



Organic Foods

Extension Foods and Nutrition Specialists
The Texas A&M University System

1. "The chemicals added to our manufactured food take away much of its value for health." **False.** All food additives have been thoroughly tested for toxicity. Chemicals added to some of our foods include vitamin and mineral enrichments and/or fortifications, antioxidants to prevent food from becoming rancid, and preservatives to prevent foods from becoming toxic because of molds.
2. "Man-made vitamins are just as good as natural vitamins." **True.** Some man-made ones are even better utilized, but all the essential vitamins and other essential nutrients may be easily obtained from proper selections of foods based on the four food groups.
3. "Much of our food has been so processed and refined that it has lost its value for health." **False.** Some steps of refining and processing enable some foods to become more digestible. Certain steps do remove some of the nutritional essentials, such as extracting bran and germ from wheat flour. In spite of this, processed and refined foods have not lost their health value. They can be balanced by selecting supplementary foods. On the other hand, some unrefined foods, including wheat, contain natural ingredients which may interfere with the body's utilization of some minerals.*
4. "Chemical sprays that farmers use make our food a danger to health, even if they are used carefully." **False.** Chemical sprays are not dangerous if they are used carefully. They present no public health problem as they are carefully controlled and only approved ones are allowed. Sprays remove insects that may be a danger to health and fungicide sprays kill molds that are dangerous to health.
5. "There is no difference in food value between food grown in poor, worn-out soil and food grown in rich soil." **True.** The actual fact is that if soil is poor and worn out, the plants will not grow. Plants do not even require soil to grow as long as they have the necessary chemical fertilizers.
6. "Many foods lose a lot of their value for health because they are shipped so far and stored so long." **False.** In the earlier days people developed pellagra and scurvy due to lack of fresh fruits, vegetables and meat because these foods could not be shipped long distances due to lack of refrigeration and processing methods.
7. "Foods grown with chemical fertilizers are just as healthful as food grown with natural fertilizers." **True.** Plants cannot actually use natural fertilizers until they have been broken down into inorganic chemical units.
8. Anyone in this country who eats balanced meals can get enough vitamins in his regular food." **True.** A balanced meal is defined as one that supplies enough vitamins.
9. "If people feel tired and run down, they probably need more vitamins and minerals." **False.** If people feel tired and run down, they

* Milling of the kernels of wheat improves its digestibility as it gets rid of much of the fibrous material associated with phytin. Phytin is a chemical molecule that ties up the calcium, magnesium and phosphorus in the bran and makes them relatively unavailable for human use. The body does not produce a high enough level of the enzyme phytase, which is necessary to break down the phytin. Therefore, minerals bound by this substance are not assimilated by the body. For this reason, whole wheat containing relatively large amounts of calcium and phosphorus indicated on the food label may have small amounts of these minerals available for utilization by the body.

need to see their physician. He may prescribe vitamin or mineral supplements, but something else most likely will be the problem.

10. Older people need about the same amount of vitamins as young adults." **True.**
11. Persons who eat a variety of available foods every day can get all the vitamins and minerals they need." **True.** Correct knowledge of nutrition and how to correctly use the basic four food groups can aid people in selecting a diet to meet their nutritional requirements.
12. "Many diseases, even arthritis and cancer, are partly caused by a lack of vitamins and minerals." **False.** Specific nutritional deficiencies will develop if there is a lack of vitamins and minerals in the diet, but these can be identified by a physician. He can prescribe what is needed to correct the condition that has resulted from an unbalanced diet. It is very dangerous for people to decide they can treat themselves with self-prescribed doses of vitamins and minerals when they are sick. Arthritis and

cancer are not cured or treated with just vitamins and minerals. (A wise physician does not attempt to treat his own illness, nor does a wise attorney attempt to defend himself in court. In like manner, we should not attempt to diagnose and treat our own symptoms.)

13. "People can protect their health if they take more vitamins than they normally need." **False.** People who frequently take excessively large doses of vitamin supplements may encounter toxic effects. This is the reason that the FDA is limiting the upper levels of vitamins A and D in nutritional supplements.

References

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- Jukes, Thomas. "Down the Primrose Path With Organic Foods," *School Food Service Journal*, October 1974, pp. 52-61.
- Rooney, Lloyd. *Personal Communications*, October 1974.

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