



# HEALTH BLISS

## Introduction



My reason for writing this book is really quite simple: I have a passion for writing—for sharing my thoughts, experiences, and research on being healthy, happy, and fully alive, and a desire to help make a positive difference in people’s lives. As you read, I want you to feel like we are sitting across from each other, and I’m talking to you personally. I already know that we have lots in common, since you’ve chosen to read a book on how to eat and live healthfully and how to be the very best you can be.

This book builds upon and expands the principles that I described in Volumes 1 and 3, ***The Healing Power of NATUREFOODS: 50 Revitalizing SuperFoods & Lifestyle Choices to Promote Vibrant Health*** and ***Recipes for Health Bliss: Using NatureFoods & Lifestyle Choices to Rejuvenate Your Body & Life***, in my 3-book Hay House set. As a health researcher, writer, teacher, lecturer, counselor, and lifestyle coach for 35 years, I’ve learned that the secrets to joy and fulfillment in this life are found in the study and practice of holistic health, optimal nutrition, and balanced living. My friends and clients call me the “NatureFoods Lady” and “The Nature Girl” because I always look to nature for answers to life’s ongoing health questions.

If you are new to my work, here’s my health philosophy in a nutshell, beautifully described by Ralph Waldo Emerson: *“Health is our greatest wealth.”* If you think about this sage advice, I’m sure you’ll agree. Fortunately, regardless of your age, your current level of health, or your current diet or living habits, you can, at any moment, choose differently. Your new, better choices will lead to a healthier and happier life than you ever thought possible.

If you are a “baby boomer” like I am, keep in mind that changes that were once labeled milestones of growing older—such as high blood pressure, fragile bones, significant memory loss, wrinkles, reduced vision, and lack of energy and libido—are no longer considered inevitable. The diet and lifestyle choices I recommend in this book (and practice myself) will help you look and feel vibrantly alive at any age. I feel as young and exuberant as I ever did—and you can, too!

Your level of health, right this moment, is the result of the countless choices you have made regarding your diet, exercise, thought processes, beliefs, and expectations. Undoubtedly, many of these choices have been poor ones. But you can use your past mistakes and learn from them. However, you must start with a commitment. Specifically, are you willing to make a commitment to your health?

A commitment to health begins with appreciating, respecting, and loving your magnificent body. *One of the most important things you can learn in life is to appreciate yourself. As you open your heart to your own self-worth and to the divine essence of all humanity, you access the most powerful healer of all, the healing power of love.* And the human body is, indeed, a miracle of love’s creation. The more I study the human body, the more I am amazed and in awe at how beautifully it is designed. Clearly, your body is a fantastic creation that deserves reverence and respect.

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Your body is a remarkable feedback machine. If you listen, you will discover that it actually talks to you. When you get a headache, for instance, your body is trying to tell you something. Listen to your body's signals with health, balance, and peace as your goals. The key here is your willingness to listen and act. Start today to tune in more to your body.

Most people think that the way to handle a headache is to reach for a bottle of aspirin. They think that it's normal to have a headache, but they are mistaken. While headaches (and the countless other aches and pains that people experience) are certainly common, health is the truly normal state. Disease is an aberration, caused either by harm you've done to yourself or that others have done to you.

Collectively, Americans have been making some very poor choices. Just look at all of the commercials on television and the advertisements in magazines and newspapers. Whatever you are suffering from—headache, constipation, sleepless nights, diarrhea, indigestion, skin rashes, high blood pressure, impotency . . . fill in the blank—the advertisers have a miracle pill, powder, or potion for you. We've come to believe that things outside ourselves are the keys to health and well-being. We've become a self-medicating society because we don't really understand how beautifully robust the human body is. Each of us needs to be reminded that our bodies are magnificently equipped to meet life's problems when supplied with the simple and easily obtainable requisites of health.

### **Choose to Make Positive Changes**

I have some astonishing news for you. It's normal to be able to go to sleep at night without taking a pill. It's normal not to have headaches, sinus problems, hemorrhoids, constipation, and shaky hands. It's normal to be well. We just need to *stop doing the things that cause the problems in the first place*. When you live more from inner guidance, closer to nature, you can enrich the quality of your life and the quality of life on this planet. It's simply a matter of choice. And it all begins, as mentioned above, with appreciating, respecting, and taking loving care of your body. The body reflects the mind, and the mind reflects the spirit, so choosing to make positive changes with your miraculous body is a good place to start.

This book focuses primarily on how to take the best care of your body—starting today—by choosing to eat healthful foods and taking steps to improve a variety of other necessary lifestyle habits. You see, it's really not about making major lifestyle or food changes; rather, it's about making simple, *effective* lifestyle choices. What you eat, how much you move or sleep, what you think, how you deal with stress, how much water you drink, how many bad habits you can discard, and how much your social relationships support you—these factors have a profound effect on health, longevity, and quality of life.

Of the many positive steps you can take, three are eminently under your control: what you eat, how much you move (physical activity), and what you think about. You have the ability to change all three of those at any time. For example, you are the one who decides what you eat or drink;

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nobody, I hope, shoves the food down your throat. If you want to be vibrantly healthy, free from disease, and filled with energy and vitality, start upgrading the foods you eat.

