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# RAWHIDE HEALTH – MEDICINE IN A BETTER WAY

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St. Maries, Idaho – Telephone 208.582.3056 – [RawhideHealth.com](http://RawhideHealth.com)

## *Nutrition 101*

by Dr. Dale J. Ross, M.D.

Start by taking an honest assessment of what you like to eat; I mean what you really enjoy. Take a few moments and make sure you know what these are. Now if you were seriously considering a pause in reading on to go and get one of these things, you just learned about yourself.

Recognizing what foods you like and enjoying them from time to time can be achieved with balance. Food is sustenance, but it can also taste darn good. If you only have ice cream sometimes that can be o.k., but if that sometimes is 4 times a week or more you are not balanced. Now if you say that what you really *really* love is broccoli or brussel sprouts for example, that is great because they have a lot of healthy nutrients, however most people tend to put some heavy sauces on them defeating most of what was a good thing. I would like to start with a better understanding of what food is and where calories come from.

To start, all calories are either fat, sugar, or protein. Plain and simple. Under full disclosure, alcohol is the only other possible source of calories in the human diet but it has no nutritional value and will not be calculated as a prudent calorie source here. Think of that then; you cannot consume any calories that are anything but those above. This means you should only have to worry about balancing three things in your diet. By the way, diet as used here is meant as a term for “what a person eats as a part of their regular intake.” Your food intake, your diet, is a way that you choose to live day in and day out. So let’s look at the foundations of nutrition:

Protein – I have found it necessary to make a strong advocacy for protein in diet modification and nutrition education. Society has railed against meat as the root for the ills of all fats, cholesterol, sodium, and protein itself to the point of taking away what is a necessity. The average American diet derives only 10-15% of its calories from protein. That means 85-90% of all calories consumed are fat and sugar. My common recommendation is to have 25-30% of your daily calories coming from protein. This means 70-75% of your calories would still come from fat and sugar; this is neither farfetched nor should be a burden. When you begin to make this change you may find just how different this is compared to your usual eating patterns however.

Adequate protein is essential and the best sources come from meats. Vegetable sources are not wrong, they can complement each other well. Meat however is exactly what we are made of and therefore need; it is the highest quality, though not only source, of protein. I was raised on the vegetables that we grew and the game that we shot; I believe this to be a good way. I have worked with various vegetarian plans and even vegan purists as well as all raw and other dietary choices. I gladly work with all to try and understand what they need to be as healthy as possible. The point being that you must understand what you are attempting if you wish to have success, otherwise it is little more than an accident if it comes out better than worse.

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Carbs – You hear about carbs or counting carbs all over the place. Carbohydrates are present as either simple or complex sugars. That is what a “carb” is: sugar. Sugar is not an evil either, but manufacturers go out of their way to use multiple names to confuse the fact that sugar is being added as an ingredient. A great example of this is those sugar-free foods such as “diabetic friendly” candy and others. Check the carbohydrates and see how much of the calories come from sugar. All carbohydrate calories are sugar calories whether they are simple or complex sugars. The body does try and handle these various sugars differently if it can, but the nuances are not what you should hang your hat on when you are trying to establish base changes and understanding.

Some important studies on calories have been showing that the way in which carbohydrates are processed by the body promotes fat synthesis above and beyond what was expected as well as is particularly troublesome for cholesterol and triglyceride production.

Fat – Speaking on those markers for heart disease, fat in the diet is actually not only important, but required. Most doctors are so busy trying to get their patients to eat less of it that they never get a chance to talk about what is good and what is bad. What is bad is usually related to the timing and amount as well as the type of fat. Fat is a necessary part of our bodies and makes up the majority of cell membranes, is a precursor molecule to many hormone complexes and is a very dense source of stored energy. Well with that being said, fat just doesn’t sound so bad. A turn on the old phrase, “If a little is good, I must be great.” in this case would not be correct. Too much of a good thing has become disastrous in America today.

*I will be attempting to cover several aspects of better nutrition in my coming articles. Please understand that I cannot do justice to all of the possible specifics that may be relevant to each and every person or loved one by this approach. I am glad to speak further about anyone’s own issues and understanding if I can help. I also encourage you to ask your own doctor if you do not come and see me.*