



## Our Food

**As we all know, our body needs food to function properly. But all food do not offer us the same benefits and we assimilate them very differently according to our metabolism. Some food make us healthy, other make us sick.**

During the 2 first years when pre-menopause hit me, I gained 20 pounds without understanding why or how. I had not changed my diet or lifestyle. I did not have a bad image of my body though despite these extra pounds and, to be honest, I even felt rather voluptuous... However, I did feel that my body was not functioning properly.

So I decided to undergo a blood test to see if anything was wrong and, indeed, my lipase rate (a substance secreted by the pancreas to convert triglycerides - sugars - into energy for the body) was a little high. My doctor then explained to me that I currently ate too many sugars, slow or fast, compared to my body needs and that my pancreas couldn't cope with it. At the time, because it was convenient and that I loved it, I ate a lot of pasta; I therefore decided to only keep pasta in my diet once a week, to include vegetables in my every lunches, often in the form of raw vegetables or salads, and to try to pay more attention to my satiety feeling so as not to eat more than necessary. Without any effort, or even deprivation – I eat chocolate with my coffee at every lunch and dinner and regularly have cakes and pastries – I lost my 20 pounds within 6 months without gaining them back ever since. All I had to do was to listen to my body and understand what it had to say; luckily, its dysfunction was quite mild.

As living beings, we ingest food to nourish ourselves and produce the energy necessary for our activities: if our food is wholesome, it allows us to be fit and healthy to accomplish all that we wish. Each food, vegetable and cereal provides us with different nutrients, which is why it is important to



diversify our diet as much as possible. The same goes for proteins contained in meat and fish which do not need to be consumed more than once a day for a sufficient supply for our muscles.

Combining food allows them to interact with one another, some trace elements often assimilate better with concomitant vitamin intake such as iron with vitamin C, for instance. Similarly, some food prevent certain micro-nutrients from fixing in our body, such as tea with iron: theine is an excellent antioxidant but it prevents iron from fixing, a lesson I learned the hard way when I was pregnant and suffered from anemia (iron deficiency in the blood).

Likewise, consuming green or raw vegetables, thanks to their water and fiber content – natural cleaners for the digestive system –, at the same time as cereals, pasta or potatoes help the digestive system – liver, pancreas, intestines – to assimilate their sugars without overloading the organs or inducing excessive fat storage.

There also are hyper-beneficial food such as dried fruits, often overlooked in our food cultures, which have incredible benefits for our whole body, almonds in particular. Already used by ancient Egyptians in medicine, almonds contain Omega 9, which have protective properties for our cardiovascular system, large quantities of vitamin E with antioxidant properties, magnesium for sleep, calcium for bones, potassium for the nervous system and muscles, phytosterols to reduce cholesterol, fiber to cleanse the digestive system and a large amount of protein that kills hunger in addition to nourishing our muscles. The same goes for nuts whether you consume them as fruit or oil because they contain the same nutrients as almonds but different minerals such as zinc, manganese and vitamin D. For my part, I eat about 20 almonds a day, the recommended quantity for an optimum daily benefit intake, with my afternoon tea because I always feel a little peckish at this time of day. If you choose to consume them in the morning, they will help you manage your mid-morning hunger pangs and regulate your blood sugar levels for the whole day.

It is important to keep in mind that all food are useful to us, even sugar – favor brown sugar (unrefined not treated with chemicals sugar) over white sugar – and fats if we favor omega 3, 6 and 9 contained in olive oil, rapeseed oil, dried fruits and fish, provided we select healthy food and listen to our body when it tells us to stop.

However, if our food contain substances that are harmful to our body (pesticides, toxic food coloring, chemical preservatives, poorly assimilable oils and fats, etc.), our immune system is called upon to defend itself against those substances or to repair the damages they are causing. Since it mobilizes our defences against these food, our immune system, which cannot be everywhere at the same time, becomes, in fact, less effective against diseases or infections. Therefore, the less we are careful about what we ingest, the more we are vulnerable to microbes and viruses and the more we put our organs at risk for the medium and long term.

