

## **Avoid the Whites – Salt, Sugar, and Flour!**

Do you need a simple rule to begin a smart nutrition routine? Try to make a change in your diet by “avoiding the whites” – those additives that supposedly will make your food taste just right or have the right consistency. To live well and be healthy, we need to make changes that may feel uncomfortable at first and possibly illogical to friends and family.

Salt, according to the Center for Science in the Public Interest, accounts for nearly 150,000 premature deaths every year primarily due to complications from high blood pressure. We do need ~ 6g of salt per day to live. Sadly, the average intake of salt is between 9g and 10g a day! Salt is a commonly occurring mineral, the technical name of which is sodium chloride. It is the sodium part of salt that is important. Sodium helps to maintain the concentration of body fluids at correct levels. It also plays a central role in the transmission of electrical impulses in the nerves, and helps cells process nutrients. The main sources of salt in the diet are processed foods, meat and meat products, bread and salt added during cooking or at the table. Experts estimate that if average consumption was cut to 6g a day it would prevent 70,000 heart attacks and strokes a year. Unfortunately, we continue to grab the salt shaker before we have even tasted our food. Poor etiquette, indeed! Most foods have so much salt in them that we now feel the cuisine is bland without the extra poison. New Zealand scientists found that the level of salt can be significantly reduced without sacrificing taste. In addition, one can eat more fruit and vegetables because they contain potassium which balances the effect of salt on the body.

Sugar, “the crack cocaine of the universal Black community,” is truly the enemy of proper nutrition. Stress has created a population of sugarholics. The average consumption of sugar per capita in the United States is 3.5 pounds a week for adults and slightly more for children. This ingredient in its various forms has been linked to almost every disease including cancer and diabetes. Sugar is a generic term used to identify simple carbohydrates, which includes monosaccharides such as fructose, glucose and galactose; and disaccharides such as maltose and sucrose (white table sugar). We must put the brakes on this toxic food by disciplining ourselves to decrease our intake of those sugar calories hiding in sodas, sweet tea, sports drinks, orange juice, and processed foods. (Drink no more than four ounces of fruit juice each day as fructose has lots of calories and more readily creates fat than glucose.). Now, don’t go eliminating all carbohydrates – that is the mistake of the Atkins diet. The focus should be on the simple carbohydrates such as sugar and white flour. Our bodies need fats, protein, and carbohydrates to function at peak performance. The definitive ratio is 40% carbohydrates, 30% protein, and 30% fat for blood sugar stabilization and the release of body fat.

Did you know that your key ingredient to that delicious bread or pie you make every holiday is an insecticide? When food is shipped it is difficult to avoid infestations by various pests such as mice, ants, crickets, rats, and insects that want to eat it during transport. However, when refined white flour is shipped and pests get in the bag they die by the time the delivery reaches the stores. Why? White flour is a natural insecticide because it kills any insect that attempts to live off it. Yet, Americans consume it in large quantities and wonder why we suffer from chronic disease. Did you know that the inclusion of hydrogenated oils, artificial preservatives, additives, and other chemicals in

bread became standard practice in the mid 1950's? Yikes! Does it make sense to then artificially "enrich" the bread by adding vitamins, minerals, and other materials destroyed in the chemical process? Other additives include alum, which gives the bread a whiter color, and emulsifiers, which are mainly used as a softening agent that can hide the signs that your bread is rotting. So, you'll just buy wheat bread instead...well, even if you buy commercially produced whole wheat bread you may be paying for white bread colored with caramel. If the first ingredient in a loaf of whole wheat bread is unbleached enriched flour, then you're actually purchasing white bread (loaded with chemicals). The solution is to bake your own bread, visit organic and natural stores, or use whole grain flour in your recipes and eat to live!

In shocking summary, the results are in – America is in a health crisis. The statistics are startling: 75% of Americans are overweight and two million more Americans become obese every year. Fifty percent of adult African American women are obese. The healthcare reform movement has too many enemies and not enough politicians with courage. So this battle is yours. Choose to modify your lifestyle gradually by incorporating an on-going and sensible cleansing, eating and exercise program. Don't go long periods of time without eating. Try eating 200-600 calories every 2.5 – 3 hours to better regulate your portions and eating frequency. Research reveals that a minimum of 10 glasses of water (decaffeinated herbal teas can be a water substitute) per day is necessary to release body fat. Drink up and flush those impurities from your body and improve digestion. And remember, information is not power; APPLIED information is power! Reduce your content of "the whites" in your diet and you will be on your way to a lifetime of improved health and wellness!