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## Preface

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Plan D is the anti-Diet. When I tell people that I repeatedly failed at dieting for the majority of my life, but eventually claimed victory over my lifelong battle with obesity, the first question I am asked is “What did you do?” Most expect me to name a popular weight loss program or surgery, but the answer is deeply personal and intrinsically richer than expected. By disposing of my diet mentality and reaching beyond the conventional approaches to nutrition, I uncovered the true answer to weight loss and optimal health. I learned that true health doesn’t come from a diet, a supplement, or a surgery. By simply eating foods in the form that our bodies are designed to eat them, thereby eliminating processed foods from my life; I released 100 pounds and have kept them off for more than 16 years.

Since then I have been guiding people of all ages and walks of life in their own quest for permanent weight loss and long-term health. As a chemist, nutrition educator and diet counselor, I am on a personal mission to transform the way our nation approaches food, health, eating, and weight loss. By taking a holistic approach to address the root cause of ill health—my own and subsequently the health of others—I developed a *way of eating for life*—not a diet—called *Plan D*.

One evening in the fall of 2004, I was conducting a nutrition lecture at a local grocery store. Afterward, a middle-aged woman from the audience approached me and exclaimed, “That was amazing! You need to put all of that information into a book.” It was the first time in her life she had ever heard that whole natural sugar cane contains an abundance of vitamins and minerals that actually nourish the human body if consumed in its whole natural state. She was astounded to learn that the most abundant mineral in the natural sugar cane is calcium—and it is that very calcium which is required by the human body to properly digest sugar. No doctor had ever told her that improper digestion of sugar leads to a number of common diseases. By listening to the lecture, she made the connection that her osteoporosis—a degenerative disease stemming from calcium-deficient bones—was most likely due to the fact that her flour and sugar-laden diet was leaching the calcium from her bones, rather than from a lack of calcium in her diet. Uncomfortably overweight, she was enlightened to the wisdom of our not-so-distant ancestors—that eating foods in their closest to natural form is the true path to sustained weight loss, and in fact the remedy for almost any “dis-ease.”

In response to this woman’s initial request, and with the support and encouragement of my partner and husband Michael, I wrote my first book—a cookbook titled *Dee’s Mighty Cookbook: Tasty Cuisine for Flourless and Sugarless Living*. The premise for the cookbook was twofold: to educate readers on the health effects of eating refined white sugar and flour and to provide them with easy to follow recipes as a practical way to transition to a sugar-free and flour-free lifestyle.

In addition to the tasty and easy to prepare recipes, the book contained two chapters outlining what the astounded woman had heard in my lecture. “What’s So Bad About Sugar and Flour?” detailed the reasons why white flour and white sugar are at the top of my list of *substances* that should never be ingested by the human body. “The Six Most Important Foods For Good Health and Weight Loss” assisted readers in finding suitable replacements for white flour and sugar in their diets. The chapter explained to readers the value of including these most essential foods into their lifestyle. A third chapter related my own personal struggle with food and weight, and how I was able to transform from an obese junk-food junkie into a slim, trim nutrition savvy expert. On the back cover of the book I invited readers to connect with me via e-mail to share their experiences with the recipes and improvements in their health.

Despite my own commitment to this lifestyle, I released the book with a bit of trepidation as to whether the American public was ready to embrace the idea that refined white sugar and flour really are the bane of weight loss and good health. However, my doubts were immediately allayed when suddenly people from all over the country and all walks of life sent me their success stories after following the simple guidelines outlined in the cookbook. To date, our self-published cookbook has sold over 7,000 copies.

Shortly after the release of the cookbook, I developed an eight-week weight loss course called *Health From the Heart* designed to educate people on how to implement the principles of flourless and sugarless living. The content of the eight-week class was the inception for *Plan D*. The course included my then unnamed eating plan, with recipes and menu guidelines. Each week I explained the science behind the individual components of the plan, and also gave a cooking lesson featuring recipes from my cookbook so that students could see how easy it is to prepare healthy food and taste for themselves how delicious it can be. Participants in the classes raved over the food, not to mention the success of their weight loss by following the plan.

