

effects of drug abuse can be far-reaching, including the increased risk of stroke, heart disease, cancer, lung disease, and liver disease⁶.

Sleeping Patterns

Inadequate amounts of sleep, or not sleeping well, can also have remarkable effects on a person's health. In fact, sleeping can affect your health just as much as your diet. Scientific studies have shown that insufficient sleep increases the risk for heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, obesity, and depression. Abnormal breathing during sleep, a condition called sleep apnea, is also linked to an increased risk for chronic disease⁷.

Personal Choice: The Challenge of Choosing Foods

There are other factors besides environment and lifestyle that influence the foods you choose to eat. Different foods affect energy level, mood, how much is eaten, how long before you eat again, and if cravings are satisfied. We have talked about some of the physical effects of food on your body, but there are other effects too.

Food regulates your appetite and how you feel. Multiple studies

6. National Institute on Drug Abuse (2017, March 23). *Health Consequences of Drug Misuse*.

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/health-consequences-drug-misuse>.

7. National Sleep Foundation. *Sleep Disorders*.

<https://sleepfoundation.org/sleep-disorders-problems>

have demonstrated that some high fiber foods and high-protein foods decrease appetite by slowing the digestive process and prolonging the feeling of being full or satiety. The effects of individual foods and nutrients on mood are not backed by consistent scientific evidence, but in general, most studies support that healthier diets are associated with a decrease in depression and improved well-being. To date, science has not been able to track the exact path in the brain that occurs in response to eating a particular food, but it is quite clear that foods, in general, stimulate emotional responses in people. Food also has psychological, cultural, and religious significance, so your personal choices of food affect your mind, as well as your body. The social implications of food have a great deal to do with what people eat, as well as how and when. Special events in individual lives—from birthdays to funerals—are commemorated with equally special foods. Being aware of these forces can help people make healthier food choices—and still honor the traditions and ties they hold dear.

Typically, eating kosher food means a person is Jewish; eating fish on Fridays during Lent means a person is Catholic; fasting during the ninth month of the Islamic calendar means a person is Muslim. On New Year's Day, Japanese take part in an annual tradition of Mochitsuki also known as Mochi pounding in hopes of gaining good fortune over the coming year. Several hundred miles away in Hawai'i, people eat poi made from pounded taro root with great significance in the Hawaiian culture, as it represents Hāloa, the ancestor of chiefs and kanaka maoli (Native Hawaiians). National food traditions are carried to other countries when people immigrate. The local cuisine in Hawai'i would not be what it is today without the contributions of Japanese, Chinese, European, and other immigrant communities.

Factors that Drive Food Choices

Along with these influences, a number of other factors affect the dietary choices individuals make, including:

- **Taste, texture, and appearance.** Individuals have a wide range of tastes which influence their food choices, leading some to dislike milk and others to hate raw vegetables. Some foods that are very healthy, such as tofu, may be unappealing at first to many people. However, creative cooks can adapt healthy foods to meet most people's taste.
- **Economics.** Access to fresh fruits and vegetables may be scant, particularly for those who live in economically disadvantaged or remote areas, where cheaper food options are limited to convenience stores and fast food.
- **Early food experiences.** People who were not exposed to different foods as children, or who were forced to swallow every last bite of overcooked vegetables, may make limited food choices as adults.
- **Habits.** It's common to establish eating routines, which can work both for and against optimal health. Habitually grabbing a fast food sandwich for breakfast can seem convenient, but might not offer substantial nutrition. Yet getting in the habit of drinking an ample amount of water each day can yield multiple benefits.
- **Culture.** The culture in which one grows up affects how one sees food in daily life and on special occasions.
- **Geography.** Where a person lives influences food choices. For instance, people who live in Midwestern US states have less access to seafood than those living along the coasts.
- **Advertising.** The media greatly influences food choice by persuading consumers to eat certain foods.
- **Social factors.** Any school lunchroom observer can testify to the impact of peer pressure on eating habits, and this

influence lasts through adulthood. People make food choices based on how they see others and want others to see them. For example, individuals who are surrounded by others who consume fast food are more likely to do the same.

- **Health concerns.** Some people have significant food allergies, to peanuts for example, and need to avoid those foods. Others may have developed health issues which require them to follow a low salt diet. In addition, people who have never worried about their weight have a very different approach to eating than those who have long struggled with excess weight.
- **Emotions.** There is a wide range in how emotional issues affect eating habits. When faced with a great deal of stress, some people tend to overeat, while others find it hard to eat at all.
- **Green food/Sustainability choices.** Based on a growing understanding of diet as a public and personal issue, more and more people are starting to make food choices based on their environmental impact. Realizing that their food choices help shape the world, many individuals are opting for a vegetarian diet, or, if they do eat animal products, striving to find the most “cruelty-free” options possible. Purchasing local and organic food products and items grown through sustainable processes also helps shrink the size of one’s dietary footprint.

People choose a vegetarian diet for various reasons, including religious doctrines, health concerns, ecological and animal welfare concerns, or simply because they dislike the taste of meat. There are different types of vegetarians, but a common theme is that vegetarians do not eat meat. Four common forms of vegetarianism are:

1. **Lacto-ovo vegetarian.** This is the most common form. This type of vegetarian diet includes the animal foods eggs and dairy products.
2. **Lacto-vegetarian.** This type of vegetarian diet includes dairy products but not eggs.

3. **Ovo-vegetarian.** This type of vegetarian diet includes eggs but not dairy products.
 4. **Vegan.** This type of vegetarian diet does not include dairy, eggs, or any type of animal product or animal by-product.
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Learning Activities

Technology Note: The second edition of the Human Nutrition Open Educational Resource (OER) textbook features interactive learning activities. These activities are available in the web-based textbook and not available in the downloadable versions (EPUB, Digital PDF, Print_PDF, or Open Document).

Learning activities may be used across various mobile devices, however, for the best user experience it is strongly recommended that users complete these activities using a desktop or laptop computer and in [Google Chrome](#).



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<http://pressbooks.oer.hawaii.edu/humannutrition2/?p=55>