

Nutrition: the Healthy Aging Solution

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Nutritional education has recognized as an essential component in all health care professions. Thus the major objective of this book is to implement the education about a correct nutrition. Citizens' longevity carries huge implications for a society which become more concerned about its health and physical appearance.

Improved medical practices have increased our longevity, and new efforts may add purpose and direction on our declining years. Better medicine, better nutritional regimes, better bodily care and regular controlled exercise have improved the physical quality of life.

Moreover recognition and understanding of the special nutrition problems of the aged may be changing with their increase in the general population.

As a matter of fact, mature or aging bodies and physiological systems function with nutrient requirements quite distinct from the young. With age some of these changes include decreased nutritional needs, while other reflect changes in economic conditions, or self-treatment of health conditions with high nutrient intake. At the other extreme, in many developing countries, adults and aging adults, particularly men, get preferential access to food and may have better opportunities for adequate nutrients intake with increasing age. By contrast, in other developed countries, it is clear that economic restrictions and physical changes during aging can significantly reduce food intakes from those enjoyed as young adults.

Moreover some deficiencies of various nutrients associated with aging are often distinct from nutritional problems of childhood. On the other hand, many adults and elderly are using levels of various nutrients well above the recommended daily allowance.

However with the increased medium life every one want to spend more time to look and feel good quickly seeking various strategies to improve her/his skin and body conditions. This has led to an explosion of SPAs focusing on pampering, rejuvenation treatments and stress reduction.

Thus many physicians, whether general practitioners, plastic surgeons or dermatologists became adding aesthetic services to complement their businesses, linking up with the aestheticians. Because of this partnership the latest trend is the medical spa which integrates spa services with conventional and integrative therapies by providing comprehensive medical and wellness care in a relaxing environment.

And the beauty role of the aesthetician and the modern physician is the topic of the **introductory chapter**.

By the advent of new technologies in the aesthetic profession anti-aging has become a new sub-specialty of modern medicine where aging is viewed as a disease that can be easily treated.

apters 1-3 give an expanded overview of the science of nutrition.

Food is necessary for all life processes from breathing, thinking, from digestion to movement. And while basic nutrition is the same for most people, daily requirements vary for each person due to age, gender, body size, health status, and pregnancy or if the woman is breast-feeding.

As one grows older, normal aging processes may result in less than optimal intake of certain nutrients, and protein-calories malnutrition (PCM) is the most undiagnosed nutritional disorder in the world today.

PCM results in numerous changes to our physiology that medical doctor and aesthetician has to know. In screening the elderly person for PCM, it is important that the clinician take into account age when reviewing laboratory parameters. In many cases, in fact, normal values must be adjusted for age.

Moreover the physical examination must include an accurate height and weight checking. An accurate weight is essential with appropriate comparison to the recent and distant past. Rapid weight loss implies a change in protein status with the use of endogenous protein as a fuel source. Adipose tissue is lost slowly due to a higher caloric content.

Calories are used by the body to fuel its physical metabolic activities. In addition, protein deficiency can still be present in a person with little change in weight, the decline in muscle mass may be compensated with increased fat stores.

Therefore determinations of skin fold thickness at several sites may be used as a rough indicator of nutritional status.

However although genetics play a strong role in body size and weight, habits instilled in children during their formative years can promote lifestyle habits that may prevent degenerative diseases later in life.

Moreover socioeconomic status has been found to impact nutritional habits. However the nutritional status of an organism is of importance in gerontological research because, food restriction or undernutrition (and not malnutrition) is the most effective and reproducible method for increasing the longevity of an organism, and is the only strategy known to retard the aging process in homeotherms. Macronutrients, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins and mineral or trace elements are all described and reported on these three important chapters.

Diet Planning is the topic of **chapter 4**.

A healthy diet should include a limited intake of fats, refined sugar, salt and alcohol and has to correlate with the energy needs.

As a matter of fact, a regular intake of excess Kcals causes them to become stored in the body as fat leading to an unhealthy body weight over time.