At the same time, a natural food market chain picked up the cookbook and still to this day regularly features my lectures in their stores throughout the Southwest. Positive reviews appeared on Amazon.com, on-line cookbook review websites, and diet blogs. Feature stories in national magazines such as *Quick and Simple Magazine*, and *Obesity Help Magazine* catapulted my simple cookbook into the national spotlight. I landed regular cooking segments on local network channels, featuring favorite recipes from the cookbook. As a sought after nutrition and weight loss expert, *Woman's World Magazine* featured my advice in several of their articles on healthy food products and cooking.

Due to the sheer number of e-mails I received, I could not keep up with them all, so Michael established a message board on our website for people to post questions and get answers in a broad forum. We also created a podcast show called "Diet Science", which allowed me to expand on many of the topics from the book. We offered scientific nutritional information on current health related topics in a fun and informative format as a way to educate the public. The "Diet Science" Weekly podcast became so popular that it was nominated by Podcaster News as the best podcast in the Health and Fitness category for its straight talk nutritional information. The e-mails and message board postings from Diet Science listeners and followers of the cookbook gave me the opportunity to personally connect with individuals all over the world. As a result, I have been blessed with many new friends and followers.

As I heard from people around the globe, one thing became clear: they were hungry for the truth about food and they wanted and needed more. Many wanted more in-depth information about what is and isn't safe to eat. Some craved more science, while others just wanted new recipes and advice on new food products. Many asked for specific portion guidelines, and how much of each type of food to eat each day. They wanted daily and weekly menu plans, gluten-free ideas, and nutritional analyses of the recipes. They wanted to know which vitamins and supplements to take, what type of water to drink, where to find healthy food products, how to stock a healthy pantry, and what to do when you go out to eat. In other words, they wanted *Plan D*.

All of this unexpected attention, however, did more than just spotlight the concept of flourless and sugarless cooking. It was the beginning of a growing movement that has since been named

“Processed-Free Living.” Processed-Free Living is an individual’s enlightened and staunch desire to avoid, as much as possible, the more than 10,000 synthetic chemicals that are added to the foods most Americans eat each day. These chemicals have shaped the landscape of America’s food supply and include flavor enhancers, stabilizers, preservatives, colorings, hormones, antibiotics, artificial sweeteners, trans-fats and pesticides, just to name a few!

It is astounding that, in the name of science, we as a nation blindly and tragically denounced many of our traditional real foods as unhealthy, and replaced them with synthetically made chemicals. Out of fear of rising cholesterol levels and heart disease, we swapped real eggs for Eggbeaters and real butter for margarine. At the same time we added, by nearly 1000 percent, more white sugar and white flour to our diets. Most recently we traded white sugar for an even more processed sweetener called high fructose corn syrup (HFCS). Studies show that metabolism of HFCS elevates triglyceride levels and promotes a serious health condition called fatty liver. Traditional wisdom and sheer intuition would tell us that not only does it not make sense to replace real food with chemicals; it simply cannot be sustained.

In an interview printed in the January 2007 issue of *Experience Life Magazine*, wellness and weight loss expert Mark Hyman, MD points out:

Healthy eating is about respecting how our bodies are designed. There are some foods our bodies naturally thrive on, and others that tend to make us sick and fat. At core, we’re all designed to eat real food. By that, I mean foods without labels that haven’t been highly processed, that aren’t foreign to our DNA—essentially, whole foods that derive as directly as possible from the natural world.

The foods most of us thrive on include unprocessed fruits and vegetables; beans and legumes; nuts and seeds; and lean, free-range, wild or pasture-raised animal proteins, including eggs and wild fish like sardines and salmon. These are the foods our bodies are designed to optimally function on and that support both good health and proper body composition.

Making the decision to eat processed-free foods can sometimes seem confusing and daunting. If you’ve ever wondered whether Newman’s O’s are really better for you than Oreos, you’re not alone. Recognizing the need to provide affordable nutrition education to both young and old, in 2007 Michael and I established a non-profit organization called *The Center For Processed-Free Living*. The Center for Processed-Free Living is committed to providing education, support services, and an environment that supports living without processed foods—thereby helping to eliminate childhood and adult obesity. Its mission is to offer a sustainable, healthy lifestyle based on accurate scientific data where people of all ages can discover the personal power to improve health, lose weight and keep it off. Proceeds from the sale of this book and related products go toward the programs offered by The Center.

*Plan D* is the culmination of the work we have been doing over the past several years, which includes the testimonials and success stories of people who have experienced weight loss and improved health by following its tenets. Our mailing list numbers in the thousands, and I know you will feel encouraged to begin *Plan D* by reading some of the inspiring stories that people who are just like you have sent me.

