

# Vibrant *living*

YOUR GUIDE TO VIBRANT LIVING THROUGH FITNESS AND NUTRITION

## Staying healthy during the holidays

Robin Walsh BAsC, ND

The winter and holiday season can seem like a five- or six-week buffet. But with some simple preparation, many of us can make it through the season without getting any heavier. So eat, drink, and be merry. But most of all, be healthy!

### 7 tips for Success!

1. Set realistic goals. Expecting to lose weight amongst all the celebrations is probably unrealistic and will make you feel guilty if you don't. Instead, plan to keep your weight and body fat percentage the same. Allow yourself an occasional indulgence, but don't go overboard. Even if you only maintain your present weight and/or body fat percentage, then that's still an accomplishment! Don't get discouraged and quit—just resolve to make a new goal for the new year and move ahead full steam!
2. Eat a low-glycemic-load diet. Eat foods that have a low glycemic load (GL)—such as vegetables, lean proteins, and fiber-rich carbs—which help you stay fuller longer, maintain a smaller rise in blood glucose levels after meals, prolong physical endurance, and keep insulin levels low to burn fat more efficiently and help you lose weight. Research suggests that consumption of high-GL foods (sweets, simple carbs, processed foods, sodas) may promote obesity by causing you to eat more. Other evidence suggests that following



a diet comprised of primarily low-GL foods may be important in the treatment and prevention of chronic diseases. So stick to low-GL foods for high yields in health!

3. Eat frequent, small meals. It's good advice year round, but especially during party season. Don't go to a party or event on an empty stomach. The trick is to continue eating the recommended six small meals a day so you never get to the state of hunger that wears down  
*Cont'd on next page...*

## Un-chocolate Cake

Sarah Heipel, CPT, SNS, CFC

Raw whole food goodness! Serves 12. I recently made this recipe for my friend's birthday. Everyone loved it! I never would've imagined that his combination of ingredients could become such a decadent dessert. Warning! 100% of the original nutrients are present in the final product. Since

none of the vitality has been destroyed with heat, you may experience feelings of health, happiness and enlightenment with each bite.

### Cake:

- 5 cups ground walnuts
- 3 cups raisins
- 3 tbsp raw carob powder
- 1/2 tsp sea salt
- 1 cup dry, hulled buckwheat
- Mix well and form into a cake shape on a serving plate/platter

### Icing:

- 1/2 cup water
- 1 cup raw tahini
- 4 tbsp raw carob powder
- 1 tps vanilla

Pour the water into the blender first, then add remaining ingredients and blend until smooth and creamy. Spread icing evenly over the cake or squeeze using a decorating bag if you want to be even more creative. Decorate with fruit, berries and or nuts (I used lots of raspberries on top). Chill.

your resistance. Before going out, have a small meal or healthy snack that includes protein, which satisfies hunger and helps you eat less.

4. Increase your activity. In addition to lifting your spirits, exercise is an important part of a healthy lifestyle program. Even if your eating habits stray (just a little), you can still stay on the track to better health by expanding your current exercise routine to burn those extra calories.
5. Plan your indulgences wisely. If you are going to give into temptation, do so with thought. Don't waste your calories on foods you don't really love. Scope out the scene, ID the food you can't live without and go for it (ideally a small portion). Following are some common buffet items that you can feel good about (next to your favorite indulgence):

Veggies (skip the dip)	Sliced turkey & chicken
Smoked salmon	Hummus and pita bread
Salsa	Mixed greens (no dressing)
Bean salad	Lean roasted lamb or beef
Fruit (berries, melons)	Black-eyed peas
Fresh shellfish	Nuts (not candied)
Sweet potatoes (no marshmallows)	Green bean casserole (w/o fried onions)
Brown rice	Lettuce wraps
Guacamole	Chicken fajita meat & veggies

6. Relax and enjoy. Stress management is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. Don't let the holidays run you down or stress you out. Simplify traditions, watch your commitments and don't get caught up in the rush. Make time to enjoy the season's sights, sounds, and flavors!
7. Help your body eliminate toxins and acidity. Things such as sugar, alcohol, fatty foods and excess animal products (all of the holiday favorites) are acidic foods and increase the toxic load on your body. To help to support your body process these foods – drink a glass of lemon and water in the morning before breakfast. This helps to alkalinize the system, and also increase the detoxification pathways of the liver. This is a great habit to get into doing every morning!!! Also, make sure you are taking a multivitamin or greens support (see the last vibrant living issue on the importance of greens and juicing) which will provide the body with the minerals to support the liver. Enjoy teas such as milk thistle and dandelion which will also support the detox process (available at your local health food store).

