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Healthy Eating During A Recession

Although this piece will explain to you how you can eat healthily and cost-effectively during a recession, the advice in it can help you eat healthily and cost-effectively in any economic environment.

The goal is to provide you with an approach to healthy eating that is independent of the economy, the noise generated by marketers and the whimsies of the research du jour.

What Is A Recession?

Here is a dictionary definition of recession:

Recession

Noun 1. the state of the economy declines; a widespread decline in the GDP and employment and trade lasting from six months to a yearⁱ

Technically speaking, you do not know that a recession is coming, nor do you know you are in one until it has already happened:

“The official definition of recession is when GDP growth is negative for two quarters or more.”ⁱⁱ

The GDP is:

“GDP (Gross Domestic Product) is the total dollar amount of all goods and services produced.”ⁱⁱⁱ

So a recession is declared after it has been around for 6 months.

This does not help you, really.

And even if the declaration of a recession makes it official, what are you supposed to do in the meantime? And afterwards?

“[A recession] is observed when the prices start to increase and the living standard starts to fall.”^{iv}

And whatever the economists, Big Business, government, etc., tell us, our bottom line is that we feel economic pain because the economic environment is unsettling.

Clearly, during a recession there is a desire to spend less.

Spending Money On “Healthy” Foods

We are given bad information as to what “healthy” food really is.

Health is a statistical concept.

Health is a lesser likelihood of developing certain diseases.

Health is not the absence of disease.

You can never really know if you are disease-free. For example, a cancer has to start at some time but generally it will not be found until much later – when it has developed sufficiently to cause symptoms. Until those symptoms occurred, one might have thought they were healthy despite the fact that a cancer was growing inside. Hypertension and atherosclerosis likewise develop silently and remain hidden until something bad occurs.

Where health relates to food is at its tangent with the BMI, or Body Mass Index.

Current data indicate that if your BMI is greater than 24.9 (overweight or obese) your likelihood of developing certain bad diseases (e.g., Type 2 diabetes, stroke, hypertension, heart disease) is increased. A BMI less than 18.5 (underweight) is also considered “unhealthy” but, most of us are not confronted by the problem of underweight.

As far as we know, whatever you eat that results in a BMI of between 18.5 and 24.9 is healthy food.

If you are inclined to believe that we really know which specific foods or nutrients are “healthy,” consider the following:

Calcium Bad - <http://fitnesswatch.blogspot.com/2008/01/study-suggests-heart-risk-from-calcium.html>

Calcium Good - <http://fitnesswatch.blogspot.com/2008/01/scientists-unveil-supercarrot.html>

Nitrites Bad – http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sodium_nitrite (nitrites related to cancer)

Nitrites Good - <http://fitnesswatch.blogspot.com/2007/11/nitritenitrate-rich-food-may-protect.html>

Strawberries Bad – <http://www.foodnews.org/> (strawberries are among the most pesticided foods)

Strawberries Good - <http://fitnesswatch.blogspot.com/2008/01/strawberries-may-help-reduce-risk-of.html>

There would be no flip-flopping or conflicting info if we really knew what was “healthy” to eat.

It is true that some may have a health-motivated preference for organic, vegetarian or vegan foods, for example, but these are beliefs about health, not facts of health. (I am a strict vegetarian, almost vegan actually, but for me this is not a choice for health. For health, I manage my Calories in.)

In the quest for losing pounds to achieve a healthy weight, people are exhorted into purchasing “healthy” foods at hugely inflated prices. For more information, [click here](#). Also misleadingly, some marketers suggest that eating their “healthy” foods is what is important, not your resulting weight. This is commonly seen in the “healthy” fats conversation.

It is my opinion that all these are basically cons.

Weight control, i.e., BMI control, involves one thing and one thing only, the relationship between Calories in and Calories out.

As long as you consume fewer Calories than you burn, you must lose weight. There is no choice in the matter. And the source and ratio of those Calories are irrelevant.

So [there is no need to get your Calories from an expensive source](#).

Remember [you can achieve a healthy weight eating “regular” food](#).

In fact, you [have a much greater likelihood of achieving a healthy weight if you eat “regular” foods, i.e., less expensive, non-diet program or special “diet foods.”](#)

The same is true for maintaining a healthy weight once you have achieved it. Expensive foods are unnecessary. Diet program foods are unnecessary. “Diet foods” are unnecessary.

All that is necessary is the balance between Calories in and Calories out.

ⁱ recession. Dictionary.com. *WordNet*® 3.0. Princeton University. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/recession> (accessed: January 27, 2008).

ⁱⁱ <http://useconomy.about.com/od/grossdomesticproduct/f/Recession.htm> (accessed January 27, 2008).

ⁱⁱⁱ http://useconomy.about.com/od/grossdomesticproduct/f/GDP_Growth_Rate.htm (accessed January 27, 2008).

^{iv} <http://www.stock-market-investors.com/glossary-of-stock-terms/what-is-recession.html> (accessed January 27, 2008).