**Food**

Food plays an important role in our lives. We should eat to live, but most of us live to eat. Many important discussions take place over a plate of divine cuisine and a glass of wine. The phrase “business dinner” is not frowned upon — men often combine the pleasure of food with making financial decisions.

There is also the belief, quite rightly so, that the type of food, and the quantity, will eventually affect your health. You alone are responsible for the size of your body and your health. Overeating is a bad habit with far reaching complications for your health.

Some of the food we love are said to cause cancer and specifically the way it is cooked. Meat barbecued over a fierce heat (fire), could release toxins in the burnt areas. Sad news for most SOUTH AFRICANS — we love our “braais”. A scorched lamb chop with a nice fatty rind remains a treat and will not be given up easily.

Different cultures also embrace the eating experience in different ways. The French people are fussy and rather go for quality than quantity. This is also the reason for their better eating habits. Most Frenchmen will also fit into their airplane seats with ease, whilst our American brothers and sisters are prone to overeating and take away food with lots of sugar and fats. Obesity is a big problem in the US and other western countries — obviously a problem for everyone’s health.

The fatter your body, the more resistant it becomes to insulin, and diabetes can develop. If you notice that you have gained even as little as 10-15 kg., make every effort to lose that weight with the correct diet. The more weight you gain, the harder it is to lose.

To reduce weight properly, it is very important to get advice from a nutritionist, so that you follow a lifestyle diet plan to reduce weight and to keep that weight off. Do not follow a crash diet, or your own uninformed idea of what a diet is, or starve yourself, or use commercially advertised diet aids. All these are ineffective, and you will gain more weight in the long run. Some tips are:

* Educate yourself about what food is good for your health.
* Make sure you have whole grains of all kinds, more dried bean dishes, at least 5 portions of fresh fruit & vegetables daily; buy the best food you can afford.
* Reduce refined sugars (white sugar), refined fats (margarine), and have smaller amounts of protein (meat, fish, chicken, eggs, or cheese).
* Recommended is 3-5 small meals daily — not just one large meal at night — the lack of food for the whole day, and then the sudden arrival of a lot of food at night plays havoc with blood sugar levels.
* Build up muscular strength — do a minimum of 1 hour of exercise daily — physical work, gardening, brisk walking, gym, any sport, swimming, all improve the body’s ability to use the glucose in the blood stream and improves the ability of insulin to do its job better. This improves the quality of health.