

HEALTH, COURAGE AND SELF-RELIANCE

BY David L. Duffy, MD



As a practicing physician of Internal Medicine, I want to share my observations on how to be healthy. Do you have the courage to dare to be healthy? Many patients go along in life eating the normal American Diet, depending on processed foods and restaurants, and taking whatever medicine the doctor prescribes for their diseases. It is normal to gain weight as we get older. It is okay to have hypertension as long as you take your medicine to keep the blood pressure controlled. Many people take in stride their experience with chest pain, the stents which were placed in their coronary arteries and adding Plavix, aspirin, and Zocor to their daily diet. Diabetes can now be controlled with an assortment of pills and once a day insulin shots. All you have to do is monitor your blood sugar and eat diabetic cookies and ice cream.

I do not know about you but I think this approach is all wrong, I believe that each person has the potential to really be healthy if he pays attention to the needs of the body and responds to symptoms in a constructive way. Arnold Ehret's Mucusless Diet Healing System (BENEDICT LUST PUBLICATIONS, 2002). Dr. Henry G. Bieler's Food Is Your Best Medicine (BALLANTINE BOOKS, 1982), T. Colin Campbell's The China Study (BenBella Books, Inc., 2006), and G. E. R. Lloyd's Hippocratic Writings (PENGUIN BOOKS, 1978) provide us with a fresh look at the wisdom of the body and nature's method of healing. I urge you to study them for yourselves.

The body is like a house. You may keep the house clean or fill it up with junk. You may keep it in good repair or let it become dilapidated. The body has self-healing mechanisms which clean the body if we allow them to do so. It is true that each person has bodily imperfections which may cause weaknesses, handicaps, and incapacities. It is true that no matter what we do our bodies eventually age and we die. Good health means living life to the fullness and accepting death when it our time to go.

In our quest for health the first step is learning to listen to our bodies. We all experience hunger, thirst, fatigue and pain. We may have colds, upset stomachs, diarrhea, fevers, and rashes. We get injured and pull muscles and sprain ankles. In each experience our body gives constructive communication which we would be wise to heed. Many people skip meals yet continually sip on bottled water. They carry on with an exhausting schedule, getting by on 4-5 hours of sleep but drink cups of coffee and bottles of caffeinated soft drinks to keep going. Tons of pain medicines are consumed each year, ranging from aspirin and ibuprofen to heavy doses of narcotics to control pain. We would rather cover-up the pain than listen to the body and follow its direction.

When we are overloaded with mucus and catch a cold we take antihistamines and decongestants to suppress the symptoms rather than fast and go on an Ehret transition diet. When we eat too much in the wrong combinations and our intestines rebel, we fill up with antacids, ulcer medications and anti-diarrhea treatments. We suppress fevers with aspirin, Tylenol, and Motrin, and cover rashes with steroid creams. Much of modern medicine is based on symptom-suppression and avoidance of facing unhealthy behaviors. Is hypertension really a disease or the heart's way of coping with an overload of salt, stress and overweight?

Let us first begin with the question: What should be our normal diet? If we listen to Ehret, Bieler, and Campbell, we should mostly eat fruits and vegetables with some whole grains, sources of vegetable protein, and a small amount of animal protein. If we eat only fruits and vegetables we may not receive the amount of food which the body really needs. Several things happen. The body uses up the supply of fat and takes protein from the muscles. We dip below our ideal weight. Then the body goes into a low energy mode and we feel tired and cold. It is hard to concentrate. At one point when I was experimenting with a vegetarian diet I dropped 20 pounds below my ideal weight. People thought I had some chronic disease. I suffered from what you might call "anorexia spartanosa", a self-imposed, disciplined starvation. I had gone too far in the wrong direction.

Arnold Ehret's Mucusless Diet Healing System is a cleansing process and enables you to eliminate excess metabolic waste and the oversupply of fat and protein. Once you eliminate this and get down to your ideal weight you need to add back in the "mucus producing" carbohydrates and proteins which the active body needs. When you achieve your cleansing goal through a fasting and transition diet, you need to discover for yourself the diet which maintains your health, a "healthy maintenance diet."

When you add in whole grains, nuts, seeds, and legumes, you can restore your weight and energy. The next question is: How much protein do you really need? What modern medicine considers a "normal diet" with 70 grams of protein for a 180 pound man is really excess protein. The "normal metabolism" excretes protein byproducts in the form of urea and ammonia. T. Colin Campbell suggests that this excess of protein, especially animal protein, promotes atherosclerotic heart disease, cancer, and autoimmune diseases. Arnold Ehret believes in a fruitarian diet. Dr. Campbell favors a vegan whole food plant-based diet.

I would suggest that each individual choose the diet which best fits his or her needs. There are cultures in which diet is based on available food sources. A friend from Algeria said that the basic diet in her country consists of dates, barley, and milk. Other cultures depend on the supply of fish from the sea. The principle I suggest is to "eat meat sparingly." If you choose to include milk, eggs, fish, poultry, or meat in your diet, eat as little as possible.