It is important to remember also that proper nutrition must be combined with regular exercise for good health and longevity. Thus with more knowledge about a proper diet and dietary supplement, medical doctors and aestheticians can influence their patients/clients to purchase some of their dietary supplements at the spa instead of mass market retailers. However it should be stressed that supplements are not to be substituted for whole fresh food because they cannot replace the numerous nutrients normally found in food.

However a healthy diet focusing on the consumption of fresh, natural foods and complemented by dietary supplements is recommended in an anti-aging program. And *Dietary Supplements and their*

Role in Esthetics is the topic of **chapter 5**.

Being slim and attractive is the ideal image created by the media. Young women in particular are more susceptible to these standards starting from early childhood when they tend to affect a female's self-perception and self-esteem, sometimes culminating in various eating disorders such as *anorexia nervosa* and *bulimia*.

As women age they become more interested in nutrition relating to prevention and treatment of chronic diseases such as *osteoporosis*. They also become concerned about body weight but place more emphasis on health rather than appearance.

Moreover women are becoming more aware that nutritional factors can help alleviate the symptoms of both premenstrual syndrome (PMS) and menopause without taking medications. Thus dietary supplements based on soy and soy products rich in phytoestrogens are increasingly used to combine these discomforting.

Nutritional issues among women is the interesting topic of **chapter 6**.

Many types of stress in humans including exercise stress result in increased glucocorticoid production in subjects classified as having a sedentary physical status. Some recent works suggest that diet and exercise can independently reduce corticosteroids, and hence lower some of the adverse effects of stress.

Thus the combination of the exercise and dietary supplementation may help us in the future to overcome some of the adverse effects of emotional or physical stress including suppressed disease resistance in the young and adults.

Therefore, it is, important that some time is taken to find out more about lifestyle behaviors such as dietary intake, exercise, stress and sleep disorders that contribute to the skin's appearance.

For these reasons one of the most important and popular services in the spa is the enhancement of the texture and health of the client's skin.

In other words, a more holistic approach to skin care is essential for the aesthetician to cater today's knowledgeable clients. These topics are brilliantly reported and discussed on **chapters 7 and 8**.

A new health paradigm of *wellness* outlines ways in which preventive care can be integrated in many health care professions, including skin care. This involves not only aging of the skin and body, but also incorporates strategies such as fitness and nutrition preventing free radical formation.

The stresses of modern lifestyle lead to increased free radical production while modern diets provide inadequate antioxidant nutrients to support the body's defense systems creating an imbalance.

It is believed that the balance between the antioxidant intake and exposure to free radicals could become the balance between life and death. Excess free radicals can trigger in fact, chronic disease such as cancer, heart diseases and autoimmune diseases.

Thus stress is one of the five pillars of anti-aging, and one of the main attractions of the spa is stress therapy or anti-stress treatments.

It is essential to life because body tissues need to be stimulated to stay alive.

Most people can tolerate normal stress if it is minor. However in modern society, people live in an over-stressed world where countless have an impact both physically and psychologically often leading to maladaptive or abnormal behaviors.

Therefore stress is recognized as playing a significant part in the causes of many physical and psychological illnesses.

he key goal in stress management is to create an awareness of the response to stressors and through this, the client can learn to control the stress responses.

Glycemic Index and Health is the topic of **chapter 9**, where the relative correlation is reported.

In recent years, in fact, health care professionals have begun to use this index not only in the treatment of diabetes, but also in other areas such as weight control and exercise.

The research in *glycemic index* indicates that food digested and absorbed slowly has the least impact on blood sugar levels.

The more refined the food, the quicker the absorption and higher the glycemic index value. Learning to read and integrate food labels gives clues to sugar content. Thus the glycemic index may be used to help people eat healthy, reduce the risk of diabetes, control weight and improve exercise performance.

During surgical procedures, body tissues experience extreme trauma and oxidative stress, and the nutritional status is essential during and after surgery.

