

## **THE REGENERATIVE DIET PRINCIPLE “TOPPING UP” YOUR LIFE**

More and more, we witness the confirmation by the medical, scientific and research sectors of the direct link between the rise of non-communicable diseases (NCD's) and the prevalence of unhealthy lifestyles. These “diseases of choice” have been found to be attributable to unhealthy diets, sedentary lifestyles and health illiteracy”.

“Diseases of Choice”, so-called because they result from unhealthy lifestyle choices rather than the usual physical and environmental vectors of disease, include cardio-vascular incidents (heart attacks and strokes), cancer, and chronic pulmonary infections. These are cited as the greatest killers of the day. These also include diabetes, degenerative joint, bone and muscular diseases, digestive disorders, obesity and mental illness.

The World Health Organization noted that the rising rates of NCD's imposed a “double burden” on poor countries, which already are faced with high levels of infectious disease. Ghana 's Ministry of Health called for “an urgent and effective public health response to NCD's in which health promotion is emphasized” and to “focus on strategies to enable individuals and households to make the right choices about healthy lifestyles.”

Therefore, Regenerative Nutrition became one of the three modules of the Regenerative Health and Nutrition Program (RHNP) that the Ministry of Health has rolled out in Ghana in collaboration with AHDA. The central point of the module is that we can enjoy a long and healthy life if attention is paid to our total lifestyle, especially to the way we eat.

The module introduces Ghanaians to the Regenerative Diet, a plant-based diet which can reduce the potential for obesity and the known risk factors for other NCD's. Plant- foods, eaten in the right amounts and appropriate combinations, can help prevent disease and provide all the essential nutrients necessary for the maintenance of health.

To increase the quality of the Ghanaian diet, the following guidelines should be applied:

- Fruits and vegetables should be increased in both quantity and quality to supply the vitamins, minerals, enzymes, fiber and other essential components for the maintenance of good health and the prevention of disease. Do not mix fruits and vegetables together in the same meal.
- Animal protein intake should be greatly reduced because it contributes significantly to the incidence of NCD's, concludes the author of “The China Study”, a recent landmark study of nutrition.
- The Ghanaian diet is largely carbohydrate-based because of low cost and availability, ease of preparation and its ability to leave that “full” feeling. However, it is a diet lacking in the nutrients needed for optimum health.
- Seeds, legumes, and grains such as cowpeas, soybeans, sesame seeds, groundnuts and agushie should be the major source of dietary energy and proteins. Starchy roots alone cannot supply these nutrients.

- Fats and oils should come from plant-based sources, and should be eaten in moderation.
- Fortify foods to overcome nutritional shortfalls that occur: caused either by lack of food or a particular nutrient; insufficient calories and/or nutrients; too few or inconsistent meals; failure to breastfeed or early weaning; cultural taboos' or diseases which rob the body of nutrients or cause an individual to absorb fewer nutrients.
- Make sure the nutrition room where the meals are prepared for the family or community is clean at all times, safe, well-ventilated, and screened. It should also be well lit, have proper storage and work space, appropriate utensils and is filled with life, spirit and love.
- Use methods of food preparation that deliver the ultimate nutrition for you and your family. Overcooking food destroys its nutritional value.
- Serve more raw dishes such as salads, fruit smoothies, power shakes, nuts, and avoid unnecessary added salt, sugar, fats and preservatives.
- Avoid toxic cookware. Use only stainless steel, clay or cast iron. Aluminum pots and pans are harmful. The soft metal can leech into the food, slowly poisoning the system.
- Select quality plant-based foods from the market. Make sure everything is fresh, ripened, in season, from clean local sources, not genetically modified, and as free as possible from insecticides pesticides. Buy cold-pressed oils and as many other whole unprocessed foods, such as whole wheat flour, local rice, grains, etc, as possible.
- Always read labels carefully to avoid unnecessary added salt, sugar, fats and preservatives. Look for expired shelf dates, research unfamiliar ingredients for safety and beware of misleading statements. Be careful of exposed foods, chemical food enhancers and processed foods.
- Make sure members of the family are fed according to their dietary needs, for example working adults, adolescents, smaller children, pregnant or lactating mothers, elders and those with special dietary needs such as those who are ill or who have special conditions.

**Use these basic nutritional instructions to RENEW YOUR STRENGTH AND PREVENT DISEASE!**