

## #22: Word of Wisdom:

### What I take into my body affects my body and spirit

Monte F. Shelley, 5 July 2009

#### Quotes

- Be careful about reading health books. You may die of a misprint. (Mark Twain)
- He who has no time for his health today will have no health for his time tomorrow.
- Many prefer drugs and surgery to changing their lifestyle.
- Eat what you like and let the food fight it out inside. (MT)
- The only way to keep your health is eat what you don't want, drink what you don't like, and do what you'd rather not. (MT)

#### Review from Lesson #20

#### How does the "plan of salvation" help you today?

Preexistence	
War in heaven	
Creation, garden, Fall	<b>Marriage, honeymoon, reality</b>
Purpose of life	<b>Moral agency, tempted, adversity, nat. man</b>
Atonement	
Spirit world	<b>None, purgatory, temple work</b>
Resurrection	<b>Death and temple endowment hope</b>
Judgment	Life=test, most fail; missionary=had opp. Fear, guilt trips, liars go, raise bar
3 heavens	

#### Creation, Garden, Fall

In garden, God gave man free agency (life/body, liberty/choices, property/garden) and moral agency (commandment, consequences)

#### Honeymoon

**Dan Judd:** Used PofS in marriage therapy.

Garden = Honeymoon (2 Merkley boys and spouses); Garden is nice but it is not the celestial kingdom!

Telestial = within 1–2 years; kids

Terr =

Cel =

#### Purpose of Life Earth= Telestial world

"we will make an earth whereon these may dwell; And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them;" (Abr. 3:24–25)

Opposition

Enemy = someone who opposes me; prevents me reaching my goal

Satan tempts us to use his methods to accomplish our goals.

#### Easily provoked, TWO WOLVES; discernment of which

What if bad thoughts? Can't keep bird from flying over but no nest.

Satan → prove God's plan flawed (encourage sin) so he can get our votes for his no-agency plan now (encourage force to create utopia)

Live in fear or vote for me (Gadianon Robber ultimatum)

Create problem that requires force to solve. (Protection racket!)

#### Spirit World:

Catholic: purgatory

#### Resurrection

**E. Scott:** Death and temple endowment hope

#### Judgment:

This life is a test ... Normal curve → most fail!

Life is like being on a high wire without a net

If you were to die now, to which kingdom would you go?  
70% telestial.

When people did not open the door, a missionary said through the mail slot "We're the Mormons!" to make them accountable. His companion said, "If that is all it takes ... the Church could just run one international commercial for about a week and send everyone to hell." (*Odds* 74)

Parable: Whose presence might keep me out of CK?

**Own Judges**

**Law willing to obey**

Criterion vs Norm Ref; Grade inflation

How many can get (1) Eagle Scout, (2) Driver's license, (3) Temple, (4) CK

#### Love tests:

D&C 109: \_\_\_ prayed for mobs.

Spouse or child will be greatest challenge ... and teacher.

I can make it easy or hard for spouse to love me.

All will have people to test our level of love.

How we treat others. (Raise the bar)

Training dolphins to jump. Lower bar, reward progress.

Kids learning to walk and talk.

#### How does Satan use these doctrines against us?

Use PofS as a club!

Guilt trips. You know where liars go. FEAR God.

Raise the bar! "Valiant in testimony" means perfect (without sin)

HJGrant: (Satan) You are unworthy to be an apostle. You should resign. HG: continue your labor for good. SIX months to tell diff.

"When Joseph warned the Saints against mortal imperfections, he did not raise himself above them, and they loved him for it. He cautioned a group of Saints newly arrived in Nauvoo against the tendency to be dissatisfied if everything was not done perfectly right. "He said he was but a man and they must not expect him to be perfect," an associate recorded. "If they expected perfection from him, he should expect it from them, but if they would bear with his infirmities and the infirmities of the brethren, he would likewise bear with their infirmities" (The Papers of Joseph Smith, Volume 2, Journal, 1832-1842, ed. Dean C. Jessee [1992], 489)."

Eliminate faults → find faults. Baseball player watching videos of non-hits to find faults. Watch videos of hitting.