After our indulgence over the holiday season...January is a great time to cleanse with a gentle detoxification program.

# New Certification

Robin Walsh BAsC, ND



Robin has now been certified in First Line Therapy which is an advanced certification program in helping patients achieve optimal health through body composition.

First Line Therapy is a therapeutic lifestyle program which is designed to help you live your life in a way that improves your health. A "therapeutic lifestyle" means making choices every day that will enhance your health and help prevent disease, enabling you to achieve a full, healthy life.

First line Therapy is based in extensive scientific research demonstrating that many of the chronic diseases associated with aging are largely caused by lifestyle choices. These diseases include:

- heart disease
- stroke
- high blood pressure
- high cholesterol
- osteoporosis
- osteoarthritis
- metabolic syndrome
- diabetes
- cancer

A first line therapy program is now recommended as the first line therapy for individuals with many of the conditions listed above, as well as those with health problems such as:

- PMS
- PCOS
- Menopause
- Stress related disorders
- Fatigue
- Conditions related to obesity/overweight

For more information, email Robin at [robin@robinwalshnd.com](mailto:robin@robinwalshnd.com).



# Organic Foods...are they?

Sarah Heipel, CPT, SNS, CFC

I'd like to contribute an email conversation that I had with a client of mine regarding organic foods. He enlightened me on many points and I thought others could benefit from his insights.

The following is a response that I received to an email that I sent out recently regarding organic foods. It begins with my original email. I hope that you will be as enlightened as I was.

If you would like to contribute your 2 cents on this topic or if you would like to describe what efforts you are making with regards to supporting local, enviro-conscious farming, please email [info@sarahheipel.com](mailto:info@sarahheipel.com) or [robin@robinwalshnd.com](mailto:robin@robinwalshnd.com) and we will post your comments in our next newsletter.

Cheers!

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From: sarah heipel  
Subject: Chosing Organically farmed foods

I wanted to send out a quick email regarding chosing organic over commercially farmed produce, as it has been a reoccurring topic of conversation around me lately.

The message is: Eat organic. You deserve it. You're worth it! You and your family are worth more than anything on Earth; give your family the best fuel possible. The organic farmers also deserve your support for not spraying pesticides (poisons) on the Earth. If you have to pay twice as much or more for organic food, do it. It is an investment in yourself (which always comes back multiplied) Organic food has more vitality, minerals and value. Eat up!

Make it an outstanding day!

sarah

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From: "George Heckman"  
To: "sarah heipel"  
Subject: Re: Chosing Organically farmed foods

Hi Sarah -  
Thanks for the wishes!  
A couple of comments -

1. Organic products, particularly tropical fruit, are flown / trucked / shipped in. Not exactly environmentally friendly.
2. "Organic" is a luxury the developed world can choose to afford - in some places, having any kind of crop depends on practices that would not be certified organic. Organic practices are not feasible in many parts of the world where getting any kind of food is a more immediate concern.
3. If livestock is ill, we give it antibiotics. This common sense approach to preserving a source of livelihood disqualifies us from being certified "organic".
4. It's important to encourage safer and more environmentally friendly agriculture. However, this is more expensive for

farmers who have an increasingly limited margin of income. You don't want to end up penalizing them.

5. There is no evidence that organic food has more vitality - it's all conjecture and marketing! There is no evidence from even remotely well designed studies that people who eat organic actually live better or longer.

6. Part of the problem with the food supply is our insistence on exotic products from far away, and that everything look fresh. This sort of demand drives producers to use the poisons that damage the environment. If people really want to encourage safer agriculture, they need to eat local, even if that means limiting choices. Local means fresher, and less preservatives because the stuff doesn't have to be shipped half way around the world. We don't need strawberries in February, but our self-centered consumer driven culture demands it.

