

# Your days of eating Nyama choma are numbered

Four thousand years seems an awfully long time ago, but an inspired man, who knew nothing about cholesterol, gave an order to the Israelites about food, which still rings true today. "All the fat belongs to Yahweh. This is a lasting covenant for all generations to come wherever you may live; that you will not eat either fat or blood." (Leviticus 3:17).

In the 21st Century, many are giving up meat and fat due to their relationship with various diseases. Diets based on foods of animal origin generally have more than the recommended fat content.

If you are to change diet, avoid animal fats and fatty meat. With due respect to our pastoralists, modern day terrorism is in our eating habits.

If meat must feature on our menus, then it must come from healthy animals, have little fat, be cooked appropriately and not be cured using preservatives. When choosing what is best to eat, remember that appetite and pleasure are not reliable guides. Choosing is an act of free will. Orientate yourself on healthy foods. It may be uncomfortable at first but it is worth the effort.

Only with proper information and properly oriented appetite beginning in childhood can a person truly make wise food choices that lead to health and well-being. Parents be forewarned.

Good food must meet the following conditions: it must be healthful, must prevent disease, must avoid problems of modern diet and must be combined properly since no single

## GOOD LIVING

BY SOLOMON KARANJA



food contains everything.

An example is the guidelines given by the Department of Health and Agriculture in the US, which we may need to re-adapt to our local conditions.

It is simple: eat a variety of foods; balance food with physical activity; choose diet that is rich in grain products, vegetables and fruits, a diet low in fat, saturated fat and cholesterol. Choose a diet moderate in sugars, in salt and sodium; and if you drink, do so in moderation.

Except breast milk, no protein contains all essential amino acids. Eggs approximate this ideal at 94 per cent. By combining vegetable proteins from legumes over a 12-hour period we are likely to get all the necessary amino acids from legumes. Animal proteins need to be taken with caution. They contain highly nitrogenous by-products, which acidify the body. Eating meat wholesale has been a major cause of increase in cancers.

Also, imagine the cost to planetary ecological balance when rain forests are cleared to rear cattle for food.

The process of slaughtering — the duration from the slaughterhouse to the butchery and



to roasting — offers golden opportunities for pathogens to attack meat and degrade it.

Roasting meat ensures that the pathogens are killed, but other carcinogens such as heterocyclic amines, aromatic hydrocarbons — benzopyrene, which is also found in tobacco smoke; and nitrosamines, formed spontaneously by action of heat on meats previously treated with nitrites such as ham sausages and others are the results.

In Uruguay a country known for high meat consumption, it has been proved that women who ingest more fried and/or grilled meat have more than triple the risk of breast cancer.

Non-protein nitrogen products present in meat that can turn harmful are:

- Creatine - an energy-giving product in muscles, which can convert to nitrosamines that is linked to causing cancer.
  - Urea, uric acid, purines and creatinine, which are waste products from the animal. They are of no use to humans.
  - Hypoxanthine - with a chemical composition similar to caffeine and is addictive.
  - Vasodilator amines such as histamine and tyramine; which are common in pork and very aged meat.
- Next time you walk into a restaurant, look at your menu afresh and choose with your health in mind.

— Dr Karanja practises medicine in Nakuru.

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