

Nourishing Your Life

by Damian Carey ND, Dip Ac

Human Life

I want to talk to you about "Nourishing Your Life", not just nourishing your body but nourishing your LIFE. You see the human being is a highly complex organism with many, many layers of systems operating simultaneously, each of them interacting with and affecting all of the others. We have a physical /mechanical structure, that's the bit we can touch which gives us the ability to move around; we have a chemical reality, we have hundreds of thousands of chemical reactions taking place within our body at any given moment; we have mental abilities and emotional experiences; we have subtle energy systems that are responsive to magnetism and radiation; we have levels of consciousness within us that enable us to rationalize and perceive information from long distances.

The reality of OUR LIFE is a whole package of abilities. It's not just what you can measure with blood tests and a stethoscope. To my way of thinking there's not much difference between a corpse that is breathing and a corpse that is not. I'm sure we could find examples, maybe within a few hundred yards of us, of people who are already 3/4 pickled and they've offered up what's left of their consciousness to the electronic box in the corner. That's not my idea of being alive. I want a LIFE. I want vitality, I want clarity and awareness, I want emotional equilibrium.

The Value of Nourishment

I'm saying all this so that when I talk about nutritional supplementation, you don't just regard it as fuel that you are going to shove into the coal burner to keep your engine running. I want you to understand that when you do the right thing for any one aspect of your human life, it will have a positive effect on all the other aspects. When you give your body good food, your cells will have a party. You will be feeding your body happiness and sending messages of abundance to your tissues; and they in turn will love you for it and perform their tasks with joy. My job is to get you thinking more deeply about the value of good nourishment and to understand the connection between what you put in your mouth and how you feel, now and for years to come. What I will have to say here, I believe, can make the difference between a life of joy and abundance and a life of misery and pain. As usual, you get to choose. Naturally, the more information you have the more likely you will be to make effective choices.

Now I happen to be a naturopath. What that means in plain language is that I have been more obsessive than the average person in finding out how to get the most out of my life. I don't know everything, nutrition is a huge topic, but I do intend to give you some clarity here on some fundamental concepts that can help you to live a longer and happier life. There is lots of information out there on nutrition and it can get quite complex, but here I am going to keep it simple. Personally I've always had a basic mistrust of anything that I can't pronounce on the food labels; so I'm going to stick to simple concepts like "carrots" and "lemons".

A Handful of Dust

Before we get into the nitty gritty of nutrition I want to set the scene by giving a quick overview of human life. What we are is approximately 80 cents worth of minerals that just happens to have formed itself into 3 trillion cells that are holding together and co-operating in exquisite harmony. A handful of dust ... just add water and stir. Actually do you realize that what we are is stardust? That's it ... it's magical. Whichever god it was who worked out the magic behind turning a handful of stardust into living, breathing organisms must have done really well out of the patent!

Anyway ... a handful of dust. Is that all we are? ... No! Obviously there is a Life Force involved, a consciousness, that enables it all to be ALIVE, to grow and heal and have experiences and reproduce. Anyway this Life Force is a bit of a mystery; we can't really pin it down, we can only study its footprints, we can look at where it has been and how it is behaving. Whatever it really is I suggest we ought to respect it, we surely better not ignore it because it's obviously very clever. It's the magical mysterious Life Force that makes the difference between a handful of dust and having a very good time for 140 years.

The Human Life Span

Yes, the potential human life span is approximately 140 years. We know that from half a dozen examples of peoples who live in high mountain regions around the world who regularly live to that age. The Hunzas in northern Pakistan are the best known. So how do they do it? Is it because they don't have cars? Is it because they don't have television and they don't get to hear all the bad news? Well that all helps, but they've probably been longevity freaks for many, many centuries, when all the rest of the Earth's population were dying of infections. No, there is another reason. All of the long living tribes have one thing in common: they drink glacial mountain water ... water with a very high mineral content. More on that later.

