

Editor's Note [Volume 26 No. 1 (2026)]

Nutrition Knowledge: Where do we turn?

As we begin the year 2026, what major decisions do we wish to make regarding our personal health? What observations have we made since Covid, that can impact the way we take care of ourselves? As I have stated before, we learnt a lot about nutrition from Covid. With my PhD in food and nutritional sciences, while trying to observe good dietary practices myself, I have observed a lot. And there is no better proof than observation. Remember the term "seeing is believing"? We continue to talk of nutrition as a new and young science. That cannot still be the case in 2026. The internet age is enabling us to watch long-ago programs and what I have observed is that human beings have for a long time been fascinated with their health, and what they eat and how food moves through the gut. Recently I watched the innovation that went into producing Kellogg's breakfast cereals and right now there are many other types of ready-to-eat breakfast cereals. At the time of producing ultra processed foods, methods are used to transform fresh foods to products that are durable and often very different. Original nutrients are destroyed while replacement nutrients are added. We know the various nutrients, both essential and non-essential and what they do for our health and in what quantities. A lot of this information would be found in text books and in encyclopedias. The challenge then was that such information would be static and in printed form. New research findings would remain in published articles and then get added to textbooks at its next production of a new edition. With the internet and search engines, you can find anything you look for. If you search properly, you can find authenticated information. You can also find untruths. But you can also find very valuable information. Right now, anyone with internet access can look up information on what they can eat to stay healthy. There is advice with a scientific basis, and also other advice without justification. What should be believed? Some other observation is that increasingly citizens do not trust their governments. All of a sudden, everyone has an idea. All of a sudden, anyone can be an expert. All of a sudden anyone can google or use AI to find the information they want. So, where do we turn? What do we do? Do we self-teach? Ideally, we may have to go back to how things used to be done- put together a panel of experts to go through what would have been assembled for consideration. They can then issue their considered opinion as to what should be recommended for the public. The question is: does the public take this advisory seriously anymore? And is anyone doing research to determine how nutritionally healthy our population is? What I know now is that a balanced diet is very important, based on foods available to you. Most essential nutrients and where they can be found are known. Quantities and proportions needed depend on age. Those that promote growth like quality proteins

and energy are crucial during fast growth spats. Those that promote healing are needed during infection and vulnerable periods of ill health. Good potable water is essential throughout and fibre is needed to maintain a healthy gut as food goes through there every day. Nutrient requirement adjustments are made during the reproductive period and in later years. The challenge always is how to maintain desired weight while consuming the right amounts of nutrients. Clearly trained professionals are needed here. That is where governments come in, to ensure continuous supply of well-trained professionals into the market and always upgrading the curriculum based on consumer demand and new information. When in doubt please consult a well-trained nutritionist.

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In this issue, we have 14 well reviewed articles to open this year, 2026. We wish you good reading.