The first part of the book introduces/reintroduces you to me. I will tell you my own personal health and weight loss journey—the struggle and eventual triumph—and will delve into the specifics of how I overcame my love affair with fast foods, donuts, and chocolate. I will also tell you what I have learned over the years since then about how the chemicals in those foods were probably more responsible for my weight problem than I ever realized.

I will recap *What's So Bad About Flour and Sugar?*, with a more in-depth explanation of the delicate balance between what we eat and how it ultimately affects our health. You will learn of two amazing nutritional studies that formed the basis for *Plan D*, as I draw heavily upon my science background to illustrate and emphasize the importance of eating foods in their most closest to natural form.

Then we move on to the components of *Plan D*. You'll learn the importance of reading ingredients lists, and discover the names of hidden food ingredients in so-called healthy foods that actually make you sick and fat. The world of fats and oils will be demystified, and you'll understand why low fat diets can be dangerous. I'll explain why the National Academy of Sciences has declared that there is *no safe amount* of trans-fat, and that if there is one thing you do to improve your health, it is to eliminate this devastating artificial oil from your life. The importance of eating organic foods is outlined, and I will explain how you can easily eat organic foods while remaining within your food budget.

Next, the specifics of *Plan D* are outlined in detail. As most of the students in my classes have heard me say, “The amount of vegetables you eat is directly proportional to the amount of weight you will lose and the amount of health you will gain.” *Plan D* emphasizes fresh vegetables and fruits, beneficial fats and oils, whole grains, lean protein sources, and of course water! You'll also discover that exercise, rest, relaxation, a positive attitude, and journaling are essential components of Plan D. There is also a section on recommended vitamins and helpful supplements to enhance and support a healthy balanced lifestyle.

You will also find all of the information you have been asking for: weekly menus with portion guidelines and helpful cooking tips (like the best way to steam vegetables without losing nutrients). You will also have more than fifty new Dee-licious recipes, as well as a useful guide for modifying your favorite comfort foods into healthful fare. You'll also discover that eating processed-free is doable in restaurants if you're choosy and ask the right questions, and that traveling and staying in other's homes is easier than you think. I have also included a glossary and a list of resources where you can find more information about some of the studies, ideas, and products mentioned in this book.

There has been a wealth of questions posted on my message board over the years concerning *Plan D* and other nutrition and health concerns. My research into the answers has been intriguing and enlightening, therefore the final part of the book is a compilation of the “best of” those questions and my honest answers. It is my intention to provide you with the straight truth about the food supply, and how to take nutritional responsibility for your own health.

It's important to point out that the word *diet* comes from the Greek word *dieta*, which means “discipline” or “way of living.” The Latin root of the word means “a day's journey.” I encourage you to approach adopting Plan D as a process to be taken one day at a time. The key is to make real changes—changes you can live with successfully on a long-term basis—in the way you approach food, fitness, and the challenges and opportunities of living.

Each of the individual stories that you read in this book illustrate how each person's experience with *Plan D* is unique. I've taken the liberty of modifying one of my favorite passages from the book *If the Buddha Came to Dinner* by Halé Sofia Schatz to encourage you along your own path to health:

I invite you on a journey of inner growth through feeding yourself with great intention, care, and love. A true journey can't be made in a day, a week, or even eight weeks. Likewise, *Plan D* isn't a quick fix-it diet program; it's a slow, steady, lifetime process. On this journey, there are a few rules—such as making the commitment to care for yourself on many levels—but there is no “getting it right.” A Buddhist monk once told his students: “There is no good meditation; there is no bad meditation; there is just meditation.” So if you fall back into old unhealthy food patterns one day, then gently bring yourself back to center the next day, or even with the next bite. No big deal. Because your experience with *Plan D* is *your* process, it will be uniquely your own.

Finally, while my own journey has been personal and unique, at the very core I am just like you. I have been there—100 pounds overweight, unhealthy and in the depths of hopelessness. If I can change, so can you.

My intention now is to use my experience to create a space for change; to educate and enlighten you on the value of proper nutrition, and to guide you in your transition to processed-free living. Welcome to Plan D. Welcome Home.