The Limits of Modern Medicine

Anyway, they live to approximately 140 years and if they can do it then so should we. We've got the same genetics ... the same programming. But we don't live anywhere near that long; something is going horribly wrong. Modern medicine has overcome the massive threat of infections and epidemics. We've actually improved the average life expectancy considerably. But still we have a situation where a wide variety of degenerative diseases are killing people well before their allotted potential. Heart disease accounts for 54% of all deaths. Bowel cancer affects 1 in 3 people over the age of 45. Breast cancer is the commonest form of death in all women between the ages of 35 and 55. Any woman has a one in ten chance of developing breast cancer ... not good odds. There is an increasing incidence of prostate cancer and leukaemia. 1 in 5 people over the age of eighty will develop Alzheimer's disease, that's an average of five years of miserable and humiliating deterioration leading to a not very pretty death. And that's just a quick scan of the major causes of death. What about the poor quality of life resulting from diabetes, arthritis, multiple sclerosis? What about the headaches and the endless tiredness and the irritation and the stuffy noses? It's NOT GOOD ENOUGH! We can do better than that.

Modern medicine can only take us so far. The medical profession are emergency specialists. They're great when we've got broken bones or we're bleeding all over the place. They have developed incredible skill with surgery and they can pluck people back from the throes of heart attacks. But all this is an emergency back up system when the damage has already been done. We don't really have a national health care system. What we have is a disease management system. If you want to get healthy you have to take on the responsibility yourselves and you have to get informed. I am sorry to report, your doctor will not inform you. I take it that everyone who is reading this is willing, not only to get informed, but also to take some positive action to ensure they live a vital and happy life.

Health Fundamentals

Before we look at the details of nourishment, I want to put it in perspective by looking first at the seven fundamentals of good health. Nourishment is only one of these. So I don't want anyone coming back in six months time saying "you told me if I nourished myself I'd get healthy". Sorry ... you have to do all of it. What I am about to show is nothing tricky, it's really very simple, but simple things can often be taken for granted so it's worth reminding you.

The seven fundamentals of good health are: **Nourishment, Fresh Air, Sunlight, Clean Water, Movement and Exercise, Rest and Relaxation** and, most important of all, **Love**, which comes in a variety of guises including integrity, intelligence and a positive mental attitude. [Note that the principle of **Love** also manifests in the human body as the immune system, or that which values and is determined to protect the integrity of the self.]

Each of these seven fundamentals is essential to good health ... you can't be fully alive without the lot. They are the positive factors which enhance and prolong life. But it's no good getting all of these things properly sorted out if you go and expose yourself to dangerous excesses and poisons, so as well as fulfilling the positive factors we also need to be aware of avoiding the negative factors, avoiding the poisons.

Plant Power

If I was to tell you there was a product that will reduce the risk of all degenerative diseases by 50%, and on top of that it will provide you with bountiful vitality, it will ensure the smooth operation of your digestive system, it will reduce hypertension in four weeks and it will help you to loose weight ... if I told you I could get you a product that will do all of that, would you take it? Well there is such a product. It's called fruit and vegetables ... nature's medicine ... food. This is how the earth sustains us. It's recycled sunlight and it does all of those things I just told you.

So what's so special about plants? Well plants are producers. We're consumers, plants are producers, they're manufacturers. Plants manufacture thousands of complex organic molecules: they make the fundamental substances that everyone knows: the starches and sugars, the proteins and fats, the fibre and vitamins. All of these are manufactured by plants using the raw minerals from the soil, the chemical medium of water and the energy from sunlight. Plants grow in the soil, we eat the plants; sometimes other animals eat the plants and then we eat the animals; that's it, that's the food cycle. Raw minerals in soil are converted by plants via photosynthesis (sun power) into complex absorbable forms.

Essential Nutrition

We know there are a whole bunch of things that the body **MUST HAVE** in order to maintain life. There are 60 minerals, both macro and micro, 16 vitamins, 8 essential amino acids, 2 essential fatty acids and eight sugars. Take any of these things out of the diet and you'll die of starvation in a matter of days or weeks. Carbohydrates are essential for energy; proteins are essential for building structures within the body; fats fulfil both of these functions; minerals provide the raw materials: the building blocks for cells, tissues, fluids and hormones; and vitamins are the catalysts for all the metabolic reactions that take place in the body.

