

220 Parker St. Warsaw, IN 46580

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TRINITY  
school of natural health

# What Feeds You? A Whole-Person Approach to Health



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# What Feeds You? A Whole-Person Approach to Health

## Introduction

Affordability is an issue in our health system—especially when it comes to proper nutrition. Food itself is plentiful, but many people in the United States are food-insecure, which means they either don't have access to sufficient food or they don't have access to quality food that will boost their health.<sup>1</sup> When nutritious foods—such as whole grains, fruits, and vegetables—are not accessible, people struggle with health-related conditions that are ultimately out of their control.

People who do have access to nutritious foods face another set of challenges. They may adjust their lifestyles in short-term ways instead of planning for the long term. They may allow their busy lives to dictate the way they eat, opting for fast food, frozen dinners high in sodium, or vending machine snacks.

Because quality food can be expensive and because many Americans lack proper food preparation and nutrition knowledge, silent killers like obesity and malnutrition—or a combination of the two—threaten our health. While it is an uphill battle, these conditions do not have to cause death. It is crucial to see “feeding” the body as not just a physical act, but a mental and emotional one as well.

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## Obesity

While one of the deadliest threats in developing countries is a lack of food, the United States faces a different problem: an abundance of unhealthy options and a lack of proper education and support. In fact, surprisingly few people are educated on the kinds of food they should be

eating—even those who can afford it. Because of that, the majority of Americans are overweight or obese.<sup>2</sup> Unhealthy snacks like chips, candy, and other processed foods are the most accessible and affordable, which ignites bad eating habits.

Obesity is not just cosmetic; being overweight puts people at risk for life-threatening illnesses like heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and even certain cancers.<sup>3</sup> While an unhealthy diet can exacerbate weight problems, obesity is not solely an issue of eating the right food. It is also influenced by genetic factors, which is why it is important to stay educated on health problems that might run in one's family. Since genetics play such a significant role in the risk of obesity, people with a family history of the disease should focus on the controllable factors that can help them overcome it.

Because drastic changes in diet or activity level can leave people feeling daunted, addressing obesity is a slow process. Change does not happen overnight, but simple practices like giving up sugary drinks or alcohol can benefit overall health. Every person's body is unique, so there is no "one-size-fits-all" nutrition solution. Maybe you prefer three sanctioned meals per day to avoid snacking, or you might have several smaller portions throughout the day to promote consistency. Regardless of what works for you, the best practices are eating whole foods, consuming healthy fats and proteins, drinking water, and choosing foods with plenty of fiber.

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Overcoming obesity requires setting goals with consistent milestones. Finding someone to help keep you accountable to your goals will encourage you to meet them—even when you don't feel like it. Health coaches, for example, can offer great insight and support so that you can achieve a healthy weight, lengthen your life, and reduce your risk for obesity-related diseases.

## Physical Inactivity

Many people associate physical activity with losing weight—but even at a healthy weight, people do not always get enough exercise. A whole-person approach to wellness helps you look at all your habits, routines, and practices to evaluate whether or not you're living well. Maintaining an active lifestyle is one of the best ways to stay mentally, spiritually, and physically healthy.

Consistent physical activity can prevent up to 10% of premature deaths.<sup>4</sup> This is because it affects multiple areas of life—exercise has been shown to improve mood, boost energy, and promote better sleep.<sup>5</sup>

Physical activity can also ease symptoms of chronic diseases—which affect about 50% of adults.<sup>6</sup> While exercise doesn't cure conditions, it boosts wellness and improves symptoms of issues like heart disease, diabetes, asthma, back pain, and arthritis.

Much like a weight-loss regimen, physical activity will not revolutionize your life immediately. It takes time to reap the benefits because your body needs to build up muscle strength and endurance. However, exercise can immediately impact the body in some ways, such as bringing in more oxygen, promoting better sleep, and improving mood through the release of endorphins.

Exercise can also be a social activity that strengthens both your mental health and your relationships. Whatever your goals are for exercising, create a routine that best suits your needs. Especially for those suffering from chronic illnesses, too much exercise without enough conditioning can lead to adverse results. Establish your routine with the help of a fitness expert or educational resources.

