give us a call if no one came back to claim them. A few weeks later, he told us to come get the timbers. Free of charge. Pretty cool, huh? We brought the timbers home.

Steven rigged up a skill saw with an abrasive cutting wheel, cut the rebar from one side of the timber, and used a stainless steel rod to hammer out the remaining rebar. Next, we leveled out an area where the timbers would be placed by digging and flattening out a trench. The timbers were stacked on top of each other, three rows high, and brackets were placed on the inside of each corner and screwed in to secure them. The outside corners were enclosed with wood planks, which made a small seating area, until we topped each corner with decorative wooden post caps.

"Are we done yet?" I had to ask that, especially since 2007 was one of the hottest summers we had experienced in many years. After we cleaned and stained the timbers, the raised-bed was transformed into a beautiful piece of garden art. I wanted to bring it into the house! We stood back and admired our creation. Now we needed to fill it with dirt—a lot of dirt.

After pricing bags of soil at home improvement stores over the Internet and checking with a few contractors on their prices, we wondered whatever happened to the old saying, "dirt-cheap." We decided to try a popular website where you can find just about anything in the world you want. After weeding through the prospects, Steven decided on the least expensive small company and gave them a call.

He described our raised-bed garden to the company representative and asked if he could back a truck up to it and dump the dirt in without causing damage to the raised-bed garden. We e-mailed him a picture and pointed out that our backyard was slightly sloped. "No problem," he assured us.

"Great!" we said. "When can we expect you?"

He told us he would call back after he had "found" some dirt.

After a few days, someone from his company called and said they were on their way over with the dirt. I dare call it a company; it was one guy and a few of his cousins, who looked liked they had just come from a hunting club. They showed up in a huge, old Chevy Crew Cab pickup truck, pulling a 20 foot dump-trailer behind it. I am convinced they learned how to drive this monstrosity in route!

They backed the truck into our yard, toward the gate. The next thing I saw was Steven, driving his van with a chain wrapped around the back bumper that was

attached to the front bumper of their truck! His tires were squealing and whirring in the driveway with smoke coming out from under them, motor revving wildly—pulling their truck back toward the street!

"They got stuck!" Steven laughed. They tried again, but the truck was too heavy, and the slope of the yard would just not cooperate, so we moved on to "Plan B."

We laid tarpaulins on the ground, as close to the gate as we could manage. When they lifted the trailer to dump the dirt, it got tangled in the overhead utility wires. After getting the trailer back down, they tried tilting it again. It wouldn't function, so they wound up shoveling most of the dirt from the bed of the truck. I have to admit, when he told us they had finally "found" some dirt, I think I know from where—the Zoo.

Now, we had not had rain in over six weeks, but once you get four square yards of exposed dirt heaped in a huge honkin' pile in your front yard, this tends to tempt the fate of the gods. Steven had gone to buy more tarpaulin; all we had was *under* the dirt. The sky started getting darker and darker, the low rumble of thunder could be heard in the distance, and the whispering wind taunted, *Mud Fest, 2007*.

One of our neighbors frantically walked over and offered to cover it, but I assured him that Steven would be home very soon. He said he hoped so and would hate to see all that dirt turn to mud. *Me, too!*

Steven and I covered it and drove stakes in the ground to secure the huge, stinky mound of dirt just in time. Buckets of rain fell; the dirt never felt a drop. However, the next day presented yet another obstacle—getting the dirt from point A to point B, which was approximately 50 yards away. After gathering around the ol' dirt pile, we decided the only way was to attach the utility cart to the riding lawnmower, shovel in the dirt, and dump it into the garden. We calculated it would only take about a gazillion round-trips.

My job was to drive the lawn mower, with cart in tow, circle the raised-bed and back up to it. Now, I don't know about you, but I have not had classes on backing up a lawnmower with a utility cart full of dirt behind it. This equates to: Me driving the lawn mower + backing it and the trailer up to the raised-bed = it might take me a few shots before I get it.

We shoveled dirt, and removed the rocks, tree limbs, and debris from it. With the help of our dear friend, Wally, we managed to get the job done and were able to plant a fall crop of Romaine, Brussels sprouts, collards, and kale. A few days after we planted, Cobb County was placed under Level 4 Draught Conditions.

I hope this story has not deterred you from building your own raised-bed garden, but if you do decide to build one, I'm sure you won't encounter the same problems we encountered. Maybe this year the much needed rain will come and we can all have a nice crop. Who knows? But one thing I do know—if we can't have a garden, at least we have Life Grocery, where the produce is always abundant, fresh, organic, delicious, and just waiting for us, anytime we want it. And, it certainly is much easier!

[Editor: If you do want to plant a garden, be sure to check out Life Grocery's wide variety of organic seeds. You can have the best of both worlds.]

Happy Spring! Get out and enjoy life!

Betsy Bearden is a published writer and the author of a self-published cookbook, *Normal People Eat Tofu, Too*. She has worked as a volunteer chef and cooking instructor, as well as a reporter for *The Paulding Neighbor Newspaper*. You can reach her at bbearden@joimail.com or visit her website at www.creativewrites.net. If you would like to see the raised-bed garden she created, you can view it on her website.

