

Reclaim Your Health with a Return to Nature's Diet

Andrew Iverson

Over the years I have realized that the secret to wellness isn't some fancy medicine, elite supplement, or expensive health promoting gizmo. The answer is much simpler and more practical. It comes down to one very basic concept: nature heals. If you look around, it is clear that nature continues to persevere despite our poor stewardship of the earth. Nature is self-cleansing and self-regenerating so why aren't we? Simply enough – we are.

There is nothing "new" or "cutting edge" about nature's diet. It has been around for all of human existence. What is "new" is the food we eat today! In the last 130 years we have gone from a whole food diet to a diet that comes from packages, boxes, cans and restaurants. Children today think that food comes from the store or a restaurant and don't even realize that it comes from the earth. We have replaced our ancestors' food with processed food and our forefathers' plant medicine with drugs; the result has been a disaster.

From the beginning of food processing in the 1800s, we ignored nature's first warning to us. When Japanese sailors showed signs of a deadly nervous system disease, it was found that those who ate only white rice came down with the disease, while those who ate brown rice did not. The disease was found not to be a disease after all, but rather a deficiency of vitamin B1 called beriberi.

Today we still eat white rice, but with synthetic vitamin B added back into it, instead of returning to nature's whole foods. Today our country has the highest rates of heart disease, cancer and diabetes in the world and our food remains nutritionally empty. To return to nature's diet is literally remembering what it is we have forgotten the last 130 years.

Many of our physical symptoms are messages from the body saying, "Hey you! Wake up! I'm trying to tell you to change your life!" Nutrition, not drugs, is the most effective way to treat these symptoms. This would result in a cure rather than a "cover up" or palliation of symptoms.

I travel at least yearly to foreign countries that are less developed than ours. These communities are commonly still in touch with their ancestral roots. They still live off the Earth and utilize the medicine of the Earth. Pharmaceutical drugs are not commonplace in economically disadvantaged areas of the world. People aren't taking Lipitor for their cholesterol in rural Haiti, or Prozac for depression in Bangladesh. They don't have money for expensive drugs, and they aren't dying of heart attacks and cancer like we are.

What is immediately noticeable about people in these poorer countries is that their physiques are significantly thinner than those in the western world. Also noticeable is that you do not commonly see children drinking cans of pop and juice drinks, or eating bags of chips

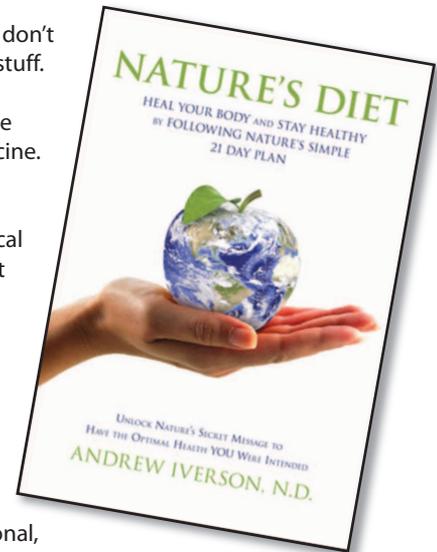
or candy, mainly because they don't have extra money to buy that stuff. These people rely on their traditional foods for sustenance and their local plants for medicine.

I was so impressed with an island village in the Caribbean where I was learning from a local medicine man. He told me that in the 40 years he had been practicing he had only seen cancer a few times in his people. The majority of the cancer patients he treated were tourists that had heard about his use of jungle medicine. Otherwise, the people there were fully functional, worked late into their life and died of age-related complications.

Consider what your grandmother's grandmother did whenever she had an ailment. She couldn't turn to a drug; the first antibiotic wasn't available until the 1920s and Tylenol not until the 1950s. Your grandmother's grandmother likely used food and plants as her medicine. In just over 60 years we have produced more than 15,000 types of medications, and there is no end in sight. We are exposing our cells to hundreds of thousands of environmental chemicals that have never before been seen in all of history. We are just beginning to understand the effects and the consensus is not favorable.

Half the wild animal population does not die from heart disease or cancer like Americans do. They die from natural predators that eat them for food, or from the destruction by humans of their natural habitat, which results in a lack of food and shelter. They also die from bacterial infections, viruses, fungi and parasites like our ancestors did before hygienic methods were commonly used. Now however, even wild animals are starting to see cases of cancer because of the pollution of their environment which lowers their immune system.

Natural medicine is not like conventional medicine. It does not treat a specific disease with one specific plant or vitamin like conventional medicine treats with a specific drug. Natural medicine treats the whole organism, the whole person. It works by nourishing the body so that it has the proper nutrients needed for repair and detoxification. When all systems of the body are functioning optimally, the body is able to heal optimally.



Dr. Iverson is a Naturopathic Physician whose medical interests and expertise are in the fields of nutritional medicine, biochemical and pH testing, and detoxification through fasting and botanical medicine. The author of Nature's Diet, he is the founder and director of Trilium Health, a successful holistic health clinic in Tacoma, Washington.