Better to progressively encourage government to support more environmentally friendly agriculture, to encourage local farmers and know that your food is local and was raised using the safest practices possible, but truly organic has limited advantages, is not necessary, and hurts most farmers even farther.

When the whole world can be appropriately fed, then we can afford to demand 100% organic.

Cheers!

George

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From: sarah heipel  
To: george Heckman  
Subject: Re: Chosing Organically farmed foods

Hi George,

You are fabulous! I really appreciate your detailed response. You bring up many very important points. I realize that in the future I need to be much more specific and clear about the message that I want to express. I made many assumptions of the readers knowledge in my email, which I shouldn't have. I didn't even realize just how many important aspects weren't said until reading your response. Thank you.

The only statement which I don't agree on is about organic food not necessarily having more vitality. Do you not think that raw organic produce would have more life force than commercially (chemically treated) produce? Do you not find that you can taste the difference in flavour and feel the difference in the texture as they are heartier plants?

If it's ok with you, I'd like to forward your email.

sarah

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# Organic Foods...are they?

Sarah Heipel, CPT, SNS, CFC

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From: "George Heckman"  
To: "sarah heipel"  
Subject: Re: Chosing Organically farmed foods

Hi there !  
Go ahead and circulate.  
Perhaps it's the epidemiologist in me speaking, but here goes.

Every health intervention has potential benefits and potential harms. Chemotherapy is a pretty obvious one there - it can cure lymphoma, but some people will die from the therapy. Because far more people are cured than die, the balance is in favour of the chemo. Cold comfort if your relative died.

Comparing regular apples and organic apples is another kettle of fish (cripes - I am truly screwing up my metaphors). How would you compare the benefits of one over the other? You'd have to take into account the specific chemicals used on the regular apples - some may be worse than others. Were the organic apples flown in on a polluting airliner? A diesel truck?

Once you'd figured that out, you'd have to do a trial - randomize a number of people to eating regular apples and another number to eating organic apples. You'd have to be able to measure a difference - what are you measuring? Number of colds? Cholesterol? Is the difference between organic apples and regular apples so great that you'd actually measure something clinically meaningful? Maybe. But you can't really say for sure without doing the experiment.

It makes sense that organic apples might be healthier. Maybe.

For a long time, it made sense that giving post-menopausal hormone replacement therapy prevented heart attacks. However, after a large randomized blinded and controlled trial, we know that this is not true.

For a long time, people with abnormal heart rhythms after a heart attack were given certain antiarrhythmic drugs. The rhythms normalized, so, logically, it would make sense that there would be fewer deaths. The trial proved that logic wrong.

Eating organic might make sense for individual health. If this individual eats well otherwise, and exercises and has fun, maybe the difference would be undetectable. A chain-smoking slob might notice the difference - may be not. It probably makes more sense environmentally. However, without better evidence of benefit, are you inappropriately exposing to potential harm the majority of farmers (who barely make enough to break even), or making less wealthy people feel inadequate because they can't afford these super foods?

I think that the key as consumers is to push for better agricultural practices, the promulgation of organically-inclined methods where possible and financially feasible, but remaining sufficiently flexible in our purchasing habits so as not to penalize the producers. It probably is more feasible to encourage better (but maybe not 100% organic) practices through incentives so that as large a segment as possible of the entire industry could improve. The benefits as a whole would be more significant.

That's my 2 cents ...  
Happy Weekend!