—Dee McCaffrey

### **Food as Nature Intended**

The secret to extracting the most powerful life force energy from your food is to choose natural, healthy foods and to prepare them in a manner that enhances their nutritional elements. Is it possible to design a food plan full of nutritionally, rich food that will strengthen your immune system, heal diseases, and maintain optimal health? Scientists believe it is and I support that belief. My own story, and that of many of my clients, demonstrates that the foods one selects and prepares in a healthy manner are the crucial component to a healthy, winning life style.

I suggest these guidelines for selecting nutritionally rich foods; they are the foundation for Plan D. They include:

- Eat foods in their closest to natural form as possible
- Avoid salty foods
- Avoid fatty foods
- Bake, broil, grill, or stir-fry rather than fry foods
- Drink plenty of water
- Eat plenty of vegetables and salads

First and foremost, always select foods that are in their most natural form. In other words, avoid processed foods; select raw foods as the basis for your food plan. Is it necessary to only buy organic foods? While organic foods are my first preference (see the Make Mine Organic section), the real key to healthy food selection is to avoid foods that contain additives and artificial ingredients.

### **Become A Food Detective**

How can you avoid additive and artificial ingredients in the foods you purchase? First and foremost, I encourage you to become a food detective and read food ingredient labels very carefully.

There is an epidemic of additive consumption in America. I cannot stress enough the risk of damage on healthy cells caused by food additives. Numerous studies over the past 50 years have tracked the increased consumption of additives in the western diet and the corresponding negative effect on health.

One study indicated, “The average American consumes about 5 pounds of additives per year. If you include sugar—the food-processing industry’s most used additive—the number jumps to 135 pounds a year.”<sup>12</sup>

In another report, “The Adverse Effects of Food Additives on Health”, it is estimated that the amount of additives ingested annually per person is even higher with proven negative effects on physical and mental health. It is reported:

The use of food additives has increased enormously in the last few decades. As the result, it has been estimated that today about 75% of the Western diet is made up of various processed foods, each person consuming an average 8-10 lbs of food additives per year, with some possibly eating even more. The following 16 adverse effects have been attributed to the consumption of food additives: eczema, urticaria, angioedema, exfoliative dermatitis, irritable bowel syndrome, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, rhinitis, bronchospasm, migraine, anaphylaxis, hyperactivity and other behavioral disorders. With the great increase in the use of food additives, there also has emerged considerable scientific data linking food additive intolerance with various physical and mental disorders, particularly with childhood hyperactivity.<sup>13</sup>

Let's look at just one chemical, sodium benzoate, which is derived from benzoic acid and is used as a preservative by the carbonated drinks industry to prevent mold in soft drinks. If we look at the research of Professor Peter Piper, a professor of molecular biology and biotechnology at Sheffield University, who is considered an expert in aging, we will be able to understand the effects of sodium benzoate on our cells. He looked specifically at the effect of benzoate on the mitochondria DNA in cells. After testing the effect of sodium benzoate on living yeast cells in his laboratory, Professor Piper reported:

These chemicals have the ability to cause severe damage to DNA in the mitochondria to the point that they totally inactivate it: they knock it out altogether.

The mitochondria consumes the oxygen to give you energy and if you damage it - as happens in a number in diseased states - then the cell starts to malfunction very seriously. And there is a whole array of diseases that are now being tied to damage to this DNA - Parkinson's and quite a lot of neurodegenerative diseases, but above all the whole process of aging.<sup>14</sup>

There are more than 3000 different chemicals that are purposefully added to our food supply. The testing for the safety of these chemicals is usually funded or performed by the company that wants to produce the chemicals or to use the chemical additives in the foods they produce.

In 1958, an amendment to Food Additive laws prohibited any additives shown to cause cancer in humans or animals from being added to our food. However, economic pressure from industries has caused the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to relax these standards and allow some cancer causing and otherwise harmful substances to be used in foods.

### Delaney Clause

The Delaney Clause was included in the Food Additives Amendment of 1958 and stated that no food additive (including pesticides) shall be considered safe if it is found to induce cancer when ingested by man or animal (a zero cancer risk standard).



In its entirety it reads:

*"No additive shall be deemed to be safe if it is found to induce cancer when ingested by man or laboratory animals or if it is found, after tests which are appropriate for the evaluation of the safety of food additives, to induce cancer in man or animals."*

The Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) signed into law August 3, 1996 revised the Delaney Clause so that it no longer affects pesticides. The FQPA instead instituted a general "safe" standard of a reasonable certainty of no harm to consumers.