A vegan diet may lead to vitamin B12 deficiency. Dr. Campbell says that plants grown in healthy soil have a good concentration of vitamin B12. Plants grown in non-organic soil do not. Dr. Campbell recommends for vegans supplementation with vitamin B12 and monitoring of the blood level of the vitamin (Campbell, THE CHINA STUDY, p. 232).

Let us say that you want to improve your health. You may be overweight with diabetes, hypertension, and some other symptoms. You begin fasting. You began an Ehret transition diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables and a limited amount of whole grains and legumes. To do this takes great courage and self-discipline. You eliminate so many elements in the modern American diet. Out goes all the junk food: white sugar, white flour, white rice, cake, cookies, ice cream, soda pop, hamburgers, cold cuts, French fries, snack foods, etc. You struggle against temptations and old food habits. You receive criticism and ridicule from family, friends, and neighbors. You are called a "health nut" or "food freak".

Initially you lose some weight and gain some energy and perhaps better sleep. The skeptics in your life notice that your diet "seems to be working." You are pleased with your progress and are encouraged to continue your quest for health. Then "IT" happens. You suddenly get sick. You begin to itch and breakout in a rash. The joints become inflamed. You start coughing up phlegm. There is an outburst of allergic symptoms with itchy eyes, nasal congestion, and perhaps even asthma. What is going on here? What is wrong with your "healthy diet?"

The answer is that nothing is wrong with your healthy diet. Arnold Ehret warned us about this phenomenon. Whoever experiments without experience with this diet of healing, whether sick or well, loses his faith immediately, as soon as he has a crisis, becomes what he believes to be "seriously ill," that is to say, a day on which a great amount of dissolved waste, debris, mucus and other poisons are taken back into the circulation, a day of great elimination. This produces at the same time a strong, almost irresistible craving for wrong foods and, strange as it may seem, the patient most strongly craves for the wrong food which was once his favorite, This is explained by the fact that Nature is eliminating through the circulation the waste of these foods, and it is when they are in the circulation the craving and desire is naturally enough produced. (Ehret MUCUSLESS DIET HEALING SYSTEM, p. 87).

While it is true that some people are born with genetic defects which lead to disease, let us assume that the body is well-designed and has the capacity to heal itself if we permit it to do so. The immune system is an elegant system which participates in the process of healing the body and eliminating wastes. When we have allergic symptoms such as nasal congestion, itchy watery eyes, or an itchy skin rash, we need to cooperate with the body and let the elimination process run its course. Taking antihistamine drugs and corticosteroid creams and inhalers will suppress the symptoms and make you feel better, but it suppresses and delays the healing process.

To eliminate the waste you need to continue your fasting and cleansing diet until the body has completed the elimination process. Sometimes this can take a long time. If the symptoms are unbearable it may be necessary to take medications to control the symptoms, but this should be seen as a temporary measure until the healing crisis is passed.

In cases of diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease it will take a longer time to lose 50 to 100 pounds of weight lower the cholesterol level, reduce medications, and reverse the symptoms. How far one goes in this path is an individual matter. You cannot force a person to follow a pattern of living imposed upon him without his cooperation. What I like to do is have patients participate in discovering the diet which works for them. There are educational, economic and social factors which affect the degree of motivation and compliance. We work on guiding each patient along a path of increasing understanding and compliance. There are degrees of success and setbacks. Some patients have food addictions which are hard to break. Some patients reach a degree of improvement and choose to remain at that level instead of going further along their path to ideal health.

Ultimately you must be self-reliant and take charge of your own health. You learn what your body needs. You establish a pattern of fasting and cleansing. You know how much sleep you need. You incorporate into your schedule regular exercise and activity. By avoiding fast foods and junk foods you save money to invest in fresh fruits and vegetables and the best fresh whole foods which you can afford. When a person embarks upon a path of seeking their ideal health, applying the teachings of Arnold Ehret, T, Colin Campbell, and Henry G. Bieler, I call them "medical research associates." Medical research associates ask questions and seek answers. Medical research associates make observations and keep records. They experiment by trial and error and discover what works and does not work. What is my body trying to tell me? How can I give my body what it needs? It is my hope that there can be more and more "grass roots" research to demonstrate that chronic diseases can be overcome, that heart disease and cancer can be prevented, and that "real health" can be achieved.

About the author:

Dr. David L. Duffy, MD graduated from Harvard Medical School in 1971. He trained in Internal Medicine and Ambulatory Care at Montefiore Medical Center, Bronx, NY, from 1971 1975. He continued seeing patients and supervising interns and residents at the Montefiore Medic Clinic until 1980. From 19811988 he had a private medical practice in Oceanside, California. In 1988 he returned to New York to work at Metropolitan Hospital Center in Manhattan. From 1996 to 2005 he served as Section Chief of General Internal Medicine. He also served as Chairman of the Patient Education Committee from 1999 to 2005.

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The Club is where Ehretists and people interested in their health can work with other similarly motivated people to gain that edge. You are all welcomed to be a part of this exciting club that was designed by Ehret to unlock the healthfulness in all of us.

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