



Basic Principles of a  
**Well-Rounded Diet**

BY TRINITY SCHOOL OF NATURAL HEALTH

220 PARKER ST. WARSAW, IN 46580  
TO ENROLL: (800) 428-0408, OPTION 2  
CURRENT STUDENTS: (800) 428-0408, OPTION 1  
[INFO@TRINITYSCHOOL.ORG](mailto:INFO@TRINITYSCHOOL.ORG)

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# Basic Principles of a Well-Rounded Diet

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Is your diet providing you with everything you need to feel your best?

In the natural health world, “diet” goes beyond the calories, macros, and potential weight loss or gain that can occur as a result of eating certain foods. We use the word “diet” in its original meaning: what you habitually consume, including food, drinks, and supplements.

Dietary needs vary from person to person based on their age, gender, size, and pre-existing health conditions. However, common threads always emerge when determining a well-rounded diet. Read on to discover our top principles for creating a well-rounded diet that can support you and your family for years to come.

## 1. Optimal Food Choices

The majority of your nutrition should come from the foods you eat that contain macro- and micronutrients that help your body function at its best. Our most important tip to ensure you’re eating quality food and getting the nutrition you need is to consume real foods. So, what do we mean by “real” foods? Real foods come from a live source and have not been processed to create another food. At Trinity, we teach that the best place to look for real food is what “flies in the sky, runs through the fields, swims in the waters, or grows from the ground.” By-products of living food sources, such as chicken eggs or nuts, are also considered real food.





So, how do you know if a food is highly processed? If it's in a box or bag, it's most likely highly processed. For example, breads, cereals, and chips are all drastically changed from the grains and vegetables they once were. Highly processed foods also tend to have a long list of ingredients on the nutrition label. Even more concerning, many of

these ingredients are chemical additives, which you'll recognize by their scientific and often difficult-to-pronounce names. Lightly processed foods, however, may still be a beneficial part of a well-rounded diet. For example, real butter, whole-milk yogurt, and dehydrated fruit have been processed from their original form but are still nutrient-dense. For all prepared foods, be aware of the ingredients, including added sugars, flavors, and dyes. Additives to look out for include substances like maltodextrin, high-fructose corn syrup, hydrogenated oils, and monosodium glutamate (MSG). When it comes to highly processed foods, it's not only important to know what is added. It's also vital to understand what is lost during processing. A major downside of processed foods is the loss of nutrients and fiber.

The best tip to find real food is to shop the perimeter of the grocery store. Here, you'll find refrigerated items and fresh produce, such as fruits and vegetables. Select organic fruits and vegetables to elevate the nutrients further. These are best for overall health and wellness because they are grown without pesticides and contain higher levels of vitamins and minerals. Often, an even better choice than organic grocery store-bought produce is local, organic produce. Frozen foods can also be a healthy option when the food is flash-frozen and otherwise unprocessed.

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## 2. Variety and Preparation

It's important to vary your meals to maximize the nutrients you receive from your diet. We suggest "eating the rainbow" by selecting produce with different colors. For example, one day, eat oranges, broccoli, kale, potatoes, and tomatoes. Then, the next day, choose avocados, strawberries, blueberries, red cabbage, and sweet potatoes. Rotating produce in this manner helps ensure you get a wide variety of nutrients, minerals, and vitamins that your body needs to function properly and at its best. It's important to note that cooking produce can reduce nutrient levels, but cooked options are considered lightly processed and can still provide health benefits. For proteins, try to primarily eat lean, grass-fed cuts, free-range poultry, or wild-caught fish. When used for cooking, oils and fats should be heat-stable, like avocado or coconut oil. Lighter oils like extra virgin olive oil are a great choice for dressing or garnishing.

## 3. Hydration and Drink Choices

20% of your hydration comes from the water-rich fruits and vegetables you eat. The other 80% comes from the liquids you consume, ideally from water. The best water you can drink is Pure H<sub>2</sub>O, which includes water purified through distillation or reverse osmosis. However, any kind of safe drinking water is better than none. To be properly hydrated, try drinking half your weight in ounces of water throughout the day and adjust as needed based on the appearance of your urine. You will know that you are properly hydrated when your urine is mostly clear with a tinge of yellow. Clear urine can mean you're overhydrated, while darker urine indicates you're not hydrated enough or possibly dehydrated. In either case, you'll want to adjust your water intake. Adding fruit to your water is also great for boosting nutrients and flavor.

Sugary sodas, fruit juices, and energy drinks should be avoided. Coffee and caffeinated teas should be consumed in moderation as they have a diuretic effect and can increase dehydration. Herbal teas and other healthy drink options should also be consumed in moderation since they can reduce your thirst for the water that your body needs.

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## 4. Supplement as Needed

To know if supplements could benefit you, you can have your nutrient levels tested by a lab. Some labs can be self-ordered online and sent back by mail without seeing a physician. Muscle testing is another technique a natural health professional may use to help determine if a supplement could support you. Muscle testing is a biofeedback technique that evaluates the strength or weakness of the arm muscle in reaction to supplements, foods, and other substances. This method, however, requires a trained practitioner to conduct.

Some common supplements that may be useful if you're not getting enough in your diet include fish oil, vitamin D3 (especially in the winter or if you live in colder climates), and a multivitamin suited to your age and gender. Herbalists may also recommend herbal supplements to help someone with a specific complaint. For example, they may suggest marshmallow root to support a person with a cough or ginger to help soothe an upset stomach. They may also recommend herbs for more complex concerns, for example, a supplement that helps regulate and maintain blood sugar levels like Ceylon cinnamon. Before taking a supplement, always check with your doctor to determine if it's appropriate for you, especially if you have a pre-existing condition or are taking any medications. Doing so helps ensure that no adverse or neutralizing reactions occur.

### Conclusion: Getting Support

Crafting a well-rounded diet takes time and effort, but it can be much simpler with knowledge and support. Seek help from your healthcare provider and gain as much education as possible. You can also consider enrolling in one of our programs, including Certified Nutritional Consultant, Certified Natural Health Professional, and Certified Health Coach, to learn more about nutrition, supplementation, and muscle testing.

For more information about these programs, visit [trinityschool.org/programs/list](http://trinityschool.org/programs/list) or call 800-428-0408, option 2, to speak with an Enrollment Specialist.



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