The FDA has come up with a classification list of foods and food additives that it has deemed safe for human consumption. This list is called the Generally Regarded as Safe (GRAS) list.

The FDA evaluates additives ONLY based on their ability to cause cancer and harmful reproductive effects.

The FDA DOES NOT evaluate, and in fact ignores, other harmful reactions or outcomes from ingesting a food additive.

Many additives have not undergone any testing, but they are regarded as safe by the scientific community. These substances are put on the GRAS list, which contains approximately 700 items. Examples of some of the items on this list are: guar gum, sugar, salt, and vinegar. The list is evaluated on an ongoing basis.

A number of formerly GRAS food additives have been removed from the GRAS list after they were found to be harmful. It is with virtual certainty that some additives that are now being commonly used and are considered to be safe, will be taken off the GRAS at some point in the future.

Additives that are individually safe may be harmful in combination with other additives. Testing for additive safety is performed for individual additives, not for combinations of additives. It is rare that any food has only one additive in it.

The effects on human health of the many different additives used in the thousands of different combinations is unknown.

### How To Read an Ingredient List

Finding the ingredient list on a food package and also being able to read it can sometimes be a challenge. Ingredient lists are often in very small print or under the flap of the packaging material. If you need glasses to read, you should always bring them with you to the grocery store.

Packages may have statements like “Natural Fruit Flavors,” “Made with Real Fruit Juice,” “All Natural Ingredients” and “No Preservatives Added.”

These statements *do not* mean that there are no harmful chemicals in the product. Manufacturers bank on the hope that you’ll think these are healthy natural products. *You need to read the ingredient list* and compare the additives with the list provided here.

Ingredients are listed in order of the weight of the ingredient in the recipe. Therefore, the ingredient that weighs the most is listed first; the ingredient that weighs the least is listed last.

*PLEASE NOTE:* You will often see the statement “Contains less than 2% of the following ingredients.” Do not be fooled by this. If a food contained less than 2% of arsenic or other poisonous substance, you will still be poisoned.

As a general rule, if the ingredient list is long and contains names of chemicals that you cannot pronounce, you are probably risking your health by eating it. If the ingredient list is short, it may or may not have harmful additives in it, so read ingredients carefully before you decide to purchase the product.

The following is a list of some common food additives and their documented health effects:

Acacia gum – may cause skin rashes

Acesulfame K (also called Acesulfame Potassium) –a high potency artificial sweetener that is definitely NOT safe. Even compared to aspartame and saccharin (which are afflicted with their own safety problems), acesulfame K is the worst. The additive is inadequately tested, the FDA based its approval on tests of acesulfame K that fell short of the FDA's own standards. But even those tests indicate that the additive causes cancer in animals, which means it may increase cancer risk in humans. In 1987, the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) urged the FDA not to approve acesulfame K, but was ignored. After the FDA gave the chemical its blessing, CSPI urged that it be banned. The FDA hasn't yet ruled on that request.

Alpha Tocopherol – also referred to as Vitamin E; may be corn, peanut, or soy based; large doses may be harmful if you have high blood pressure.

Aluminum – may be associated with senility, memory problems, kidney problems, neurological problems, mouth ulcers, mineral malabsorption. Other names: Aluminum ammonium sulfate, aluminum calcium silicate, aluminum chloride, aluminum potassium sulfate, aluminum sulfate

Benzoic Acid, Benzoate of Soda, Calcium Benzoate – can convert into benzene, a toxic and carcinogenic compound. Can cause skin rashes, stomach upset, neurological disorders; has caused birth defects in animals, moderately toxic if swallowed.

BHA (butylated hydroxyanisole) – can cause liver and kidney damage, behavioral problems, infertility, weakened immune system, birth defects, cancer, should be avoided by infants and young children.

BHT (butylated hydroxytoluene) – same problems as BHA. Has been banned in England.

FD&C Red, Green, Blue, Yellow – may contain aluminum, may be contaminated with carcinogens, causes thyroid tumors.

Potassium Bromate, Bromated Flour - used to enhance flours to make bread more fluffy, causes cancer in lab animals. Banned worldwide except in Japan and U.S.

Benzaldehyde, Butyl Acetate – may cause central nervous system depression, decreased sex drive, immune system stress.

Calcium Caseinate –may contain free glutamic acid or MSG, harmful to anyone with milk allergies.

Calcium Disodium EDTA – may cause skin irritation, stomach upset, liver and kidney damage.