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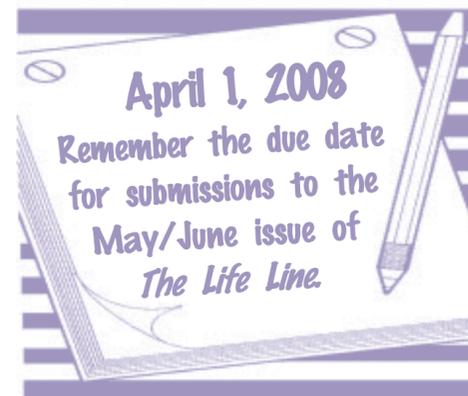
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The Tide is Turning

By Nisla C. Whetstone, L.M.T., Gluten Free Lifestyle Coach, and Amateur Chef

Have you heard about Celiac Disease and the Gluten Free Diet that so many people are talking about? Have you noticed the increase in stories on the news about people living with Celiac or the Gluten Free Diet? What about the increase in products that contain the label *Gluten Free* on them? It's EVERYWHERE! So many people are talking about this now and you may be wondering, "What is this all about?" It is not a fad diet or a diet to lose weight (although many people who are overweight would probably lose weight on a gluten free diet). The gluten free diet is here to stay, as it improves the health of those who suffer from gluten intolerance.

"The tide is turning against gluten as more people ditch the protein" found in wheat, barley, and rye from their diets, according to a recent article by the *Chicago Tribune*. More people are being diagnosed with Celiac Disease everyday, as awareness for this condition spreads among the medical community and health-savvy individuals. Many people are finding that, even without a diagnosis, by eliminating gluten from their diet, they are feeling better. How amazing is that? What is even more amazing is the amount of mainstream companies that are recognizing the importance of providing gluten free products and labeling for products that are naturally free of gluten. For many years, the choices and availability of gluten free products have been very limited and mostly tasteless. The running joke was that you didn't know whether to eat the gluten free product or the box it came in, as they both tasted the same.

Years ago, health food stores only had a few bland gluten free products on a back shelf somewhere. Just look at the size of Life Grocery's Gluten Free section now; an entire aisle dedicated to gluten free products, as well as an abundance of naturally gluten free products found throughout the entire store. My favorite companies are Pamela's (baking mixes and cookies), Tinkyada (rice pasta), Kinnikinick (breads, cookies, mixes, pizza crusts, and on and on!), and Ian's (with their allergen-free line of frozen products). Ah, the gluten free life is good!

Many restaurants are beginning to offer gluten free menus, so dining out is no longer a minefield of stress. And the wonderful Cafe Life has many fantastic gluten free options. Any of you who know me, know that I am addicted to their gluten free Oreo (vegan) cheesecake made with a gluten free version of the Oreo cookie. Even if you don't have to be on the gluten free diet, this stuff is good!

I truly believe that everyone would benefit from less gluten in their diet, and I'm not the only one who feels this way. More and more people are starting to figure out the benefits of cutting out gluten. For starters, it forces you to eat healthier, as so much of the junk food out there is absolutely chock full of gluten. Even if you don't have to be gluten free, try it, you just might like it! And, you just might notice you feel better too!

Easy Asian Stir-Fry

This recipe is so easy and you can vary the ingredients to your personal taste. The variety of vegetables and amounts you use will vary, depending on how many people you are cooking for and your personal preferences.

½ onion, chopped
5 medium mushrooms, chopped
broccoli, chopped
snow peas, chopped
carrots, chopped
purple cabbage, chopped
bean sprouts, chopped
canola oil

- Heat a small amount of canola oil in a hot wok.
- Toss in onions and cook until they start to become translucent.
- Add the mushrooms and cook them for an additional couple of minutes.
- Toss in all of your vegetables and keep stir-frying them until they get to your desired level of doneness. I like my vegetables crisp.
- Toss with Asian Stir Fry Sauce (see below) and serve over steamed rice. Brown Basmati is particularly delicious with this recipe.

Asian Stir-Fry Sauce

Measurements of the following ingredients depend on how much sauce you want.

honey

San J Light Wheat Free Tamari

¼-½ t powdered ginger

¼-½ t powdered garlic

- Mix equal parts of honey and wheat free tamari together.
- Add ginger and garlic.
- Stir until well incorporated.
- Pour over stir-fry at the very end.

Chocolate Chip Muffins

2 c Kinnikinick All Purpose Baking Mix

2 eggs

½ c oil

½ c hot water

¼ c organic cane sugar

2 t vanilla extract

½ c Enjoy Life Chocolate Chips

- Preheat oven to 375°.
- Line muffin tins with paper muffin cups.
- Mix the first six ingredients together.
- Add the chocolate chips.
- Pour batter into prepared muffin cups.
- Bake at 375° for approximately 13-15 minutes or until tops are beginning to brown.

For more information about Celiac Disease, please visit <http://www.csaceliacs.org/> or <http://www.geocities.com/HotSprings/Oasis/3820/index.html>.

Nisla Whetstone is a Licensed Massage Therapist and Gluten Free Lifestyle Coach in Private Practice in conjunction with Dr. Joe Esposito. Contact her at 770-653-6017 or magickhand@gmail.com.

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ATTENTION Health Care Practitioners

If you would like to be included in the Life Grocery Health Care Directory please submit a business card at the customer service desk.

If you would like to present a lecture or class, or be a part of an upcoming Life Fest, call Jesse Andersen at 770-977-9583 ext. 215.

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