The more our food are processed (ready-to-eat meals, industrial pastries and cakes, etc.), the more they contain harmful substances such as, for the most famous, palm and coconut oils. These oils are not correctly assimilated by our body and do not contain any essential fatty acids needed for it to



function properly; their saturated fatty acid considerably increases our cholesterol production and, in doing so, they clog our veins and arteries like kitchen sink pipes get clogged by our dirty dishes mixed with limestone grease. Palm oil also contains carcinogens such as glycydile. It should be noted that most infant formula and industrial cakes intended for children contain palm and/or coconut oil, thus preparing our children's bodies, from a very early age, for the appearing of diabetes and cardiovascular problems in their early adult life. In addition, these 2 oils being used in huge quantities by food manufacturers, because they are cheap and allow very high temperatures cooking, entire regions of the world, in particular subject to monsoons South-East Asia, were devastated by deforestation caused to excessive planting palm and coconut trees, provoking floods and major natural disasters in those parts because those trees do not have deep roots capable of stabilizing soils and retaining rainwater. Likewise, in these countries, hundreds of cheap and easily replaceable labor people, whose low-paid job is to climb trees to harvest coconuts, kill themselves each year by falling down from trees. In India, men climb up to 40 coconut trees a day. But the job is considered so dangerous by young men now that, for lack of volunteers, the country has just authorized women to take over... So that we can keep on poisoning our bodies and have great shiny hair!

Processed food also contain hidden sugars that serve to improve their taste or texture but have no nutritional value: all starches such as those in corn (which also contains GMOs as well as rice), rice and cassava or even glucose syrup (laboratory produced sugar) which also tend to appear more and more frequently in deli meats and fried chicken. Starches are present as well in almost all canned soups, accompanied by sugar and/or glucose syrup, creamy desserts, yoghurts and ready-to-eat dishes for sauce thickening. During last 10 years, beets and bamboo fibers have also appeared mixed with hamburger meat when there is no pure beef mention on the package.

Nevertheless, we must not forget that our body needs sugar to produce energy and that the use of "false sugar" in large quantities in our diet such as Stevia, agave syrup or aspartame – highly carcinogenic substance prohibited for pregnant women – disturbs organs such as liver or pancreas which, after several years of those products use, no longer know how to assimilate real sugar, causing dysfunctions of these organs and, in the long term, cancers or type 2 diabetes.

However, unprocessed food can also involve health risks because of the pesticides that are used to grow fruits and vegetables. Currently, if you drink non-organic, iced or hot tea, you drink more pesticides than tea. Similarly, one of the most widely used pesticides for potato, cereal and grape crops, SDHI, is known for its more or less long-term effects on our nervous system and brain, increasing the risk of Alzheimer and Parkinson's disease and premature dementia. The only way to escape it, again, is to consume these food in their organic versions, though not totally free from dangerous pesticides and thus to be carefully washed before eating. Indeed, organic food are far from being a guarantee of healthy food: food manufacturers have well understood how to use it as a marketing tool and their processed organic food contain just as much unhealthy fats and sugars as others.

What can we do then? Be attentive to consume better. Of course, we cannot entirely eliminate all



these substances from our plates unless we grow everything ourselves in our gardens. Nevertheless, we can be attentive to the products we eat, favor unprocessed food and read labels - you can also seek for help with a food app like [Yuka](#) which can guide you with your food and cosmetics purchases, even though their rating can sometimes be a bit questionable. For my part, the biscuits I buy for my daughter's snacks are made with pure butter and cane sugar and her yoghurts contain neither starch nor pork gelatin (yes, yes, several brands use it to make them creamier!).

However, there is no need for food terrorism either, indulging yourself once in a while by eating chemical candies, potato chips or unhealthy sugar and fat ice-creams won't kill you and will bring you joy!

**So, as in all other areas of your life, be mindful of what you eat and fully aware of your choices. In doing so, you will take better care of yourself and your loved ones while being proud of not letting your diet be dictated by anyone else but you and especially not by any greedy agri-food manufacturer!**