So what is the common denominator amongst all of these? What is the fundamental substance. The answer is ... the minerals, the fundamental elements such as carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen and oxygen. Actually these four elements compromise 96% of the chemical composition of the human body. Throw in calcium and phosphorous and you have 99% of the human body. But there's lots of other important minerals; there's sodium and potassium, magnesium and manganese, iron and copper, zinc and boron, selenium and chromium and on and on. Together these minerals make up the content of the other 1% of the chemical composition of our bodies. Although all of these are present in minute proportions, still they are essential to the life of the body.

The fundamental food groups that we get taught in school all consist of various proportions and combinations of minerals. The carbohydrates are CH_2O ; the lipids or fats are CHO ; the proteins are carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, sulphur and phosphorous; fibre is collagen which is a lipoprotein; and the vitamins are a wide variety of combinations of all of these major elements bonded with various micro minerals.

Phytochemicals

In addition to the fundamental substances (the carbohydrates, proteins and fats) there are THOUSANDS of additional substances collectively known as phytochemicals or phytofactors. What we know as vitamins are really those particular phytofactors which modern science has been able to isolate and research and draw conclusions about their effects. But in reality there are thousands of additional compounds which effectively we know very little about, but which appear to have an important role in overall health. Remember what I said about Life Force? ... just because we can't measure it, don't make the mistake of dismissing it's importance.

The phytofactors are chemical compounds produced by plants to protect themselves against disease and radiation (that's a clue). There are many subcategories of phytofactors: carotenoids, isoflavones, flavanoids, bioflavanoids, indoles, allyl sulfides, saponins. These phytofactors work synergistically with the vitamins and minerals. They are an essential part of the whole plant, they contribute to the overall integrity of the plant and they contribute to the integrity of the cells of the people who eat the plants.

The human body loves whole foods. It recognises whole foods as being bio-compatible. The human body will readily absorb and utilise whole foods. On the other hand laboratory synthesised vitamins and other chemical isolates, such as sugar, act as drugs in the body. Often they are forced into the system whether the body wants them or not, at other times they are not absorbable at all, like elemental iron supplement tablets that merely give people constipation. But give the body a whole food and the body will pick and choose exactly what it requires and readily absorb it.

Incidentally the presence of this vast array of compounds explains why plants/herbs cannot be patented. The patents system applies to single compounds only. A patent on a single compound costs approximately a million dollars. The FDA (Food and Drug Administration in USA) has decreed that "... bioflavanoids do not have any nutritional, therapeutic or preventative value". The FDA are the guys who send SWAT teams into natural therapy clinics in the USA whenever anyone is selling anything that severely threatens the future income of their drug company buddies, so if you believe their lie about bioflavanoids I've got a nice little beachside property over in Broken Hill you might like to buy. Plant compounds, logistically, cannot be patented; therefore there is no money in it ... end of story.

Anyway we eat the plants. What happens next?

The Human Cell

The human body absorbs the nutrients in the plants and uses them to grow cells which form tissues. As long as all the essential components are present the cells will function properly. Cells are very interesting devices; I like to think of them as self contained cities. They are surrounded by an outer covering or boundary, just like the defensive wall around an ancient city. The cell wall has selective openings: some things are allowed to pass in, others are denied access, just like in a city. Inside a city there are factories and power plants and transportation systems and central administration headquarters and storage facilities, just like in a cell. And there is a lot of activity there, in both cells and cities; they are a happening place. Cells are breathing, feeding, secreting and eliminating just like we do.

