

Staying natural

In general, I suggest that you stay as natural as possible when it comes to what you put in, on, or near your body. In the case of food, nature has combined many important elements in the earth's bountiful produce that can't be perfectly replicated in artificially produced foods. Human bodies have been living well on only the nourishment supplied by nature from the beginning of the species until recent times.

With modern science, production, and distribution avenues in place, the world has suddenly become filled to the brim with artificial everything. Kids are drinking juices made with 0 to 3 percent real juice, and eating plastic candy products made with "artificial fruit flavor" that give the instinctual impression of eating nature's healthy foods, but with little nutrition and a lot of chemicals.

Do you really trust that big corporations and government committees always make the right decisions about what should be allowed in foods? I've seen even committees with altruistic motives and no lobbyists make lots of mistakes and poor decisions. I wouldn't assume that something is safe and healthy just because you see it on a grocery store shelf.

Take time to research so that you can choose what to eat based on intelligent information. Check out books, Web sites, and newsletters that focus on keeping your body healthy and free from toxic substances.

Consider

Most studies agree that natural fruits, vegetables, grains, and legumes lead to good health, and suggest striving, in general, to stay as natural as possible in food and everything else.

Spiritual Wisdom

Wise words about the body

“Believe not that man consists of flesh, skin, and veins. The real part of man is his soul, and the things just mentioned are only outward coverings. They are only veils, not the real man.”

—the Zohar

“The true ascetic does not gratify the body; but he cares well for the body that he may advance the spiritual life. Cared for, it is a better vessel for truth.”

—Gautama Buddha

“He will be the slave of many masters who is his body’s slave.”

—Seneca

“Every man is the builder of the temple called his body — we are all sculptors and painters, and our material is our flesh and blood and bones.”

—Henry David Thoreau

“This body is mortal, always gripped by death, but within it dwells the immortal Self.”

—the Upanishads

“If anything is sacred, the human body is sacred.”

—Walt Whitman

Here are some more ways to stay healthy by staying natural:

- **Do your best to stay away from poisons.** Look carefully at what you use to clean your counters and bathrooms. If you spray it, you breathe it! You can find natural alternatives to most chemical cleaners and poisons in health-conscious stores, and many common household items, such as vinegar, water, and baking soda, can be used as perfectly good cleaners.

One of the most bizarre scenes I've seen took place during a Thanksgiving dinner with friends where the owner of the house started spraying poison all over their kitchen to get rid of a few ants. The living room we were all sitting in was right next to the kitchen, so the fumes were clouding out into our breathing space. I quickly and kindly asked him to stop, but was really surprised that this intelligent fellow hadn't thought twice about spraying poison.

Now, I don't like having ants in my kitchen either, but I'm not willing to poison myself to get rid of them! Look online to find out different natural methods that people have discovered and tried. Some use boric acid to get rid of insects, and others even swear by drawing a line with chalk, saying that the ants won't cross the line (I haven't personally tried this one yet). If you must spray with usual products, do it sparingly or preferably outside, near the area where they're entering your home.

I suggest steering clear, too, of defogger cans that fill your home with poison for an hour or two. Does it sound like a good idea to fill your living space with poison? Of course, extreme situations may require extreme measures. However, poison has become a fast-food type of solution to problems in today's society, with little consideration of how that poison is going to affect your body or the bodies of those you love.

- **Don't take too many medications.** Business-based medicine has turned today's world into a world of drugs. I've consulted doctors who've zipped off all kinds of potent prescriptions for minor ailments. Each time I've had prescriptions filled, the pharmacist inevitably hands me a list of potential side effects for that drug — side effects that are often much worse than whatever I went to the doctor for. One list was a whole page long and had some of the most disgusting-sounding possible side effects you could imagine!

Obviously, if you have a serious illness, you should use whatever means are available to cure it, including medicines. I'm not suggesting that you should never take medicines, but to appreciate that your body is your responsibility. Be aware and do your research. Sometimes, even with doctors in white lab coats, you have to "just say no."

- **Read the labels of anything you're going to put in, on, or around your body.** Inquire about natural alternatives when possible. Remember that your skin is also a breathing organ — check the labels of what you're putting into your body through the pores of your skin. Health-food stores often offer natural options, and many of these simple products are as good or better than chemical conglomerations, but without as much of the bad stuff.

Don't Forget

Don't bathe your body in toxins just for convenience sake.