Calcium Chloride – may cause heart problems, stomach upset. Calcium chloride tastes extremely salty and is used an ingredient in some foods, especially pickles to give a salty taste while not increasing the food's sodium content.

Canola Oil—toxic; genetically engineered from rapeseed oil; processed at extremely high temperatures; depletes body stores of vitamin E; contains trans-fats; caused kidney, heart, thyroid and adrenal problems in lab animals; depresses the immune system; blocks enzyme function; no studies done on humans for safety.

Carrageenan – comes from seaweed, undegraded version has not caused cancer in animals. Degraded carrageenan has caused cancer in rats. Product labels do not distinguish between degraded and undegraded carrageenan. Those with intestinal problems such as Chron's, IBS and colitis should avoid.

Corn Syrup, High Fructose Corn Syrup – Highly refined processed sweetener associated with blood sugar problems and obesity. Causes mineral and B-vitamin deficiencies.

Monosodium Glutamate (MSG), Free Glutamates – may cause brain damage, esp. in children; always found in the following: autolyzed yeast, calcium caseinate, glutamate, glutamic acid, hydrolyzed corn gluten, hydrolyzed protein, hydrolyzed soy protein, monopotassium glutamate, monosodium glutamate, pea protein, plant protein extract, sodium caseinate, textured protein, yeast extract, yeast food and yeast nutrient. May be in the following: barley malt, boullion broth, carrageenan, citric acid, enzymes, anything enzyme modified, anything fermented, flavors and flavorings, malt extract, malt flavoring, maltodextrin, natural flavors and flavorings, natural chicken flavoring, natural beef flavoring, soy protein, soy protein concentrate, and foods that proclaim NO MSG, NO Added MSG or NO MSG Added. Monosodium glutamate is used to induce obesity in laboratory animals. Quite possibly induces obesity in humans.

Modified Food Starch – processed with chemicals of questionable safety. Modified starches are used in processed foods to improve their consistency and keep the solids suspended. Starch and modified starches sometimes replace large percentages of more nutritious ingredients, such as fruit.

Mono & Diglycerides- these are just hydrogenated oils in disguise. Makes bread softer and prevents staling, improves the stability of margarine, makes caramels less sticky, and prevents the oil in peanut butter from separating out.

Nitrates and Nitrites – form powerful cancer-causing agents in the stomach, considered dangerous by the FDA but not banned because they prevent botulism. Found most often in cured and smoked meats such as hot dogs, bologna, salami, smoked turkey, ham, bacon and sausage.

Nutrasweet, Aspartame – may cause central nervous system disturbances, brain lesions and menstrual difficulties. Headaches are common symptom. Metabolic breakdown products are formaldehyde and methanol--two known carcinogens. In combination with MSG causes multiple sclerosis symptoms.

Natural Flavors - may be chemically extracted and processed and in combination with other food additives not required to be listed on ingredient labels. May contain MSG.

Phosphates, Phosphoric Acid – can inhibit mineral absorption, especially calcium. Excess consumption can cause kidney damage, osteoporosis. Phosphoric acid is a main ingredient of carbonated soft drinks.

Saccharin, Sweet 'n Low – delisted as a carcinogen in 1997, however studies still show that saccharin causes cancer.

Soy (Protein) Isolates – contains toxins that cannot be completely removed with processing, enzyme inhibitors that block enzymes needed for digestion, phytates that

inhibit mineral absorption; promotes clumping of red blood cells, kidney stones; depresses thyroid function weakens immune system; fermented soy products have less toxins.

Soybean Oil – contaminated with hexane from chemical extraction at high temperatures; may be genetically modified.

Sucralose, Splenda – chlorinated sugar linked to shrinkage of thymus gland, enlarged liver and kidneys, miscarriage, and diarrhea in lab animals. Contrary to manufacturer's claims, sucralose is absorbed by the body. No long term studies on effects on humans.

When you make fresh vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and legumes the foundation of your food plan, not only do you avoid additives, you benefit from the disease-preventing effects of these foods. These foods contain a group of health-promoting nutrients called *phytochemicals*, which give plants their color, flavor, and natural disease resistance. Over 200 studies have documented lower cancer risks with food plans rich in fresh vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and legumes.<sup>15</sup>

How do phytochemicals help prevent cancer? These substances block cancer-forming steps that occur in cell's DNA when cells have been exposed to potential cancer causing substances that are ingested from polluted water, air, or food. These substances activate groups of enzymes in the body that flush the potential carcinogens out of cells!

