

EYES ON THE FOREST

What is *Nutrition Action Healthletter* about?

How diet can prevent cancer, what causes obesity, how to keep our food supply safe...and much more.

A given issue of *NAH* (or any similar publication, for that matter) can only scratch the surface. And

that could mean that people who are just becoming interested in healthier eating might have trouble seeing the big picture after having read just a couple of copies.

For instance, this month we look at multi-vitamin-and-mineral supplements, frozen pizzas, and food poisoning. While the articles provide solid, useful information, from those disparate "trees" you may not have any idea about what constitutes a good overall diet. Therefore, I wanted to devote a few paragraphs to the "forest."

Though it may seem complex, healthy eating is really a simple matter. In a nutshell, it means eating a more plant-based diet—more vegetables, fruits, beans, and whole grains (with some seafood, poultry, and low-fat dairy). It means getting your fats from plants (vegetable oils and nuts) and fish, not animals (meats, milk, cheese, and ice cream). It means eating fewer sweets and fried foods and less candy, including "liquid candy" (soft drinks). And it means cutting back on salt and cholesterol, buying organic when you can, choosing sensible dietary supplements, and making sure your food is safe.

How do you get from here to there? Here's my little tip sheet:

■ **Take inventory.** Overhaul your refrigerator and your pantry. Get rid of the junk—the greasy ground beef, sugary soft drinks, fatty pastries, and the like.

■ **Experiment.** Try new grains and beans and unusual vegetables. Stock a variety of seasonal fruits, including ones you've never eaten before.



Memo from MFJ

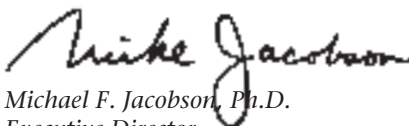
■ **Cook.** Nail down some delicious, easy-to-prepare recipes. Dust off an old (or invest in a new) cookbook that doesn't lean too heavily on salt and grease to provide flavor—*The Mayo Clinic Williams-Sonoma Cookbook* or just about any *Cooking Light* cookbook, for example. After all, if healthy eating isn't at least as pleasurable as what it's replacing, you won't stick with it. If cooking isn't for you, at least shop for the most healthful packaged and fresh prepared foods. You're more likely to find a bigger selection at natural-foods stores than supermarkets.

■ **Eat out less.** Restaurant food is almost always high in calories, fat, and salt. Look for restaurants that know what a vegetable is (Asian cuisines, for example).

■ **Switch at your own pace.** Some people have overhauled their diets over a period of months or years, while others have done it almost overnight. There's no right or wrong. The important thing is to do it at your own pace.

The Center for Science in the Public Interest will try to help you and others eat healthier diets not just by publishing *Nutrition Action*, but by pushing for better labeling, honest advertising, and a safer food supply and by getting the media to publicize our reports on diet and health.

If you'd like a free copy of my "Nine Weeks to a Perfect Diet" pamphlet, just send a stamped, self-addressed, standard-size (business) envelope to: CSPI—9 Weeks, Suite 300, 1875 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20009-5728.



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Executive Director

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The contents of *NAH* are not intended to provide medical advice, which should be obtained from a qualified health professional.

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