



Food is Fuel For Your Brain

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled "All Psyched Up" for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of "Life is An Adventure...every step of the way" and "Open for Business Success" is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drlindahancock.com

Published

December 3rd, 2008

I love desserts. In fact, ice cream for breakfast would suit me just fine.

Over the years, however, I have had to face the fact that we truly "are what we eat" and if we are only eating foods that hold empty calories without good energy we are in trouble.

Imagine that instead of filling your gas tank with fuel what would happen if you filled it with sugar. How many miles per gallon do you think you could travel?

I once worked for a man who did his doctoral dissertation on the association between eating breakfast and good academic achievement. His work clearly showed the connection between young students who had a healthy meal at the start of the day and the ability that they could demonstrate in class.

The *Food Channel* chef Jamie Oliver of England recently brought attention to the importance of having proper nutrition for children within the school setting. Thankfully, Canadian society is also beginning to not only recognize this but also to ensure that schools are implementing changes to that effect.

One of the schools in our city has breakfast on the desk of every student each morning. The child is required to refuse it rather than having to ask for it. What a wonderful concept! As well, several other schools are examining foods that are sold during lunch and replacing both pop and "junk food" machines with ones that vend healthy choices.

Good nutrition is about three things: having the right foods in the right amounts at the right times.

Often we eat too much of the wrong things. Recently I met a friend who I hadn't seen for a few weeks. How surprised I was to become aware of the fact that he has lost over thirty pounds! He told me he still eats a lot but instead of having a twelve ounce steak he now has a four ounce steak supplemented with vegetables and is satisfied, not only with the meal, but also with how he feels and looks now.

My doctor would love to see me lower my cholesterol and lose a few pounds. Sometimes I tell him about a new "scheme" that I have heard about for doing this. He is always so kind and patient as he reminds me "Linda, it's all about what you put in your mouth and how much you move". Pretty simple, when you think about it this way, isn't it? But we all seem to be looking for a magic solution!

In 2007, the *Canada Food Guide* was revised. An internet version found at http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/myguide-monguide/index_e.html allows you to study the categories and prepare a personalized plan for your daily living. It's fun and practical.

Well, let's think about what would happen if you treated your vehicle like you treat your body. If that's a scary idea to you, perhaps it is time to make some changes.

Remember "You are what you eat!"