And what happened to an ancient city when it got attacked. Well as long as they had a good supply of water and a good store of food, and as long as their walls were strong and intact, they could defend themselves quite well, same as a cell. But what if the city didn't have good supplies? ... the inhabitants would starve in a siege; and if their walls had deteriorated and not been repaired? ... in would come the invaders. And what happens to a cell when it hasn't been supplied with the raw materials to keep itself intact? Same story. The cell gets invaded by bacteria or viruses. Or maybe it loses its function; it stops producing the hormones or secretions it specialises in, or it loses the ability to reproduce itself, or worse still, it becomes malignant and starts on a mad process of acceleration that turns into a tumour.

A Good Balanced Diet

OK, so a cell needs all of the fundamental substances to maintain its life. But surely all we need is a good balanced diet to give our cells all the nutrients they need? ... lots of fruit and vegetables and meat and dairy foods? Surely that's enough. Well let's have a look at it. Suppose you really did get a good balanced diet. I mean REALLY. 75% of your diet is fresh fruit and vegetables, no junk food, no margarine, forget the dairy food (only B type blood groups are adapted to it anyway), nothing fried, lot's of fruit and vegetable juices, and all of this supplemented with good lean meats and fish and nuts and seeds and grains and legumes. That'd do it wouldn't it? Well ... are you living in high mountain regions away from any air pollution? Have you gotten away from all microwave radiation? Are you totally free of stress? ... not bombarded with the evening Bad News? ... no growth hormones in your meat? ... no antibiotics or pollutants or herbicides or pesticides or fungicides in your food? ... nothing toxic in your water? ... IS YOUR FOOD ORGANICALLY GROWN?

Minerals and Flavour

What's so good about organically grown food? ... its not just the lack of pesticides, though that's important; it's the mineral content! That's what gives organically grown food its FLAVOUR... the MINERAL CONTENT! When was the last time you enjoyed a tomato from Woolworths? When was the last time you couldn't wait to get your teeth stuck into the corn from Coles? You don't! ... they taste terrible. You have to cook everything to billy-O and pile on the salt and pepper and chilli sauce just so you can bear to eat it. And you believe its doing you good because you KNOW you have to eat your vegetables to be healthy. But there's no flavour in the vegies because they have no mineral content ... and there's no mineral content because it isn't in the soil. There hasn't been a good mineral profile in the soil since the first couple of crops and that was seventy years ago!

Some minerals, like zinc, have never been adequate in Australian soils. And every time they take another crop out of the soil they have to pile on the drugs ... the super phosphate. When did your local farmer think to add some selenium or copper or zinc to his soil. Without copper, in minute amounts, your tissues will loose their elasticity and you're heading for varicose veins, if your lucky, or maybe an aortic aneurism or a cerebral haemorrhage; without zinc you're heading for a loss of smell and taste or maybe prostate problems or irregular menstruation; without selenium you're looking at loss of hair, nails and skin or in extreme cases paralysis and death. When was the last time your local farmer looked to see if there were any earthworms there? ... just to see if his soil could support any intelligent life? He didn't; he's too busy keeping up with the pressures of mass production, happily facilitated by the banks and the agricultural chemical companies.

Every mineral has its proper function in the body and it's the micro minerals, the trace elements, that are tied up in the phytochemicals. These are the factors which, when present in the diet, give your body the MESSAGE that you are serious about staying alive, you are serious about cellular regeneration, you are serious about having a righteous good time for years and years to come.

The Case For Supplementation

So now you're beginning to get the full picture. If you're serious about being healthy you need to get an abundance of fresh, organic vegetables, grown in mineral rich soils, with a full complement of vitamins and phytochemicals; and preferably you need to live in a pristine high mountain environment with lots of glacial water, no bad news and no radiation. ...

... but, if you're not doing all of those things, MAYBE you ought to consider getting yourself a good range of vitamin and mineral supplements just to get yourself up to a reasonable base line cellular standard of living. And for every bit of extra stress that you're putting up with in your

life, whether its air pollution or emotional stress or excess growth hormones, you ought to take a bit extra to ensure your body's immune system is adequately equipped and you're coping with the free radical assault on your cellular membranes.