George

## Vibrant Living

ROBIN WALSH BASC, ND  
GOLDSWORTHY CHIROPRACTIC  
AND WELLNESS CENTRE  
168 LEXINGTON CRT., UNIT K  
WATERLOO, ON  
N2J 4R9  
519.886.4814  
ROBIN@ROBINWALSHND.COM  
WWW.ROBINWALSHND.COM

SARAH HEIPEL, CPT, NLC-1  
STUDIO ENEGI  
B10-490 DUTTON DRIVE  
WATERLOO, ON  
N2L 6H7  
519.888.8339  
INFO@SARAHHEIPEL.COM  
WWW.SARAHHEIPEL.COM

# Ask the Expert

Robin Walsh BAsC, ND

**This week, Robin highlights a topic that a lot of our readers have asked about—Should I get the Flu Shot?**

I have recently had a lot of questions on whether or not to get the flu shot. If you would like more information, I will refer you to Vibrant Living Issue eight which you can access by visiting [www.robinwalshnd.com](http://www.robinwalshnd.com). This issue has an extensive article on the flu shot, as well as the Canadian Naturopathic Association Flu Vaccine Position Paper. Another quality source for information is the Vaccine Risk Awareness Network which can be accessed at [www.vran.org](http://www.vran.org)

## Boosting Your Immune System Naturally

In order to keep your immune system healthy over the winter, it is important to include the following things in your daily routine:

- Proper diet and nutrition
- Proper exercise
- Rest
- Stress reduction
- Supplementation

It is natural to get the occasional cold or flu, and it is an important part of strengthening the immune system. It only becomes a problem when you are getting chronically sick, or if the illness lingers and seems very difficult to get rid of. If these things happen, it is important to see a qualified health care practitioner to determine if there are any barriers that are suppressing your immune system and to work at strengthening and supporting it.

However, for the occasional cold and flu...here are things you can do to support your immune system and shorten the duration of the illness:

## Vitamin C – 1000 mg per day minimum

- Choose a quality C that contains Bioflavonoids
- It stimulates the immune system by both elevating interferon levels and enhancing the activity of certain immune cells

## Astragalus

- A herbal tonic that is used to boost the immune system before and during the cold and flu system

## Mushrooms

- Extracts from mushrooms such as shiitake, maitake, and reishi have a long history of traditional use as invigorating tonics and provide support for a healthy immune response

## Echinacea

- Has antiviral and immune stimulating properties
- Best if taken at the beginning of infection or first signs of cold symptoms

## Elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*)

- Studies show antiviral properties against ten different strains of the influenza virus, including A and B
- Sambucol reduced the duration of flu symptoms (e.g., fever and myalgia) to 3-4 days when 4 tablespoons were taken daily for 3 days

## Thyme and Eucalyptus Essential Oils

- Put these powerful anti-bacterial and anti-viral oils in a diffuser to cleanse the atmosphere, or put on your pillowcase before going to sleep

## Oil of Oregano

- Antiviral, antibacterial, antiparasitic, antifungal
- Take acutely, or add to vaporizer for respiratory congestion, coughs, sinusitis

There are combination products that will include the above mentioned herbs that can be taken either preventatively, or to treat a cold or flu. For more information on these products please email [robin@robinwalshnd.com](mailto:robin@robinwalshnd.com) or mention it at your next appointment.

## Hydrotherapy—Warming Socks – Flu/Cold

Use warming socks for a side-effect-free treatment for congestion and to help ward off oncoming colds. Apply this treatment to stimulate the immune response, overcome exhaustion and relieve stress headaches, insomnia, stuffy sinuses, head or chest congestion. Sounds crazy...but try it. It really works!!!

This is also a safe, effective way to support kids immune systems. You will need:

- long cotton socks, not too thick
- long heavy wool socks
- hot and cold water
- towel and blanket
- five minutes to prepare
- from one hour to overnight for resting.

**The treatment:** Warm feet first with a quick hot rinse or footbath. Wet cotton socks thoroughly in very cold water and squeeze out excess. Put them on and cover with dry wool socks. Dress in warm pajamas and get into bed under warm covers and try to keep them on all night.

**Why it works:** The body responds to the false “threat” of cold by sending blood to stimulate the vital functions. Red and white blood cells increase, keeping the immune system functioning strongly. The cold temperature also draws blood downward to the feet to warm them, relieving head congestion.

TO HAVE YOUR QUESTION FEATURED IN AN  
UPCOMING NEWSLETTER, SEND YOUR  
QUESTIONS IN AN EMAIL TO ROBIN  
([ROBIN@ROBINWALSHND.COM](mailto:ROBIN@ROBINWALSHND.COM))