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Nutrition: Knowing Isn't Doing

In Tuesday's message, I said that both the experts and the public in a New York Times nutrition survey considered the vitamin and mineral content of food important or very important when they consider whether a food is healthy or not. But do people have enough information to make a decision about which foods are healthy? Not surprising that the nutrition experts almost all said they did. What shocked me was that 81% of the public also said they had enough information to make healthy choices.

That's interesting because it contradicts what the authors of the New York Times article said. "It's clear that many shoppers do want to eat healthful foods but are unsure what to choose." Maybe the authors only considered the answers to individual foods as I talked about Tuesday and Thursday. But if people say they have the information they need to make healthy choices, they should know how to assess individual foods. That they don't know how could mean they really don't know what is good nutrition information and what isn't.

Or it could mean they just don't make healthy choices. Nutrition experts said they select nutritious foods 84% of the time while the public claims to choose healthy food just 28% of the time. Knowing isn't doing.

There was a part of the Times article that I disagreed with. Here's a quote from the dean of the Tufts University School of Nutrition Science and Policy: "Twenty years ago, I think we knew about 10 percent of what we need to know about nutrition, and now we know about 40 or 50 percent."

One of the problems with nutrition research is that studies are too small, don't last long enough, and don't consider enough variables—from differences in absorption of nutrients, genetics, and on and on. I would say we know maybe 5% of what we need to know about nutrition.

The question isn't what we know; it's what we do. We have enough general information, but too many of us haven't been motivated to put the information into practice, and that's critically important when there are children in our lives. Eat less. Eat better. Move more.



Two weeks from today, I'm doing the [Supplementing for Health](#) seminar live in Dallas and everyone's invited. Based on this survey, it would really serve you well to be there. And bring a friend or customer.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

Reference: <http://nyti.ms/29jIE12>

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