

HOMOEOPATHY, NUTRITION AND YOUR PATIENTS

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Since the beginning of life upon this earth millions and millions of years ago, *food* has been and will continue to be a relatively important problem to each and every form of life that survives. The plentifulness or the scarcity of food has determined to a large extent which type of living forms would survive: whether it was lichens, small fungi, dinosaurs, bacteria, or cavemen.

The fact that man has survived a few million years is more likely due to the favorable climatic conditions existing during these millenia than to man's so-called ingeniousness. Some of the preliminary reports of the International Geophysical Year studies would indicate that, if certain changes were made in the ocean currents and prevailing winds, plant and animal life as we know it would become extinct while some other forms of life would become prevalent. The few of us who might survive would need to have a great degree of adaptability to both physical changes and food changes than is generally found in our population.

By taking this long look at the past, as life has developed in all its various forms, a person may get a better picture of food and what it can contribute to living. It tends to sweep away some of the popular non-essentials about nutrition and gets down to the rather basic question of what is a "good" food? By what criteria is any food "good," "wholesome" or "nutritious?" Is the food "good" because a majority of people who eat it have lived three score year and ten? Is it "good" because research studies show it has all the proteins, minerals and vitamins considered essential for good health? Is it good because it was grown on specially treated soil, and under special conditions?

To evaluate the quality of foods in common use, it is well to go beyond the calorie charts, trace minerals, vitamins and

organic farming. These yardsticks of measuring food values are better than none. But the present day over-emphasis on these nutritional measurements oftentimes gives a biased picture of the virtues or vices of a food. There may be other unknown qualities in foods in use to-day, or in foods that we should be using, that we know nothing about as yet. These still unknown factors may be as important to health as the ones that are commonly known today. Fifty years ago vitamins were generally unknown. One hundred years ago the food calorie, proteins, etc. were unknown. Yet people were doing a pretty good job of living to a ripe old age even then. Furthermore, those who did live to be old were pretty rugged individuals whose bodies didn't need a medical shot a day or a big pill to keep them ticking. I think they had learned the art of enjoying living, and eating is surely a part of living.

Let us consider again the present day yardsticks for measuring the nutritional values of what we eat, and how they can slant our own thinking if these measurements are used exclusively. For example, take one of the highly rated foods for all growing children: MILK. There isn't a diet that doesn't advocate at least a pint a day or more for every child. Milk is classed as one of the most complete, nutritious, wholesome foods a child can swallow. By giving milk such undue importance in the diet, other factors essential to a strong healthy body can be overlooked. Mothers have watched children gulping down quarts of milk at one sitting, and complacently feel that Junior is getting the most complete food needed. It isn't the mother's fault that she is satisfied when he drinks lots of milk and consumes little else. It is the fault of our present day yardsticks for measuring the worth of foods. Now for good nutrition seen from a long range view, all children need their jaws developed by good hard chewing. Milk in its crude form doesn't furnish this. The stomach needs to develop its muscles, juices, enzymes to take care of a variety of foods. Milk gives a feeling of fullness and retards the eating of more solid and diversified foods. The intestinal tract needs a residue to promote healthy bowel motility and excretion. Milk leaves a pretty small residue. I am not against the use of milk, but the point I want to make is that no

one food is necessarily ideal or the perfect food, even for healthy people. So when we talk about nutrition and relate it to good health it is best to see it in its totality, even as we consider our homœopathic patients as whole persons.

Now there are many kinds of healthy people who eat quite differently from one another. They tend to live as long and as happily as anyone else. For instance, the diet upon which the Eskimo thrives probably would not be well tolerated by the people living along the Amazon, or vice versa. Religiously an orthodox Moslem could not tolerate some American foods. Imagine how well the average American would tolerate the rice diet of the Chinese. Now, these are crude examples of the innumerable differences in eating patterns found around the world. But they do point up the fact that many factors enter into choosing a nutritional pattern that will produce desirable results. As I see it, nobody has the perfect answer, and those who restrict their eating to food fads that come and go, never will see anything but a small section of the total picture. They are like a person always chasing rainbows.

It is easy to see that people all over the world are pretty well addicted to their food habits, and for persons past 50 years old to make many changes in how they eat or what they eat requires a complete alteration in their thinking and a new mental outlook or their particular situation. Unless this mental rebirth concerning their nutritional needs occurs they will do one of two things :

1. They will forget the recommendations, and mentally put the idea on a shelf to be looked at occasionally and left there.
2. Or they will try to follow the recommendations to the physical letter of the law, but inwardly revolt against the new food pattern to the point where neither it nor any medicine will do them any good.

The old saying, "Man does not live by bread alone," can surely be applied to nutrition. I should like to add to that by saying, "Man does not live by bread alone but only by that food he firmly believes, deep inside himself, is best for him."

Hahnemann felt strongly about the mental attitudes and general temperaments of his patients. He gave the mind and mental symptoms top priority. It was his feeling that only as

the physician understands and treats the "inner man" will the best results be obtained. It is also interesting to note that some of the mental symptoms are closely connected with food habits, food likes and dislikes. Evidently Hahnemann considered the habits of living very important. In several different places in the *Organon* he mentions the need to consider the modes of living of the patient and his family when the physician is taking the case history. In paragraph 4 of the 5th edition of the *Organon* he states:

"He is at the same time a preserver of health when he knows the causes that disturb health, that produce and maintain disease, and when he knows how to remove them from healthy peoples."

Another example is found in paragraph 94 where Hahnemann is speaking of helping chronic diseases. He says:

"The investigation of the condition of chronic diseases should be conducted with particular reference to the circumstances of the patient, his habits of living, *his diet*, his domestic relations, should be carefully considered to discover to what extent errors of living have participated in producing and maintaining the disease."

It may seem that I have talked around the problem of optimum nutrition, and said little about specific foods. I feel there has been too much written already about single foods, and diets. Way beyond what we really know.

Here are a few concrete suggestions which I use in discussing nutrition with my patients. First, you and the patient have to decide what you want to accomplish by the food pattern developed. This is something the patient has to think over and decide with you. Some questions which I may ask are: Why do you wish to change? Do you want to live longer? Do you want to be able to work and play harder? Do you want to have stronger healthier children? Do you want to get healthier than you ever have been?

In other words a worthwhile goal or purpose helps to deepen the desire to make necessary changes. This desire to change has to become deep enough that he or she will carry it onward for five to ten years. It is not some three week

reducing regime. A smoothly working body wasn't built in a day any more than Rome was.

Second, choose foods that have stood the test of time, say for several hundred years. The test of time may be found in other countries around the world by observing the nutritional state of the people using particular foods.

Third, choose and use foods in as natural a state as your body will tolerate willingly.

Fourth, don't expect the best food plan in the world to correct the mistakes of your ancestors. It has taken generations to make those mistakes visible, and it will take good homœopathic prescribing, good nutrition, and several more generations to correct them. But you can start in your own home and educate your family to eat the best available foods.

Fifth, have fun and enjoy what you eat. Enjoyment is as important as the food you are eating.

I have found that talking over these nutritional problems with my patients has helped them to eat better, and to be honest in reporting what they are actually eating. This in turn helps me to choose a better homœopathic remedy that will speed up their recovery.

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