

2 UNIQUE



KELLI LEWTON

Learn your food's genetic background

How would you like a big bowl of fresh strawberries with fish genes? How about a mound of grandma's homemade mashers with chicken genes? And don't forget to save room for a two-scoop serving of your favorite ice cream produced with milk containing BGH (Bovine Growth Hormone) which has been linked to breast and prostate cancer.

On Saturday, Oct. 31, Chefs Collaborative, an organization of food professionals committed to safe food products and healthy whole foods, in conjunction with Greenpeace, kicked off its campaign against the horrors of these genetically engineered foods.

Most chefs, myself included, are committed to the pursuit of good cooking that nourishes people. Since the time that humans first started cultivating plants and raising animals for food, we have been striving to make food healthier and food production more efficient. Using the natural mechanisms of cross breeding, which is nature's way of ensuring genetic diversity, we have been able to affect the biological traits of offspring by selecting and mating the parents that carry the traits we desire. Cross-breeding can only take place between species of plants and animals that are closely related genetically.

Genetic engineering

With the advent of genetic engineering, scientists are now able to surpass the natural barriers of cross-breeding. Genetic engineers can cut out bits of organism DNA genes and splice them together into totally unrelated species such as the strawberry/fish example.

A gene from a strawberry was inserted into a flounder gene to give it additional tolerance to the cold. The hope was that frozen strawberry products would thaw and taste better.

Basically, genetic engineering

Please see 2 UNIQUE, B2

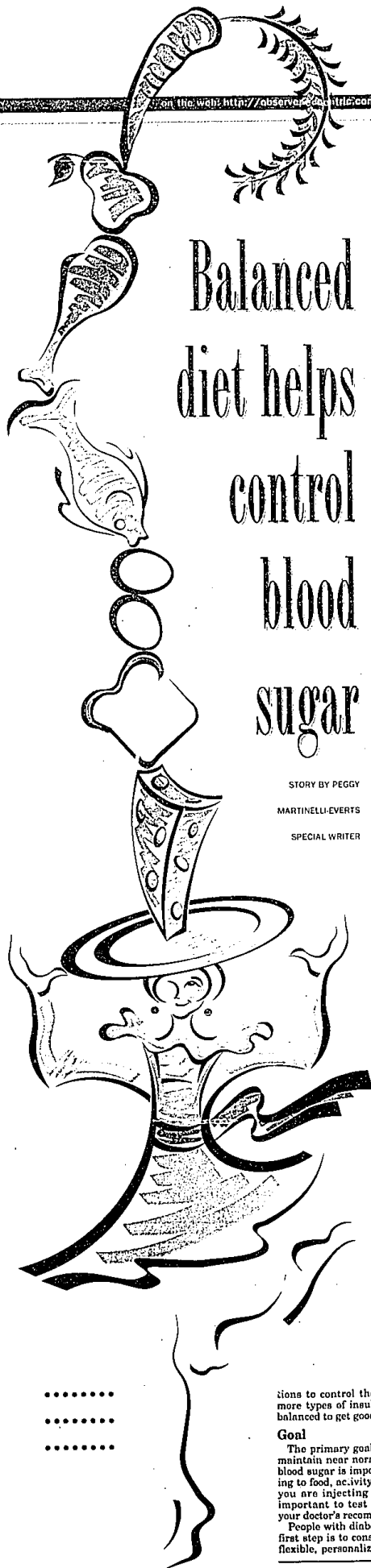
For more information

- Visit the Greenpeace web site www.greenpeace.org
- Whole Foods (formerly Merchant of Vino) has petitions demanding consumer labeling of genetically engineered foods. Six reasons to label genetically engineered foods
- Unknown allergies - that can transfer these proteins to foods that are otherwise safe. Children are four times more likely to have food allergies than adults. Without proper labeling, there is no way to avoid tragic allergic reactions.
- Antibiotic resistance - to alter many plants engineers rely on the use of genes that confer resistance to common antibiotics. Research has indicated that these resistances can be transferred to disease-causing bacteria, making them immune to treatment.
- Lost nutrition and food quality - genetic engineering has the potential to alter the nutritional content of food and create other changes in food quality.
- Violation of religious and ethical preferences - Millions of Americans wish to avoid genetically engineered foods because of religious or ethical principles. Without proper labeling, these freedoms may be violated.
- Threat to farmers - Failures of genetically engineered crops have already cost farmers millions of dollars, and lost exports have cost hundreds of millions. Family farmers are facing a threat to their very way of life by the industrial farming of genetically engineered foods.
- Threat to the environment - "Super weeds" and "super bugs" can flourish as a result of genetically engineered crops. This will in turn require the use of even more toxic pesticides, which could damage our fragile ecosystem and threaten other species.

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

- Focus on Wine
- Samira Yako Cholegh of West Bloomfield shares "Treasured Middle Eastern" recipes



Balanced diet helps control blood sugar

STORY BY PEGGY

MARTINELLI-EVERTS

SPECIAL WRITER

November is American Diabetes Association Month. It is important to know the benefits of controlling blood sugar to prevent the devastating complications of diabetes.

