

# Is There a Nutritional “Magic Bullet?”

by Delisa Renideo

Is it Acai berries? Or goji berries? Or blueberries? Or kale? Or flax seeds? Which one is the “magic bullet” that will turn our health around and make it possible to leap over tall buildings?

It seems to be part of our Western mind-set to focus on individual parts rather than on the whole, and when we do that with nutrition, we really miss the boat. This reductionistic world-view has led to a reliance on drugs, and to herbs and nutritional components used as drugs. We have “health food stores” that don’t have any food in them, but just shelves and shelves of bottles of supposedly “natural” remedies.

Many studies of nutrition suffer the same problem. They isolate a particular food or nutrient to see if ingesting it will prevent cancer, induce weight loss, or reduce baldness. These studies invariably are summarized thusly: “Nope. Eating fruits and vegetables doesn’t make you healthier.”

In other words, if you’re eating the Standard American

Diet (SAD), which is now 62% processed foods (primarily white sugar, white flour, and fat) and add a serving of blueberries every day, you’re not going to miraculously avoid

cancer, heart disease, obesity, or diabetes. You could substitute Acai berries, goji berries, kale, or flax seeds in this study and the results would be the same. If you make a mi-

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nor change in a really bad diet, it is still a bad diet and you will still suffer health problems from it.

On the other hand, if you change the overall picture of what you eat -- if you eat a diet consisting primarily of unprocessed



or lightly processed plants -- you will see tremendous health benefits. There is not one food that is going to make the difference alone. It is the sum total of what you eat on a regular basis that will determine how you look and feel and how long you live.

Fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes all have innumerable health benefits, and the way to maximize the benefits is to eat a variety of them as they work synergistically in our bodies. The brightly colored foods generally have higher levels of the amazing antioxidants that strengthen our immune system and ward off aging. But just adding one or two bright vegetables or fruits to the SAD won’t make your body happy. Not even if they are Acai berries, goji berries, or blueberries.

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