Finally & simply, What shall we eat?

Denis E. Corpet, 2006

Here are few simple advices, from precise recommendations

1- Do not eat too much, but exercise a lot
Adults should maintain constant their body weight
Minimal mortality is observed when Body Mass Index is kept between 18.5 and 25. (BMI = body weight / squared height (kg/m²).
To keep this BMI with a moderate physical activity,
Men need 2300-3000 kcal, Women need 1800-2200 kCal /day

2- Balance carbohydrate / fat / protein.
Recommended caloric balance is carbohydrate >55%, fat <30% and protein 15% calories (corresponds to % weight: C >66% F<16% P=18 %). French people often get 40% calories from fat (too much fat) and 20% calories from proteins, animal protein mostly, it could be reduced.

3- Be careful with quality (nature) of carbohydrate, fat & proteins
- Carbohydrate: eat "slow" starch with low Glycemic Index mostly (noodles, lentils, whole grain are better than potatoes, white bread and rice). Get approx 30 g fiber per day (twice what is usually eaten)
- Fat: The 3 thirds rule says 10% calories saturated fat, 10% MUFA, 10% PUFA (Mediter. rule says 10/20/10). Increase the n-3 PUFA (= omega 3, e.g., alpha-linolenic) more than n-6 (e.g., linoleic), to increase (n-3)/(n-6) ratio between 1/10 et ¼
- Proteins: balance animal & plant proteins: Ratio is 2 in France, it could be reduced (more plant)

4- Diversify your foods: vary your sources!
When foods have diversified origins, when diet is not monotonous, vitamins & minerals are easier to balance. Specifically, 2 or 3 portions of milk or dairy food are needed to bring enough calcium (0.8 à 1 g/d).

5- Increase fruits & vegetables: eat loads of plants
A huge number of observations suggest that a diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables is beneficial (at least 400g/d and more than 5 different products). However, no direct proof has ever been provided. Low-calories, vitamins & minerals, fiber & n-3 PUFA, and many phytochemicals seem to cooperate in the prevention of many chronic diseases (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, osteoporosis, diabetes II, obesity, …

Dietary supplements, vitamin pills, and nutraceuticals share a very large market. That so many people buy them does not prove that they improve health. Denis Corpet thinks that some specific agents can be useful for specific people (e.g., chondroitin sulfate, leucine, iron…), but that they should not be recommended on a large scale to the general public.