Free Radicals

Did we talk about free radicals yet? Alright lets explain that one. The free radical reaction is an oxidation reaction. Oxygen is the by far the most abundant element in the body. Its job is to cleanse. When things oxidise they are being cleansed and transformed. So the free radical reaction is a normal process that helps keep our internal environment clean. It burns up toxins and undesirable particles. Excessive free radical oxidation arises in the body as a result of stress and environmental toxins and air pollutants and smoking. Any of these things can generate a free radical reaction in the body which results in the oxidation of the proteins and glucoproteins that form the structures of your tissues. Over time free radical reactions will damage your cellular membranes and this leads to serious tissue malfunctions.

This process is opposed by the antioxidants, the main ones being the vitamins C and E and pro-vitamin A or beta carotene. These have the ability to deactivate and destroy free radicals, preventing any damage they may cause. Where do you get these vitamins? ... from a laboratory? ... well, yes, you can, but does the body like them? ... not as much as whole food vitamins. Your body prefers the natural antioxidants that occur in fresh organically grown fruits and vegetables.

So how much vitamin C do you need to take? Well that depends. An average 2,500 calorie diet, if it contained plenty of fresh raw plants that were naturally high in vitamin C, that diet would contain anywhere from 2 to 10 g of vitamin C. And that could be regarded as an average daily requirement for a stress free person; the more stress you have, and the more you cook your food, the bigger your requirement for vitamin C. How many of you have eaten a bowlful of acerola cherries and a dozen lemons today?

Fatty Acids

Let's talk about the fatty acids for a while. We have already seen that there are a whole pile of essential nutrients which the body must have in order to maintain its life. Do you remember I said there are two essential fatty acids? One of these is Omega 3, the other is Omega 6. As it happens we all have an abundance of Omega 6. It is present in most oils and fats we consume. But Omega 3 is a different story. It is present in very small amounts in leafy green plants, but very few plants have a high concentration of Omega 3. This wasn't a problem for the hunter gatherers. An analysis of the stomach contents of one of our snap frozen ancestors showed he had ingested over sixty different green leafy plants. So how many of you had sixty different green leafy plants today? ... not me.

So where can we get a decent supply of Omega 3? Well you'd better find out, because a huge proportion of your nervous system is made of fat, your brain is 60% fat! Fat's important; it's just had a bad wrap ... fat's actually very hip ... as long as it's not on your hips! Anyway you need Omega 3. As well as forming nerve tissue it comprises a substantial proportion of the membrane of every cell in your body. Without Omega 3, in the right proportions to Omega 6, your cells will deteriorate way before their use by date. A deficiency of Omega 3 can increase platelet stickiness, constrict arteries, increase inflammation and inhibit the immune system. So Omega 3 is a very potent anti-inflammatory; it's also a heart tonic and it's a great mood enhancer, it has a soothing effect on the nervous system. Your body LOVES it!

Luckily there are two very good sources of Omega 3: one is flax oil and the other is fish oil. Of course you could eat fresh, deep sea, cold water fish once or twice a day ... that'd be good ... but if you don't then I recommend you get yourself a good quality fish oil or flax oil.

The Ultimate Allergy

I hope you're getting the picture that there is a big gap between what we SHOULD eat and what we DO eat. Even someone on a good organic diet, in today's world even that isn't good enough. So when we take into account the rushed meals and the high fat, high starch standard diet, it's very obvious we urgently need a good source of high potency, naturally derived vitamins, minerals and phytofactors.

Fortunately for us, there's plenty of good quality nutrients to choose from (get in touch with me and I'll tell you more). But you don't have to take all of it, you don't have to take any of it ...unless you happen to have the allergies that I've got. You see I'm allergic to pain and suffering. I don't want to drop dead of a heart attack before I learn to play the violin; I don't want to die of cancer or diabetes; I don't want to be crippled with arthritis or drowning in my own fluids because my kidneys have failed. I don't want to end my days propped up in bed without any bladder control. I'm allergic to all of that ...

... I want to die when I'm very old and feeling very young!

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