



McCARTHY & COX

Retirement & Estate Specialists LLC

How to Win the Food Game: Our Family's Quest to Stay Healthy

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We had a life changing event in 2016 when our daughter was diagnosed with multiple food allergies at the age of 8 months. This started a long, challenging journey we had to embark on to ensure we did everything in our power to keep her safe, happy, and healthy. The silver lining of this complete lifestyle adjustment was that we learned the shocking truth of what is really in the food we had been used to eating and we found simple ways to dramatically improve our overall health.

The first wake-up call we experienced was our realization that there is still to this day a surprising lack of resources to help families with food safety concerns. We had to educate ourselves on reading labels, speaking with manufacturers, understanding the risks of cross contact, and finding safe alternatives. We had to learn how to source, carry, and God forbid administer epinephrine. My wife and I are not licensed nutritionists, but we have now researched how hundreds of food products are made, how assembly lines operate, and what exactly various hard to pronounce ingredients really are.

One of the most profound things we've learned is this: much of the "average American diet" is made up of synthetic materials: food dyes, additives, preservatives, and chemicals engineered to extend shelf life, boost flavor, brighten colors, and, arguably, keep us hooked. Many of the foods we used to eat contained a dizzying list of ingredients, excessive sugar and sodium, and artificial components that sound more like lab experiments than nourishment. Even items marketed as "healthy" are often designed to trigger cravings and drive consumption. A single snack-sized treat can sneak in a full day's worth of calories, not to mention ingredients whose long-term effects on the human body are still unknown. Dozens of ingredients that are common in American foods are banned in Europe, Australia, and other parts of the world due to links to obesity, cancer, heart disease, and more. We quickly realized something unsettling: the food system isn't built to protect us.

Our family takes an extreme approach that certainly does not have to be the case for everyone. We choose to eliminate potential risks through total avoidance – we do not eat food that we do not prepare and do not eat at restaurants or get takeout. We make much of the food we consume from scratch with organic ingredients and even grow quite a bit of our own produce, spices, and other staples. We avoid "box mixes", "processed foods", and "ready-made" options and source meats, honey, maple syrup, and other items from local farmers. We prioritize protein, vegetables, fruit, fiber, and whole grains and minimize empty carbs, sodium, extra fat, and sugars.

All these steps have led us to generally staying in good health, missing many of the sicknesses others are plagued with, and keeping the artificial stuff out of our bodies. We enjoy high energy levels, clear minds, healthy BMIs and feel great most of the time. I have dropped and kept off about 30 pounds since 2017 and have been able to add a modest amount of daily exercise (30 minutes) to my

routine to help me stay alert and active. Our family currently takes 0 prescriptions and pretty much only goes to the doctor for annual wellness checks. We have concluded that a conscious diet is the key to a healthy body, mind, and spirit. Eating right does not mean starving ourselves (those diets never work long-term) or dreading gross meals – it means loving the adequate, nutrient dense, portions of completely delicious, natural cuisine that our bodies crave.

We hope this short summary of our journey is helpful to encourage folks to eat clean, read labels, and consider “real food” over all the fake junk out there poisoning the population and feeding the pharmaceutical industry.

Here are our top 3 quick tips:

1. Eat food that is as natural as possible with the fewest ingredients and the shortest expiration date.
2. Activity is important but the winning equation is 80% diet + 20% exercise = 100% happiness.
3. Not everything needs bacon, cheese, extra salt, or added sugar – proper seasoning can bring the flavor.

Here are 3 of our favorite, simple recipes:

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup organic whole milk Greek yogurt • 2 T organic chia seeds • ¼ cup organic raspberries • ¼ cup organic blueberries • ¼ cup organic black cherries • 1 t raw, organic honey • 2 t organic ground flax seed <p>Feeds 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pan fried organic 93% lean ground turkey 1 lb. with sausage seasoning • 1 chopped organic yellow bell pepper • 1 chopped organic white onion • 1 can organic diced tomatoes • 2 cloves organic minced garlic • 2 t organic chili powder • 1 can organic black beans <p>Feeds 4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 organic chicken cutlets seasoned with salt, pepper, garlic powder, Italian seasoning and 2 T olive oil then grilled • Top with 4 slices organic mozzarella cheese and melt • Top with ½ cup organic basil pesto • Toss together ½ cup organic halved cherry tomatoes, 1 T organic fresh lemon juice, ½ cup organic basil leaves thinly sliced, cracked black pepper <p>Feeds 4</p>