## Poor Nutrition

Although we often associate malnutrition with being underweight, it also occurs with obesity. People may gravitate toward empty calories, which do not provide the body with the nutrients it needs. This leads to a cycle of overeating as the body seeks the nutrients it is not receiving.

Eating healthy food, on the other hand, may require “extra work,” especially in comparison to junk food in the snack aisles or burgers from drive-thrus. While fatty, sugary foods are accessible and affordable, fresh food can be expensive and may not seem worth the cost. However, what we feed our bodies has a significant impact on the way we function, from mood to energy levels. We need to eat the right things in order to achieve maximum wellness.

While it is important to eat nutrient-rich foods to maintain heart and muscle health, food choices have also been linked to mental health. For instance, one study found that children who consumed large amounts of sugar, fast food, and soft drinks were more likely to suffer from ADHD.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, a link between depression and an individual’s microbiome—or “gut health”—continues to emerge in some studies.<sup>8</sup>

While consuming foods that nourish your body might not solve all your problems, it can improve the way you think, feel, and act. If you don’t nurture your body by feeding it well, you cannot expect it to function well. Learn what your body actually needs. Talk to a nutritional consultant or another health professional to decide on your first steps toward a nutritious and healthy lifestyle.

## The Emotional Effects of Malnutrition

Obesity is not just a physical condition. While genetic makeup is a factor, it is not the sole cause. In fact, obesity has been linked to emotional triggers such as stress, anxiety, and sadness.<sup>9</sup> Because our souls and minds are hungry for purpose, it becomes easy to fill the emptiness with food—leading to malnutrition and obesity. However, by taking a holistic approach to obesity, you can implement practices that promote not just weight loss, but also whole-person wellness.

## Meditation

Adopting a long-term meditation practice allows you to make space to think, reflect, and understand yourself better. When you focus on self-awareness, you can tap into the stressors and anxieties that might drive you to eat empty calories. Many people have found mindful meditation to be a good tool to help them avoid falling into harmful feelings of shame—which would otherwise trigger emotional eating.<sup>10</sup> Set specific times aside each day to focus on meditation and turn the practice into a habit. Consider how foods make you feel, when you are hungry and when you are full, and what your cravings are. These levels of awareness will help you make positive strides toward a healthy lifestyle.

## Acupressure

Acupressure is an ancient healing technique, which has been successful in promoting weight loss by strengthening the digestive system and helping people control their appetite. It helps restore energy to boost metabolism and encourage weight loss. Of course, this practice is often supplemental to other techniques—such as healthy eating and regular exercise. Be sure to implement a dedicated regimen to pursue holistic health, rather than relying on one specific practice.

## Herbal Supplements

Combined with a regular, balanced diet, several herbs have shown promise in aiding weight loss.<sup>11</sup> More than 80% of the world's population depends on herbs for health and well-being—so taking the time to understand herbs and use them advantageously is important. Their misuse can be dangerous, but if you educate yourself effectively, you can incorporate them into your daily diet and realize healthier outcomes.

# Taking a Whole-Person Approach to Health

The leading causes of death in the United States are largely preventable. Our access to modern medicine makes us far less concerned with holistic, restorative wellness—but we are missing out on remarkable benefits when we settle for “good enough.”

At Trinity School of Natural Health, we offer comprehensive natural health programs for all kinds of interests, from aromatherapy to nutrition. We're passionate about equipping you to pursue whole-person wellness—not just for your own well-being, but for others' too. Through our classes, you will learn to help people make lifestyle choices that improve their lives. Learn more about Trinity School of Natural Health's programs by [contacting our team](#).

1. <https://www.webmd.com/diet/food-insecurity#1>
2. <http://www.healthdata.org/news-release/vast-majority-american-adults-are-overweight-or-obese-and-weight-growing-problem-among>
3. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/obesity/symptoms-causes/syc-20375742>
4. <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/about-physical-activity/why-it-matters.html>
5. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/fitness/in-depth/exercise/art-20048389>
6. <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/about-physical-activity/why-it-matters.html>
7. <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2017/09/food-mental-health>
8. <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2019/02/evidence-mounts-gut-bacteria-can-influence-mood-prevent-depression>
9. <https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/obesity>
10. <https://www.healthline.com/health/meditation-for-weight-loss#weight-loss>
11. <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/weight-loss-herbs#section3>



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