



**Cristian Baldini**

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**Bionutrizione organica  
Sport Nutrition**



# The Healing Power of Food <sup>1</sup>

## Diet Therapy <sup>2</sup>

Diet therapy is based on two fundamental observations:

- a) Proper nutrition is a requisite for general well being
- b) Poor nutrition plays a critical role in conditions, such as obesity, that can lead to a number of serious and potentially life-threatening conditions, including type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, some types of cancer, and stroke

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/obesity](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/obesity)

**If we recognize the link between poor nutrition and poor health, can we similarly conclude that the right diet has preventive properties?**

An oft-cited example used to demonstrate the importance of nutrition is that of the obese patient. Diet, in this case, can be as simple as avoiding foods like carbs in excess, which are contra-indicated in overweight patients and those with type 2 diabetes.

Doctor Dr. Andreas Eenfeldt, founder and CEO of the Diet Doctor LCHF program (Low Carb, High Fat diet), advises diabetic patients who are embarking on the LCHF program and who are on medication “to test your blood sugar frequently when starting this diet and adapt (lower) your medication. This should ideally be done with the assistance of a knowledgeable physician”.

[www.dietdoctor.com/low-carb/with-diabetes-medications](http://www.dietdoctor.com/low-carb/with-diabetes-medications)

The difference between a nutritional approach and pharmacological therapy is that, with the former, the patient is not restricted to consuming one food, once a day, every day, for a prescribed period of time.



*Foods are not like drugs.*

*If an active principle of interest has been identified, it cannot be administered with a single food in a repetitive manner.*

*The therapeutic role of food is determined by the synergy between different ingredients and different cooking processes.*



# Cooking methods and food associations have different targets and can interfere with the bioavailability of active principles.

Several studies in recent years have shown that foods have curative properties owing to the various active ingredients contained within them. This research, however, is limited in that it doesn't explore the effects of associations with other foods, nor does it specify cooking methods, which can vastly alter the properties of ingredients.

We cannot underestimate the degree to which cooking methods interfere with the availability of nutrients.

**If we wanted, for example, to increase the bioavailability of vitamin K (a fat-soluble vitamin) within a given ingredient, we would have to cook that ingredient in a lipid (like oil).**

Similarly to pharmaceutical drugs, the active ingredient within a food may not arrive at the target site in order to perform its healing function unless it is associated with the necessary excipients. Diet may, thus, be less effective, or ineffective altogether, if the cooking method is not specified.

To stimulate metabolism (specifically, support the thyroid and liver function) in the case of weigh-loss diets, for example, we would have to use foods rich in iodine, such as fish proteins.

## **What kind of fish should I choose? And how should I prepare it?**

In order to proceed, your diet therapist will have to possess a thorough knowledge regarding the different properties of food and the ideal cooking methods that will help you achieve your desired result.

The iodine content of cod, for example, is higher than that contained within sole. Grilled fish allows for a greater concentration of iodine, as the latter increases with dehydration, as opposed to boiled fish, in which the iodine content is diluted in water. Frying, on the other hand, whether stir-frying or deep frying, allows for an even quicker dehydration and a greater concentration of iodine, with the added stimulus on the hepato-biliary function<sup>3</sup> that this method offers.

“ *The kitchen can be a laboratory for food preparation* ”

Naturally, we cannot exclusively consume fish for a lifetime.

As mentioned before, we cannot isolate a single food and administer it repetitively, but we can assemble a meal for that same purpose. In the above case regarding metabolic stimulus (thyroid stimulus), we chose both the type of fish and the best method of preparation in order to allow for the highest concentration of iodine.

Dairy products, for example, and even some vegetables that are rich in potassium can slow metabolic activity, which would hamper metabolic stimulation.

The prevalent message for decades now in the discourse on diet has been that a calorie is a calorie; the most important focus in dieting is counting calories. While being aware of calorie intake is indeed important in a weight-loss context, the significance of the quality of that calorie is often overlooked. Fat, for example, while containing more calories per gram (fat contains 9 calories per gram, carbohydrates provide 4 calories for the same amount), has less impact on glycaemia (blood glucose level) and on insulin response than carbohydrates do. 200 Kcal from carbs has a much more significant impact on insulin spike than 200 Kcal from fat. This is because food has an effect on the endocrine system—insulin is a hormone<sup>3</sup>. In a weight loss diet, 100 Kcal of cheese would not produce the same effect as 100 Kcal of fish as cheese has a fattening effect owing to its effect on the thyroid gland, slowing its function down as opposed to stimulating it as iodine-rich fish would.

