

# The Challenge of Balance

## RECENT STUDIES SUPPORT THEORY OF INSULIN RESISTANCE

Recent studies discussed at the 1997 American Dietetic Association Convention highlighted the functions of fat in the diet and the powerful role of protein. In our carbohydrate crazed society, these are welcome words.

For the past five years I have championed the significance of enough fat and adequate protein in the diet. How much fat and how much protein is adequate? This is the significant dietary question and the answer is "it depends". But the biochemistry of nutrition is only one component in the much bigger picture of insulin resistance.

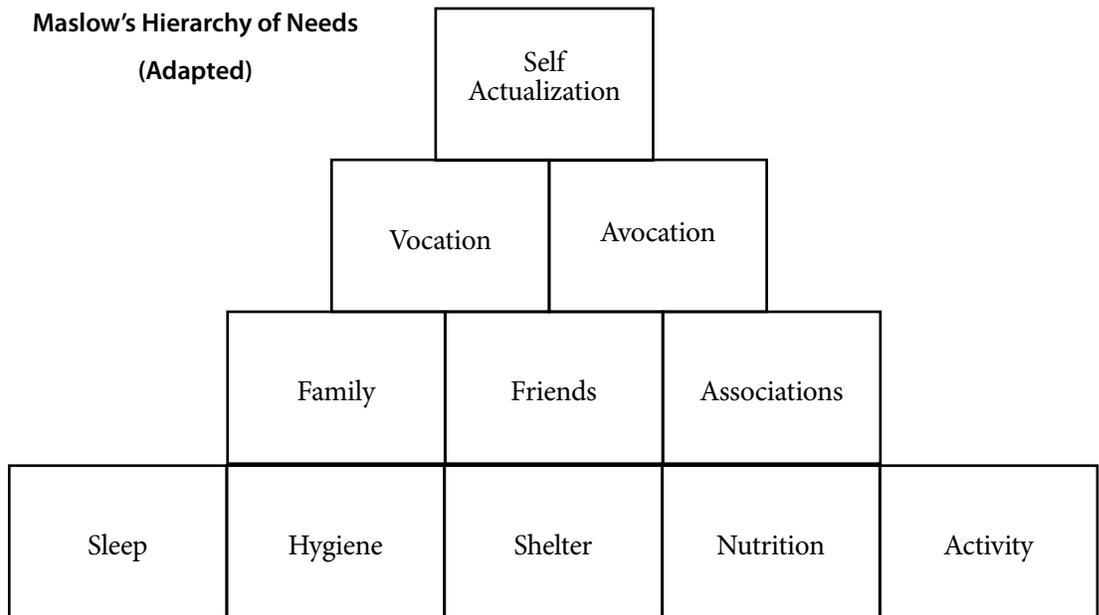
Each person is unique in that their physiological and biochemical make-up is impacted by the environment in which we live. I define environment as the complex of all other variables in our daily lives. It is important for each of us to consider how well we manage our environment (or how our environment manages us! (See the next article on Balance)

The point is that many of the factors that impact our environment will also impact what is the better balance of carbohydrate, protein and fat for each of us individually. This is the reason most of us need to experiment with different food choices and learn from each experience in order to determine how our food can serve us best. The goal continues to be a flexible approach to food that provides us with the energy and vitality to fully engage in each day's challenges.

If you are interested in reading more about these issues, I have been working on several projects that address some of these concepts. I wrote the nutrition section of a book called *Kathy Smith's Getting Better All The Time*. Publication is scheduled for January, 1998. The nutrition information in the book addresses the fact that all of us metabolize carbohydrates in a different way and provides meal plans and recipes to help the reader identify their best range of carbohydrate intake. In addition, the book addresses many of the factors that are critical in developing more functional, independent eating patterns.

Next, we decided to take this project one step further and develop a specific weight loss program to help anyone who realizes that they don't handle carbohydrates well, are probably insulin resistant, and don't know how to shift their food intake appropriately. The infomercial product is still in development (we're still playing with titles!) Expect this product to be available after the first of the year as well. It is designed to give the person with carbohydrate sensitivity more specific guidance, more meal plans and more recipes to help them adjust to a better balance of carbohydrate, protein and fat in their diet.

Lastly, I am planning to present professional and public workshops on insulin resistance. These will be announced in their own brochures at the beginning of the year. Anyone who gets this newsletter will be on the mailing list. If you would like to be added to the mailing list because you got this by default or from a friend or colleague, please call 310-395-4822.



## THE WISDOM OF ENOUGH

I just heard it again last week. My cousin lamenting the craziness in her life and the desire to stop. How did life become something too busy, so overwhelming? As our lives become more complicated and fractured with more options, more choices, more information, I see the quality of life slipping away.

Ironically, as we are provided with more options, the typical response is to impose more structure. This “should” orientation can provide one with a sense of security in structure. Too bad the inevitable consequence is to be smothered by the “shoulds”. More than ever we need to manage our life with conscious choices. This takes skill.

I believe the basic question here is what is enough—enough work, enough plans, enough outside commitments, enough material goods as well as enough sleep, enough to eat, enough play, enough time to be still. Our ability to establish boundaries on our time and energy is a critical skill in managing our lives.

The irony here is that society, the media, our families and ourselves continue to try to nurture with excess food and excess everything else. We end up depleted of the really valuable things in life: time and energy to enjoy and celebrate the here and now. The sad reality is we end up trying to do more, to buy more and to eat more to fix the problem. When that doesn't work, the knee jerk reaction is to restrict the offending elements. Go on a diet, cut up the credit cards, cancel everything. There is relief in this action—it is unfortunately short-lived.

Real relief—determining what is “enough” —is challenging but ultimately more rewarding. I use an old management concept known as “Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs” to help illustrate how our fundamental needs do not get met. We often spend most of our time on “higher” level needs, neglecting the very foundation that allows us to maximize our wellbeing and ability to function at our best.

And how does this discussion effect my work in nutrition? It is often this issue of enough that keeps most people from finding true contentment in their lives. Sometimes people end up focusing excessively on body weight and food restriction, sometimes people don't give enough thought or time to their food. Ironically the contentment most of us are seeking can't be realized by our diet alone. But, the way we eat can ground us and compliment a way of living that is richly satisfying.

Look for flyers announcing Functional Food workshops this spring. If you are particularly interested, call for more details (310)-395-4822.