

Healthy Living for Dancers (Chapter 9)

Ideal Nutrition: What to Eat, What to Avoid - Part II

By Dr. Veronica Collings, Chiropractor and Wellness Practitioner

Part I of this series in nutrition revealed one predominant concern: How can I **afford** to eat healthy food? Before I address specifics, let me remind you of the big picture. You can afford to eat to promote health a lot more easily than you can afford to spend countless years in illness. In other words, you cannot afford not to. This is **not a dramatic exaggeration**. Heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and arthritis are **not cheap lifestyle choices**. Even the AMA implicates nutrition as a cause factor in 90% of cancer. You may be thinking, “nobody makes the choice for disease,” but, unfortunately, not choosing health is the same as inviting disease. Enough preaching - let’s get to the meat of the matter.



Speaking of meat, organic or free range meat truly is more expensive than commercially raised. To compensate, change the amount on your plate to 3-4 ounces of meat for a woman and 5-6 ounces for a man. Trader Joe’s has free range chicken filets for \$4.99/lb.

Granted, this is still more expensive than a box of chemicals, otherwise called “macaroni and cheese,” but it’s cheaper than feeding your family an entire meal of fast food.

Load up the balance of the plate with larger portions of vegetables. This ratio is much healthier because overdoing on animal products has its own slew of toxic problems. For instance, I buy a 2 ½ lb. box of baby spinach for \$5 at my local produce store and a 3 lb. box of field greens for \$10. These two items are the foundation of my voluminous salads, to which I add the smaller portions of meat, chicken, fish, or some type of goat cheese. These huge salads, with a bounty of other delicious and healthy ingredients are my main meal of the day. Other ingredients can include avocado, which is good for the ovaries, artichoke hearts, which are good for the liver, tomatoes, which are good for my

husband’s prostate, beets, which are good for building red blood cells, cauliflower, which is good for the lungs, walnut pieces, which are good for the brain and are a rich source of omega 3 essential fats, etc., etc.

What about when we are rushing? Fast food - yes, we need some when we are rushing, but it doesn’t have to kill you. There actually are some fast food outlets that have real food. I recommend the Chipotle chain because it prides itself on free range meats and locally grown vegetables. This fact was even featured on *Oprah*. A Chipotle chicken, pork, or beef salad meal is about \$6.50. So are their other meals, but, because I stay away from grains and especially white flour, that’s the menu item that suits me.

Locally grown is healthier because, the less transport time, the more nutrients that are retained. Ideally, you want to go from the ground to your mouth as soon as possible. This is where frozen is your next best choice, and this is how I get a large majority of my antioxidant nutrients which prevent cancer and protect the cells from destruction by free radicals. I get them in the form of frozen

berries from Trader Joe’s. A pound of a rich mix of dark berries is under \$3. The darker, the better they are for you. Rule of thumb: the more real color in your food, the more nutrients that it contains. I am not talking about food coloring and additives in fake food, now - I mean “real food.” For an expanded definition, look back for a couple of issues for the article entitled “What is Real Food and Why Should I Care?” or find it on my web site under Wellness topics at www.drveronicacollings.com. What I do with those berries is the best part of my food day. My work schedule often gets me home at 9 PM or later - too late to eat a meal that takes hours to digest. I defrost about ½ a bag of those berries (\$1.50) and about a cup of organic plain yogurt (\$.75) and for about \$2.25, I am in taste bud heaven for dinner during my work week.

I’ll talk more about eating out on the weekends in the next chapter of ideal nutrition. Experiment with these concepts and feel free to contact me with any questions. You can reach me by phone or email at the number and address listed below. See you on the dance floor!

About the author: Dr. Collings, a regular contributor to the Dance Spotlight, is a summa cum laude graduate of Pennsylvania College of Chiropractic.

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She and her husband, Greg, have been ballroom, Latin, and swing dancing for almost a dozen years.