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Press Article

Microwaves, Silly Science & the Tsunami of Health News

Our evolutionary history designed us for life on the savannas of east Africa...

MYTHS AND FALLACIES

Our opinions are often moulded by alarmist ignorance rather than enlightened evidence.

Microwave, Griddle Cooking Best

I first wrote about the benefits of microwave cooking in my December 2004 Bond Briefing (see Bond Archive on my website). But some people worry that it is 'irradiating' the food and it is somehow radioactive afterwards. This is nonsense. Microwaves are just a form of low frequency heat. Moreover, this type of heat occurs in the safe part of the electromagnetic spectrum (which includes light waves, radio waves, heat waves and so on).

Some people worry that microwaving destroys the nutrients in the food. Well, the answer is that fish and poultry are more safely cooked this way than by roasting or grilling, where oxidized fats are the problem [Cancer Epidemiol. Biomarkers Prev. 1995 Dec; 4(8)]

Now, Dr Jiménez-Monreal, Murcia University, Spain finds that either griddling or microwaving vegetables produces the lowest antioxidant losses. Pressure-cooking or boiling lead to the greatest losses [Journal of Food Science; April 2009]. "In short, water is not the cook's best friend when it comes to preparing vegetables", says Dr Jiménez. Microwaving or griddling actually *improved* the antioxidant power of green beans, carrots and celery.

SILLY SCIENCE

Oftentimes scientists are so close to their subject that they miss the obvious.

Gut bacteria in Twins

Identical twins brought up together but separated since adulthood still had very similar gut bacteria profiles [Nature. 2009 Jan 22]. Researcher Jeffrey Gordon MD, Washington University in St. Louis, USA concludes that "it is the exposure in childhood that decides which microbes colonize our colons."

My View? It is just as likely that the twins, in adulthood, carried on eating exactly the same way as when they were children!

Moreover, we know that Gordon's musings are wrong. As my series in the last two months, "Make of Your Gut a Herb Garden" shows, having good gut bacteria is all to do with what we eat NOW.

OPINION

Tsunami of Health News

The trouble with following the health news is that there is so much of it. Every day brings new information, new facts, new theories — dozens of them. The health news becomes like a dense Russian novel, with so many characters coming and going that we forget the plot.

Of course, if you're reading War & Peace this summer, you can always stop, flip back and figure out what is going on.

In the health profession you can never stop. The news just keeps coming...the absurd characters keep popping up...the intrigues and sub-plots get denser and more confused.

Is there any hope? Yes, we can cut through the humbug and farce to focus on our touchstone: **"Does it match up to what nature intended?"**

And that is where we come in!
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Geoff Bond is a nutritional anthropologist and a recognized authority on what it means to be human in lifestyle terms. In September Geoff is keynote speaker for lecture and workshop at the London Anti-ageing Conference, details at Geoff's website: www.naturaleater.com . Geoff's latest book, Deadly Harvest, is the reference work for lifestyle anthropology and the connection with degenerative disease. All good bookstores stock it.

Geoff is available for private consultations and the occasional talk to interested groups.

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