

'People want easy way out of problems'

Eating habits tied to healthy life'

By Betty Lippold
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We are what we eat," according to nutritionist, Maria Gonet. Working as a consultant in Kuwait, she contends that our eating habits will either provide us with robust health or send us down the rickety path of illness.

"Bad eating habits cause health problems," she stressed, "and most people don't want to take the responsibility to change those habits. Most often they would rather take some pills than change the way they eat — similar to putting a bandaid on an untreated wound."

Gonet says that "one must be truly blind not to see that what we eat affects our bodies." She pointed out the obvious fattening desserts that we find on every buffet along with highly processed fast-foods as being "real health threats to everyone, especially children who need all the right nutrients to build strong bones and a strong immune system."

She finds, in her counseling with people experiencing ill health, that "there is a strong resistance to change eating habits. People want an easy way out of the problems they are experiencing due to eating the wrong kinds of foods. They would rather be cured by others, not wanting to find the fault within themselves which is a tragedy."

Living proof of good nutrition, Gonet abounds in good health along with many of her clients who have been willing to follow her advise. She told Arab Times that "too much useless, processed food with deficiencies in nutrients overload the body's system with toxins. Add to this a lack of exercise and we have major health problems. As ill health sets in, people can no longer enjoy life."

The culprits within our present food intake can generally be found in bleached flour of breads and pastries, polished rice (with rich nutrients taken away), bleached-white sugar and other overly processed foods. "Natural unprocessed fresh fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts and seeds, greens, and herbs along with friendly bacteria found in yogurt as well as pure water provide a healthy diet that keeps illness at bay," she said. "Fish, fowl (including eggs) and lamb should be eaten in moderation and red meats should be avoided to ensure a healthy colon. Only olive oil (cold pressed) should be used and



Maria Gonet

real butter instead of margerines."

The nutritionist says she especially likes to consult with people who are having skin problems "because, if they follow my advise they will heal themselves within a very short period of time - usually within a few days or weeks. Remember, the person accomplishes their own healing — I only share my knowledge."

New 'lifestyle'

She admitted "you cannot force anyone to follow a new regime. They have to want to do this. Through research and practice, I have found there is a nutritional answer to every health problem. We shouldn't think of nutritional changes as a 'diet' but rather as a new 'lifestyle' that will provide us with excellent health."

"An imbalance in your nutritional status is called a 'disease' and there are many names under this heading. Actually, there is only one name for a disease and that is 'poor nutrition'," she stressed.

In answer to wanting to lose or gain weight, she reiterated that "only a change in your lifestyle will give you long lasting results with a slim, strong body and perfect health which I believe is a God given right to all. Our resistance to change and yearning for fast results make us weak, sick and vulnerable."

"Obesity is often challenged with 'fad diets' that merely put the body's systems into a starvation mode so that once the original bad eating habits are re-instated the person puts the weight back at a rapid pace. By totally chang-

ing to a new lifestyle which includes good nutrition and exercise (rather than a fad diet), the extra weight comes off slowly and stays off, a slimmer and healthier you," she noted.

The basic good nutrition requirements apply to everyone, "however, now and then there are people who have special requirements when their bodies can't assimilate certain foods as well as others. Not everyone has a tolerance for dairy products, seafood, salt or sugar for instance and they must be very careful ingesting these because they act just like poison to their systems. Someone suffering from heart disease or kidney failure must eliminate salt, and fats along with sugar can spell disaster to someone with high blood sugar for instance," noted Gonet.

Sugar, especially in candy and soft-drinks, will at its least rot the teeth of children. Kuwait is known for its 'sweet tooth' requirements. One has only to look at the many sweet shops throughout Kuwait and the 'door-to-door' soft drink sales to realize there is a high consumption of sugar. "Even some doctors have been known to hand out 'lollipops' to children who visit their offices," she said.

Drugs (over the counter and prescription) mostly only remove the symptoms of the disease — not the cause. Each has some small effect on the system, often with side effects that worsen the patient's condition. "Changing to good nutrition is the best way to tackle a health problem — and there are no detrimental side effects," she promised.

"Our bodies have a God given power to heal if we take care what we put into our stomachs. It is an amazing ability that is within our reach, we just need to apply the nutritional information that is available to us. With today's fast-paced demands, we tend to neglect ourselves and our families which leads to ill health. We must step back and realize that without good nutrition we have everything to lose and nothing to gain," she warned.

"As we approach the year 2000, we have the opportunity to partake of the knowledge of healing ourselves through good nutrition assuring a healthy future. So much has been researched and written about the subject so there is little excuse to continue to ignore the facts." She concluded with a question: "Since we treat our cars better than our own bodies using only proper fuel - why not proper nutrition to live a healthy life?"