## **Personalization of the nutritional plan: how food interacts with the individual.**

Nutrition is an interaction between two organisms: on the one hand, the food that is supplied by nature, and on the other, the organism that consumes it.

Knowing the unique characteristics of all the ingredients needed to compose a meal, both raw and cooked, and the changes that occur with the cooking process, is not sufficient to create a nutritional plan.

In order to personalize the diet plan, therefore, the following are necessary:

- a) An organic and physiological assessment/diagnosis of the patient: pathologies and medications diagnosed (if these are present), as well as lifestyle factors including sports, or life phases, such as pregnancy, breastfeeding, menopause and so on.
- b) An identification of the constitutional characteristics of the subject to be treated: family history and predispositions.
- c) An assessment of appetite: the therapist must understand whether the craving for a specific food is an organic or pathological request (such as the appetite for sugar in diabetic patients).





### **POTATO FRIES** **in extra virgin olive oil**

Fried potatoes are unparalleled in their ability to stimulate liver function. They likewise stimulate gallbladder contractility and provide the carbohydrates and potassium necessary for hepatocyte (liver cell) metabolism. The carbohydrate and potassium content also works as a muscle relaxant for the smooth muscles of the biliary tract, thus facilitating the flow of bile.

**Recommended for:**  
obesity, epato-biliary hypofunction, insomnia, hypertonic constipation.

**Contraindicated for:**  
any acute condition of the liver, in which case the stimulus provided through frying would be less tolerated.



### **BELGIAN ENDIVE** **raw, with extra virgin olive oil, lemon, and salt**

Raw Belgian endive retains all of the diuretic properties contained in its water and is particularly indicated in cases of kidney disease and tissue imbibition. The fibrous part of its stroma is soft and digestible and thus only gently stimulates intestinal transit and may therefore be used even in cases of bowel disease, such as colitis.

**Recommended for:**  
weight loss, pregnancy, diabetes, kidney disease, tissue imbibition.

**Contraindicated for:**  
high levels of iron and ferritin in the blood.



### **FISH** **pan-fried with lemon**

Easily digestible, simple to make, and enjoyed even by children (or picky eaters) and individuals who do not otherwise enjoy the strong taste of fish, this recipe is particularly suited to increasing the bioavailability and absorption of the nutrients present within the meal, owing to the citric acid of the lemon and the iron and Vitamin C content of the fresh parsley. Garlic, included for its neurosedative properties, attenuates the stimulating nature of fish in patients on which this would otherwise have a negative effect.

**Recommended for:**  
weight loss, hypothyroidism, diabetes

**Contraindicated for:**  
allergies, hypersecretory gastritis, esophageal reflux.

References:

- 1) Michael T. Murray N.D. The healing power of food. Prima Lifestyles. 1993
- 2) Krause, Marie V. Food, nutrition and diet therapy. W.B. Saunders; 7th edition. 1984
- 3) TMalhotra, Aseem; O'Neill, Donal. The Pioppi Diet: A 21-Day Lifestyle Plan. Penguin. 2017
- 4) Fausto Auferio e Michele Pentassuglia. Il ruolo nutrizionale e terapeutico degli alimenti. 2015

All the data in this brochure is from the literature referenced and the information provided is, at best, of a general nature and cannot substitute for the advice of a medical professional.



Cristian Baldini- M.Sc.

Roma - Via dei Giuochi Istmici, 16  
Torino - Corso Vittorio Emanuele, 160  
L'Aquila - Via Solaria, 35  
Milano - Via Ausonio, 26  
Avezzano - Corso della Libertà, 61  
Treviglio - Via Pontirolo, 43A  
Crema - Via Diaz, 18

For collaborations, interviews, long-distance  
consultations on skype, or general questions,  
please write to the following address:  
[info@cristianbaldini.com](mailto:info@cristianbaldini.com)

[www.cristianbaldini.com](http://www.cristianbaldini.com)  
tel. (+39) 327 240 4224 GMT+1