Most people are digging their graves with their knives and forks each and every day. While your diet is only one of the essential ingredients of vibrant health, it's a big one. Think about it this way. Your body is composed of over 70 trillion cells. Think of each cell as a little engine. Some of these engines work in unison, some work independently, and they all work 24/7. In order for the engines to work right, they require specific fuels. If an engine is given the wrong fuel, it won't be able to perform to maximum capacity. If the fuel is of a poor grade, the engine may sputter and hesitate, creating a loss of power. If the engine is given none of the fuel it needs, it will stop.

Much of the fuel for our cells comes directly from the things we eat. The food we eat contains nutrients in the form of vitamins, minerals, water, carbohydrates, fats, proteins, and enzymes. Just as a car requires different forms of energy for the brakes, transmission, and battery to run smoothly, the cells of the body require different types and amounts of nutrients, depending on their location and function in the body. These nutrients allow you to sustain life by providing your body's cells with the basic materials they need to carry on. Each nutrient you ingest differs in form, function, and amount needed; however, all of them are vital. Nutrients are involved in every bodily process, whether it be combating infection, providing energy, or promoting tissue repair, but their common goal is to keep us going. Although eating has been woven into many cultural and religious practices, the essential purpose of eating is survival.

A fundamental problem for most of us is that we eat too much low-nutrient food. These poor food choices deprive our bodies of the nutrients we need. When you deprive your body of the nutrients it needs for a long enough period of time, you get sick because normal functions are impaired. Even if you are not obviously sick, you may not necessarily be healthy. It simply may be that you are not yet exhibiting any overt symptoms of illness. Unlike a car engine, which immediately malfunctions if you put water into the gasoline tank, the human body has tremendous resilience and often camouflages the repercussions of unhealthful fuel choices. By understanding the principles of holistic nutrition and knowing what nutrients you need and what foods contain them, you can improve the state of your health, stave off disease, and maintain the harmonious balance that nature intended.

### ***Trying to Buy Health***

One of the most sobering national statistics is that we spent \$1.5 trillion on disease care last year, more per capita than any other nation in the world. But we are nowhere near the top when it comes to health. Despite our high tech therapies, we are lagging behind all of the industrialized countries and a number of developing countries, as well. How can this be?

One big reason is that there are huge food and medical industries working hard to convince us that what we eat has little or no effect on our health. We are told by industry apologists that any

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combination of low-nutrient, processed, chemicalized “foods” will meet our nutritional needs as long as we take plenty of vitamin pills, heartburn medicine, headache pills, and other remedies. By contrast, scientists tell us that by the year 2015, over 75 percent of all Americans will be obese (with all of the diseases that accompany moribundity). You don’t need to be a Nobel Prize winner to understand that Western medicine needs to rethink how it views health and well-being, and that changes need to be made *now*.

### ***Eating for Optimal Health***

As study after study has shown, a high-nutrient, plant-based diet is a prerequisite for optimal health. That is why half of this book is devoted to identifying 50 of the most healthful foods—what I refer to as *NATUREFOODS*—and describing their benefits. I’ve also included some easy-to-prepare recipes that just happen to be as delicious as they are nutritious. Add these *NATUREFOODS* and recipes to those you’ll find in Volume One and you’ll have 100 of the best foods to help reduce your risks of heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, obesity, Alzheimer’s, arthritis, common forms of cancer, premature aging, vision problems, and mental dysfunction. I’ll also describe the foods that help to accelerate fat loss, increase your energy level and joie de vivre, and empower you to achieve control over your life. I list the foods in alphabetical order. Every food is backed by extensive research and my personal experience of teaching nutrition and healthful food preparation classes (cooked and live-food cuisine) for more than 35 years.

As you’ll discover, there’s more to radiant health than a good diet. Other essential factors must be integrated into your life if you want to maximize your health potential. These include physical factors such as fresh air, plenty of rest and sleep, exercise, sunshine, internal and external cleanliness, and the avoidance of addictions, and mental factors, such as a positive attitude, deep respect for life, high self-esteem, daily respites of solitude and silence, a sense of belonging, and an awareness and trust in your Higher Power, God, or whatever you choose to call this loving presence. I also encourage you to explore practices such as meditation, deep breathing, intentional profuse sweating (saunas), and body balancing. I describe some of these topics in this book. For more in-depth information about these and other practices, please refer to my books and audio programs ***Be Healthy~Stay Balanced; The Joy Factor; Recipes for Health Bliss; Celebrate Life; The Healing Power of NatureFoods; Healthy, Happy & Radiant . . . at Any Age; Choose to Live Peacefully; The Curative Kitchen; Living on the Lighter Side*** and ***Walking on Air***.

I encourage you to make a commitment for 90 days—just one season, three months—and incorporate as many of my dietary and lifestyle suggestions as possible into your life. In this short period of time, you will look better than you have in years and also feel more youthful and empowered. In fact, if you make the commitment for 90 days, you can turn back the clock by at least ten years. That’s right—you can look and feel ten years younger. What do you have to lose except some extra weight, aches and pains, ailments and diseases, and a negative attitude toward your body and your life? I know you can do it. I believe in you and salute your great adventure. I hope to meet you in person somewhere along the way.

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