Over 16 million Americans have been diagnosed with diabetes, and perhaps millions more have the disease but do not know it. Diabetes is a serious, incurable disease that causes your blood sugar to be too high. Over time, diabetes can harm your eyes, kidneys, nerves, heart and blood vessels. But diabetes doesn't have to be scary. Studies have shown that, in most cases, all foods can fit in a diabetic diet if they are managed correctly.

Our body normally handles food by breaking it down into tiny particles. These particles get absorbed from the intestines and into the blood stream where they travel to all parts of the body to be used. Foods that contain protein, like meat, eggs and cheese, are broken down into amino acids and build muscle tissue.

Foods that contain carbohydrates, like bread, cereal, fruit, vegetables, and milk, become glucose and travel to the brain and muscles for energy and performing work. Foods that contain fat are broken down into fatty acids and used for energy or stored for later use. Any extra amino acids, glucose or fatty acids not immediately needed, get converted to fat for storage. And in fact, our body has an unlimited capacity to store fat.

However, with diabetes, a hormone called insulin, that allows glucose to enter the cells of the body, is either absent, or the body becomes resistant to it. So instead of insulin working to pick up glucose from the blood, glucose stays in our blood, and we have no energy. If high blood glucose continues, it can cause damage to sensitive organs resulting in blindness, kidney failure and amputations.

Types of diabetes

There are several types of diabetes, however, the two most common are Type 1 and Type 2. Type 1 diabetes is an inherited disorder that primarily occurs before age 30. People with Type 1 produce little or no insulin, and to survive, must depend on daily injections of insulin. Because stomach acids destroy insulin before it can be absorbed, insulin cannot be taken orally.

A far greater percentage of people with diabetes, perhaps 90-95 percent, have Type 2 diabetes. This type primarily appears after age 40. These people may produce normal levels of insulin, however, their body becomes resistant to it, or its release is delayed and sluggish. These people usually can correct this defect by taking oral glucose lowering medication to stimulate insulin. About 40 percent of people with Type 2 diabetes eventually require insulin injections to control their blood sugar. There is a myth that some people have a "touch" of diabetes or are "borderline diabetic." There is no such thing - you either pass or fail the blood glucose load test. Some people have what is called Impaired Glucose Tolerance (IGT) and with weight loss, IGT returns to normal.

People who require insulin injections to control their blood sugar may be prescribed one or more types of insulin. Medication, diet and exercise must be balanced to get good blood sugar control.

Goal

The primary goal for people with diabetes is to achieve and maintain near normal blood sugar levels. Daily monitoring of blood sugar is important to evaluate how the body is responding to food, activity, stress and other daily events. So whether you are injecting insulin, or taking oral medication, it is important to test your blood sugar frequently according to your doctor's recommendations.

People with diabetes have special meal planning needs. The first step is to consult with a registered dietitian to develop a flexible, personalized meal plan. There is no such thing as a

Please see DIABETES, B2

THE MICROWAVE

Taking work out of low-fat cooking

MAIN DISH MIRACLE



MURIEL WAGNER

I didn't grow up eating low-fat foods. Like most of my patients I was brought up in a food culture that said, "fat tastes great." When later nutrition research pointed out that this was not the way to avoid the

diseases programmed by my genes, I reconsidered my eating habits.

It was then that I met what has become a venerable friend - my microwave oven. It became a major support for my low-fat cooking efforts.

The microwave oven doesn't need fat to cook foods deliciously. It cooks vegetables, fruit, fish and poultry in less than half the time, and with half the dirty dishes of stove and oven cooking. It's not only a boon to cooks like me who are in a hurry, but also lazy cleaner-uppers as well.

One of my most flavorful treasured recipes for the microwave is this one for Apricot Cornish Hens. It has most of the necessary virtues

■ It cooks vegetables, fruit, fish and poultry in less than half the time, and with half the dirty dishes of stove and oven cooking.

that I consider when selecting a recipe. It makes a handsome company presentation with minimum preparation time. It also keeps the fat, saturated fat and calories at low limits. I don't even miss one of the loves of my former life - the chicken skin.

The white wine Worcestershire sauce and apricots contribute a more interesting tart-sweet flavor.

This recipe works in a 650-700 watt microwave oven. It yields a moist, juicy bird that's really an improvement over the traditional oven roasting. I like to skin the cooked halves and then brush them with the white wine Worcestershire sauce so that they'll turn a lovely golden brown under the stove broiler.

The halves should be cooked and left to stand until an internal temperature of 175°F (drumstick is reached). I measure this on an instant read thermometer to sidestep food contamination problems.

Cornish hens are really small chickens. As such they are a possible source of Salmonella infections. Surprisingly, however, most of the problems with infection occur when a raw, or slightly cooked, food has come in contact with the raw poultry or its juices.

I like to defrost poultry in the fridge just prior to cooking. After handling raw poultry make it a rule to wash your hands, the cutting surface and cutting tools with hot soapy water or in the dishwasher before preparing another food.

I like to serve my hens with quick-cooking wild rice prepared in sodium reduced, fat-free bouillon. I add sliced water chestnuts, sliced green onions and dried cranberries for crunch, color and fiber.

APRICOT CORNISH GAME HENS

- 2 Cornish Game Hens (about 1 1/4 pounds each)
- 1/4 cup orange juice
- 1 tablespoon white wine Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 cup apricot preserves
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1/4 teaspoon hot pepper sauce
- 3 garlic cloves, minced

Please see MICROWAVE, B2