Phytochemicals are nature's gift to us. Plan D recognizes this and incorporates fresh whole foods in each daily meal plan.

### **Keep Chemicals Out of Your Cookware**

When storing, preparing and cooking foods, it is important that you use good storage containers and good cookware. I encourage you to avoid three specific types of containers and cookware: plastic, Teflon coated, and aluminum. Plastic containers leach chemicals from the plastic material into food particularly when used in the microwave or in boiling water. Teflon coating flakes off in microscopic pieces and leaches into food.

"In July 2005, a scientific advisory panel working at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in Washington, D.C. drafted a report that described a substance derived from Teflon as a 'likely carcinogen'."<sup>16</sup>

Small amounts of aluminum can flake from the pan and leach into the food. The aluminum can then be absorbed by the body and potentially become deposits in the brain and nervous system.<sup>17</sup>

Storage containers and cookware made of tempered glass; non-leaded ceramic, iron and stainless steel are the safest type to use.

### Keys to Selecting Fresh Foods

Now that we have discussed which food groups to make as the foundation of your food plan, let's look at some key points to remember when actually shopping for food. To adopt a healthier food plan, will you need to only shop at natural, whole food stores? Although I find a better selection of vitamins, supplements, and natural food items at natural food markets, anyone can make good choices at their regular, neighborhood grocery store. I do recommend that you always shop with a comprehensive shopping list in hand. You will find in the appendix a shopping list of key food items that I recommend you keep on your pantry shelves to use in daily food planning.

On your list of fresh, natural foods, I recommend that you always include a group of foods, which studies are now referring to as “Super Foods.” These “Super Foods” are spinach, blueberries, green tea, broccoli, tomatoes, and oats. To further enhance the nutrients in these six “super foods” add to them olive oil, onion, walnuts, garlic, avocados, and oranges.<sup>18</sup>

Studies have discovered that these specific foods improve our health because they can destroy cancer cells, flush out bad cholesterol from our system, help prevent infections, improve memory skills, and help with weight loss or weight maintenance due to low caloric content. You will find that these six “Super Foods” are incorporated in many of the Plan D recipes.

### Make Mine Organic

Organic produce and milk are my first choice for my clients and my own family. When discussing organic products, we are referring to these production characteristics:

- Food crops are grown without use of pesticides, hormones, or bioengineering.
- Soil is nourished and invigorated through the process of crop rotation and crop covering (covering such as clover are planted between rows of crops which then help nourish the soil).<sup>19</sup>
- Pest reducing insects such as worms and other microorganisms are used to help naturally fertilize the soil.
- Animals have not received antibiotics or growth hormones.
- Organic farmers promote soil and water conservation.<sup>20</sup>

It is true that organic products tend to cost more than products grown in soil treated with traditional pesticides and fertilizers. The difference in cost is due to farming techniques being more labor intensive and time-consuming. Is the higher cost for organic products one that you are willing to incur? While your choice may be made with your pocket book and food budget, I hope that ultimately it will be a choice that is based on the health of yourself and your family.

Despite the propaganda that pesticides used in traditional farming are safe for the American consumer, Chuck Benbrook, Ph.D, science director for the Organic Center for Education and Promotion, disputes that contention. Dr. Benbrook argues that both the health of the American consumer and the health of the planet is negatively impacted by insecticides that are sprayed continuously on the crops throughout the growing season.<sup>21</sup> Not only is the groundwater and soil polluted, the products absorb the pesticides which in turn can be ingested by the consumer.

There are proven health risks associated with the use of pesticides. The government tends to rate the safety of a pesticide and the health risks incurred on the factors of both the toxicity of the pesticide used and the amount of exposure to the chemicals incurred. What does the government look for in their testing of a pesticide? They evaluate the potential for the pesticide to cause: cancer, nerve damage, dermatitis (skin irritations), DNA (genetic mutations), disruptions to the endocrine system and hormone production in humans and animals. Based on testing results, the EPA may ban the use of a certain pesticide on certain crops. Or, they may allow the use of a pesticide but will require that the workers handling it wear protective equipment including respirators, gloves, or even allow specific time to pass before working in a treated crop field.<sup>22</sup>

Regardless of how you look at it, pesticides are a danger to the health of the consumer, soil, and groundwater. It is ultimately the responsibility of the consumer to determine the level of risk they are willing to take in the selection of their food products. Fortunately, researchers and scientist continue to evaluate product risks and to advise consumers on food safety.

