

3 - NUTRITION

Reflections:

“When highly skilled physicians shall fully examine this matter, thoroughly and perseveringly, it will be clearly seen that the incursion of disease is due to a disturbance in the relative amounts of the body’s component substances, and that treatment consisteth in adjusting these relative amounts, and that this can be apprehended and made possible by means of foods.

“It is certain that in this wonderful new age the development of medical science will lead to the doctors’ healing their patients with foods. For the sense of sight, the sense of hearing, of taste, of smell, of touch—all these are discriminative faculties, their purpose being to separate the beneficial from whatever causeth harm.”ⁱ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

“Many of us have swallowed the idea that when it comes to food, faster is better. We are in a hurry, and we want meals to match. But many people are waking up to the drawbacks of the gobble-gulp-and-go ethos. On the farm, in the kitchen and at the table, they are slowing down.”ⁱⁱ Carl Honoré

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Food nourishes your bodies. When you maintain excellent nutrition, your bodies function better, your thinking is clearer and more effective, and your emotions are more likely to stay stable or rebalance easily. If you choose simple, high-quality food, well-being is likelier to occur. Your nutrition choices can prevent illness. If you help each other grow, buy, cook, and eat good food, meals become pleasurable occasions.

Science is still uncovering knowledge about food and how it behaves in our bodies and influences health or causes illness. Every person’s body is unique, and foods and supplements behave differently for each person.

However, there are general principles that will usually guide you in a beneficial direction:

- Fresh and simple foods
- Minimally processed and affected by chemicals
- Variety of colors and flavors
- Fruits, vegetables, proteins, and grains in balance
- Clean water purifies and hydrates your bodies, which are composed of a large amount of water

A Couple’s Experience:

“We began with one of us mostly vegetarian and the other eating meat regularly. We decided to experiment with meeting in the middle and eating more of each other’s choices, while also listening to the needs of our individual bodies. Over time, we discovered intolerance issues with some grains, and that caused us to make further adjustments.

“We have two sons now, and they have their own needs and desires for us to manage. However, unity is always important to us, so we choose to eat as a family and strive to eat as close to the same thing as possible. It’s just too difficult to prepare separate meals. Often, we eat slightly different meals, but we do it together.”

Well-Being Discussion:

- How do foods and nutritional supplements seem to affect our bodies? Moods? Energy levels? What changes do we want to make?

- What are our views about home cooking from fresh ingredients rather than eating out at restaurants or buying pre-prepared foods? How can we increase the number of home-cooked meals we consume as a couple? As a family?
- How are meals different when we eat on the run or separately compared to when we sit down together as a couple or family (without the TV on and accessing electronic devices)? How does it feel when we invite friends to our home and share food with them?

Learning Activities to Try:

- Keep food diaries for a few days or a week, noting what we ate and how we felt as a result. What foods make us feel poorly or positively, such as heavy, energized, achy, tired, light, heavy, bloated, or satisfied?
- Research two foods that we eat regularly to understand what they are composed of and their potential benefits.
- Plan a simple, nutritious meal and invite another couple or family to eat with us.

Conscious Focus:

“We value the strength and vitality that comes from excellent nutrition.”

ⁱ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, #134

ⁱⁱ Carl Honoré, *In Praise of Slowness*, p. 58