

Ageing Well Workshop (5/26/2024) Final

Speaker: Aimee Yan, MS RD

Title: Longevity, Health and Nutrition

"Thank you for inviting me to come speak to you about nutrition as we age. I am Aimee Yan, MS RD. I brought handouts to share with you. They are here on the table. Please take the ones you want. Now, let's start with your questions."

Q1: Are there supplements you would recommend as we age?

First, ask your doctor for specifics tailored to your body's needs, but generally the top three supplements are calcium, B-12 and vitamin D. A multivitamin is a good way to get started.\

Q2: How should we look at diet to align with age, lifestyle, and health/medical conditions holistically?

- A good overall diet to follow is the Mediterranean Diet:
 - Fruit, Vegetables, Legumes, Whole grains, Nuts, Plant based oils like olive oil, Fish 2x/week. Include moderate amounts of poultry, eggs, dairy, cheese. Include less animal fat, saturated fats and sugar.
- Another recommended diet is the DASH Diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension):
 - Focus is to treat or help prevent high blood pressure by focusing on lowering salt intake by eating Fruit & Vegetables, Whole grains, Nuts, Low fat dairy, Lean proteins, Vegetable oils.
- A third recommended diet is the MIND Diet (Mediterranean-DASH diet intervention for neurological delay)
 - Combines aspects from both the Mediterranean and the DASH diets. Whole grains, Berries, Vegetables, Olive oil, Poultry and Fish.
- Our gut biome has a connection with the mind. It enhances Serotonin. 3 years of research have shown how what you eat affects all kinds of health issues. Digesting red meat in the gut may promote cancer. The recommendation is less red meat, more fish and seafood, but moderation is the key.
 - Fish as well as crustaceans are considered to be Seafood. Seafood contains Omega 3's which are good for your heart. The brain is cholesterol and fat so fat is needed in your diet for your brain. The emphasis is on using good oils, olive and fish oil, because they contain Omega 3's.

Q3: Is there an optimal eating schedule?

Eating 3x/day was the standard for a long time. Intermittent fasting is more recent and some research suggests longer life if we eat this way. It isn't good for some because it can produce low blood sugar. 20% of daily calories are needed for our brain function.

Some suggest just eating when you are hungry is best. Eating a balanced diet utilizing one of these plans that fits your needs is good.

Q4: Where can I find practical and credible nutrition information?

The Standard American Diet (SAD), also known as the Western Diet, is an eating pattern common in the US. It is characterized by processed foods, refined carbohydrates, added sugars, refined fats, high fat dairy products and red meat. The FDA issues nutritional information every five years. The "Food Pyramid" was the standard until 2011. Then the "My Plate" diagram showing the 4 food group proportions in a divided circle like a plate was published:

- ½ fruit & vegetables, ¼ carbohydrates, ¼ protein to better address our more sedentary work and life styles.

Q5: What fish is best to eat?

Bigger fish may possibly have more mercury vs little fish due to accumulation in big fish as they eat the smaller fish. Wild vs farmed has more oils but is more expensive. Both are safe to eat and the difference is minimal.

Q6: Handling fresh fruit and vegetables

Certain foods are better as organic because the skins hold pesticides. Washing fruits and vegetables to remove pesticides is a good idea but making things too sterile is not good either. We need to be in contact with some germs to keep healthy.

Q7: What about including foods that are anti-inflammatory?

Research shows much disease is caused by inflammation. Our body has an army in its immune system. When there is a germ introduced, cytokines are produced to fight it.

Antioxidants in fruits and vegetables reduce inflammation. Look for foods with color because they contain the compounds that are anti-inflammatory. In the summer there are so many to choose from. Each color is a compound:

Polyphenols, Vitamin A. Don't forget white is also a color. Onions and garlic have the antioxidant quercetin. The more colorful your plate, the more polyphenols and therefore more antioxidants

Q8: What foods are inflammatory?

The worst foods for inflammation are ones filled with nitrates, processed foods that contain preservatives. Eating more natural foods that are less processed helps avoid added chemicals in your diet.

Q9: Fresh food makes for a healthy diet, but what about availability?

The world has so many people to feed, we can't always have just fresh fruit and vegetables to eat. We do need to rely on some preserved food. Canning and freezing are good techniques for preserving fresh foods. Using nut oils, not animal oils, are good and are available. Whole grains keep the whole grain intact, add fiber and are generally available.

Q10: How can we get enough calcium to avoid osteoporosis?

Calcium is important for maintaining bone. Legumes (peas, lentils, beans) have calcium, but the body is less able to absorb plant based calcium. Dairy products like milk, yogurt and cheese are traditional sources of calcium more easily utilized by the body. Milk is also fortified with vitamin D which helps with calcium absorption. Getting sun on your skin 15-30 minutes per day allows your body to generate vitamin D too but one can take a vitamin D supplement too.

Q11: Why is including enough fiber in our daily diet important ?

The American diet is not so high in fiber, think meat and potatoes. Kale smoothies have become popular with the younger generation delivering more fiber. Eating 5-9 servings of fruit and vegetables per day is a way to include fiber in your diet. Fiber is prebiotic. More fiber produces better health outcomes. It helps the liver break down fat. Oatmeal fiber lowers cholesterol. Blood sugar level is lowered when you eat more fiber. Also worth noting, fermented foods like kimchi, sauerkraut, pickles and pickled vegetables add fiber and contain probiotics which are the good bacteria we need in our gut that live on the fiber. Fiber breaks down to confer a good outcome, biochemical not mechanical. There are 2 kinds of fiber, soluble in fruit & vegetables and insoluble like bran.

Q12: What are some changes that affect diet and health as we age?

Grocery stores offer processed foods that are quick, easy and often salty which are already not the best foods to be eating, especially as we get older. Our tongue senses Bitter, Sweet, Sour and Salt. We need our sense of smell to taste food. But, we lose taste buds so the full flavors from our food are reduced. Maintaining proper fiber intake requires us to drink more fluids to stay well but the fear of

incontinence or loss of feeling thirsty may stop us. Dehydration can leave one open to bladder infections.

"Thank you for being here and for asking good questions. Don't forget the handouts."