At this purpose a right dietary intake can play a significant role as a therapeutic agent in skin healing promoting a safe and rapid skin recovery. And the nutritional supplements useful to promote wound healing are reported on **chapter 10**.

Chapter 11 deals with the protective effects of nutrients on skin sensitivity and sun exposure, and their relationship to the immune response and food toxins.

With a higher incidence of hypersensitive skin, more education in determining whether the allergy may be due to cosmetic applications or food allergens can prove very beneficial to a professional's practice.

As a matter of fact, toxicity occurs in the body on both external and internal levels. People are daily exposed to external toxins from the environment by breathing pollutants and ingesting food, drink and drugs. The body produces internal toxins from oxidative processes. These include biochemical, cellular and free radicals. If not eliminated they can cause a buildup leading to the body malfunctioning and eventually cause damage to its systems. Therefore a right nutritional approach in skin care should be used as a natural and holistic approach to treatment, particularly useful to reduce or eliminate numerous forms of skin sensitivities and allergies.

Weight Management is focused on **chapter 12**.

Obesity is a ubiquitous problem of the industrialized society and, unfortunately, many people are judged by their physical appearance instead of their character.

Obesity exists when the percentage of body fat exceeds 30% for women and 20% for men. Whether a person needs to lose weight depends on several factors such as the amount of excess weight, age, genetic makeup and health. And the best weight loss results come from a long-term relationship between nutrition, low fat diet supported by a regular exercise program and other positive lifestyle changes. Thus tissues and nutrition are two components of wellness that people use to change their lifestyle and improve the quality of their longevity. Aging and longevity are associated with extrinsic factors caused by environmental influences including solar radiation, pollution and negative lifestyle behaviors such as unhealthy diet, food toxins, alcohol, smoking and stress. Aging of the skin concerns everyone and facial appearance is one of the most powerful factors influencing social interactions in many situations.

This is because there exists a physical attractiveness stereotype. *What is Beautiful is Good*. Those who are

attractive gain advantages and the unattractive suffer throughout the life cycle. But self-perception and other-perceptions can be improved by a right food, active cosmetics, and make-over and cosmetic maneuvers.

Therefore cosmetics are becoming more and more drug oriented and more and more concerned with skin health and skin care and not simply with decoration and beauty. This while pampering or stress-relieving treatments are psychologically effective in developing an improved frame of mind: use of the right cosmetic, proper advice on nutrition and simple exercises to correct postural faults will enhance results for body treatments and help fight the effects of aging.

These and other interesting discussions are reported on **chapters 13-15** together with food label definitions and claims.

In fact, health claims in food labels cannot be made if the percentage of a nutrient is more than the daily values, particularly in the case of foods such as fats, saturated fats, cholesterol and sodium that are positively linked to health problems. Moreover any claims made such as *cholesterol-free* must be suggested by scientific evidence.

Chapter 16 treats *Cultural Foods*.

Mass migration from developing countries to industrialized nations has led to the formation of ethnic care enclaves established in large cities.

Thus some cities or towns have become multicultural embracing all cultures whether food, fashion or behavior, while others are a melting pot where individuals assimilate into the major culture and eventually lose their ethnic identities. To build an eclectic clientele, it is necessary to learn about cultural differences as much as possible in order to bond with the potential clients. This chapter deals with information on the cuisine of some of the most common ethnic groups found in westernized societies.

Therefore cultural tips, traditional values that have an impact on ethnic cuisine, some of the popular foods associated with these groups, key ingredients and traditional spices are reported and discussed. This interesting book ends with appendices dedicated to fat and water soluble vitamins, and minerals reporting also charts on *Ideal Body Weight and Body Mass Index*.

Full of new ideas and comments, this book provides precious information in the area of food and wellness for health care professionals and aestheticians, and may be particularly interesting for dermatologists, plastic surgeons, cosmetic chemists, marketing managers and for all wanting to know more in this area.

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