One such group, the Environmental Working Group (EWG), has a stated mission to expose threats to consumers' health and the environment, and to find solutions. Through their work they have developed an extensive list of 43 fruits and vegetables that have been tested for pesticide residues. Below is the list of the 12 most contaminated and the 12 least contaminated produce crops. The complete list is included in the appendix.

The EWG website offers a free downloadable wallet guide that you can print, clip, and carry with you to the grocery store. The guide lists the 12 fruits and vegetables with the most and least pesticide residues, so you'll know which ones to buy organic, and which conventionally-grown ones are okay when organic isn't available or doesn't fit your budget. Go to <http://www.foodnews.org> to download a printer-friendly PDF version of the guide.

For your convenience, I am including the list here:

<b><i>When To Purchase Organic</i></b>	
<b>Buy Organic</b>	<b>Conventional OK</b>
Peaches	Onions
Apples	Avocadoes
Bell Peppers	Sweet Corn (frozen)
Celery	Pineapples
Nectarines	Mangoes
Strawberries	Sweet Peas (frozen)
Cherries	Asparagus
Lettuce	Kiwi Fruit
Grapes (imported)	Bananas
Pears	Cabbage
Spinach	Broccoli
Potatoes	Eggplant
Source: Environmental Working Group <a href="http://www.foodnews.org">www.foodnews.org</a> , ©2008	

Organic milk is another product that I recommend you select. It is more expensive than regular milk but the health benefits well justify the cost. Organic milk is more nutritious and contains higher amounts of beta-carotene, vitamin A and E, and Omega-3 than conventional milk. Moreover, organic milk is produced by cows that have not received growth hormones or antibiotics, or given feed that contains prohibited pesticides, animal waste or animal by-products.<sup>24</sup>

### **Make Mine Fresh**

To assure that the food you eat and feed your family contains the highest levels of nutrients and the lowest levels of harmful substance, always choose, prepare, and serve food in its freshest state possible. If you follow these suggestions, you can improve the quality of the food you consume:

- Select and purchase fruits and vegetables that are at their peak of ripeness. The fresher produce is, the higher the amount of enzymes and vitamins available to you. The older food is, or, the longer it has been kept in storage, the fewer nutrients will be available from it.
- Avoid canned foods as they usually contain extra salt and other additives. Always purchase raw, fresh produce. Frozen foods can be selected in cases in which you are unable to find them in their fresh form.
- Eat foods in their natural, raw state as much as possible. Eating raw foods assures that cooking will not destroy nutrients and enzymes obtained from the foods. If you are unable to eat the food raw, then just lightly steam it, so that as much of its nutrients as possible will be retained.

- Never overcook or burn (char) your food, be it meats or breads or other items. Studies show that “when amino acids and other chemicals found in muscle are exposed to high temperatures, other carcinogens, called heterocyclic aromatic amines (HAAs), are created. Many of the chemicals used to produce cancer in laboratory animals have been isolated from cooked proteins.”<sup>25</sup>
- Be sure to wash your store bought fruits and vegetables with a soft vegetable brush using a mild non-toxic soap and cool running water. You may also soak your produce in a sink full of cold water and add tablespoon of apple cider vinegar. This is particularly important for non-organic produce. Any produce whose peels have wax on them will need to be peeled, as the wax cannot be removed with water.
- When steaming vegetables, use Patapar paper (vegetable parchment paper) which preserve nutrients and vitamin during the steaming process, as they will cook in their own juices. (See the appendix for more information on this wonderful cooking tool).

### **How to Identify Genetically Modified Produce**

If you're eating non-organically grown food, you're probably eating some genetically modified food without even knowing it. Genetically modified food has been in the food supply for many years now.

You can tell if the fresh fruits and vegetables you buy have been genetically modified by those irritating little stickers that they put on the produce. If the item does not have a sticker on it, just look at the sign for a 4 or 5 digit number. If the number is:

4 digits - it is conventionally grown

5 digits starting with 9 - it is organically grown

5 digits starting with 8 - it is genetically modified

At this time, there is no way of knowing if the ingredients in packaged or canned foods have been genetically modified, unless they are organic. Organically grown foods are not genetically modified.