**F. Elder McConkie:** "All faithful Latter-day Saints—those who chart their course toward eternal life, receive the ordinances of salvation, and strive with all their hearts to be true to their covenants—will gain eternal life. Even though they are certainly not perfect when they die, if they have sought to stay on course, in covenant, in harmony with the mind and will of God, they will be saved in the highest heaven. ... We ought to have hope, [and] we [need] to be positive and optimistic about attaining that glory." (*Odds Are* ..., 20)

**G. Elder Nelson:** "My heart goes out to conscientious Saints who, because of their shortcomings, allow feelings of depression to rob them of happiness in life. We all need to remember; men are that they might have joy—not guilt trips." (*Ensign*, Nov. '95, 86)

**H. President Hinckley:** "We are the creatures of our thinking. We can talk ourselves into defeat or we can talk ourselves into victory ... Don't partake of the spirit of our times. Look for the good and build on it. Don't be a 'pickle sucker.'" (*Odds Are*... 83)

Timeline of Events Related to the Word of Wisdom	
Eden	Eat of every tree except the tree of knowledge
Moses	Clean and unclean beasts, fowls, fish
Acts	Gentiles: No 'idol' meat, blood, things strangled.
1831	D&C 49, 59. Beasts, fowls, plants for food "to be used, with judgment, not to excess." Wo if kill and no need.
1833	Feb 27. D&C 89. The Word of Wisdom
1851	Brigham proposed that all Saints covenant to abstain from tea, coffee, tobacco, whiskey, ...
1880s	John Taylor urged. Condition for School of Prophets.
1908	Required for local leadership positions
1913	Required to be a missionary
1919	Required for temple recommend
1942	First Presidency. "quit trifling with this law and so ... live it that we may claim its promises." (Oct. Conference)

#### Section 49: Some Shakers taught no meat.

**"Animals:** Animals which are permissible must have two characteristics: they must chew the cud and have cloven hooves. Among these are cattle, sheep, goats and deer." Camel, rabbit, and pigs are unclean. The Bible lists 42 unclean animals.

**"Birds:** Although the Bible does say which birds are not clean, it does not list the clean birds. The Mishnah, however, states their characteristics: they must have a crop, a gizzard which can be easily peeled off and an extra claw. Among these clean birds are domestic fowl, pigeon and dove. Eggs from unclean birds are regarded as unclean and even the eggs of permitted birds are forbidden if they have been fertilized (usually indicated by the presence of a blood spot).

**"Fish:** A fish is considered 'clean' if it has fins and scales, which usually indicate a fish found in freshwater areas. Those without fins and scales usually live in the muddy, swampy areas and are considered unclean. ... Unclean fish which are forbidden are shellfish such as lobster, clams, shrimp and oysters. (Rona)

### 1. Historical context of section 89

#### Alcohol, tobacco, and temperance movements in 1800s

Distillers in the Smith's region of upstate New York made corn whiskey and sent 65,277 gallons of it and 60 tons of beer to market on the Erie Canal the year after Joseph's first vision. [1821] ... Regardless of social class, nearly all men drank alcohol, and many women and children did too. (Harper)

Between 1792 and 1823, the per capita consumption of alcohol in the US tripled, from 2.5 to 7.5 gallons per year. To combat this increase and its attendant evils, the American Temperance Society was formed in 1826. ... By 1833, there were 5,000 local temperance societies nationally with 1.25 million members. (Robinson)

Some activists advocated temperate uses, but between 1831 and 1836, the cry for abstinence gained momentum. ... A new method for delivering ... nicotine—the cigarette—was just about to spread across the globe when Joseph received the Word of Wisdom in 1833. Outspoken temperance crusaders added tobacco to their list of noxious substances in the 1830s. (Harper)

#### What prompted Joseph to inquire of the Lord?

**Brigham Young:** "The first school of the prophets was held in a small room situated over the Prophet Joseph's kitchen, in a house which belonged to Bishop Whitney. ... The brethren came to that place for hundreds of miles to attend school in a little room probably no larger than eleven by fourteen. When they assembled together in this room after breakfast, the first they did was to light their pipes and, while smoking, talk about the great things of the

kingdom and spit all over the room, and as soon as the pipe was out of their mouths a large chew of tobacco would then be taken. Often when the Prophet entered the room to give the school instructions he would find himself in a cloud of tobacco smoke. This, and the complaints of his wife at having to clean so filthy a floor, made the Prophet think upon the matter, and he inquired of the Lord relating to the conduct of the Elders in using tobacco, and the revelation known as the Word of Wisdom was the result of his inquiry." (JD, 12:158.)

### 2. What is the purpose of the Word of Wisdom?

A Word of Wisdom ... sent ...; not by commandment or constraint, ... showing forth the ... will of God in the temporal salvation of all saints in the last days—<sup>3</sup> Given for a principle with promise, adapted to the capacity of the weak and the weakest of all saints.<sup>4</sup> ... In consequence of evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days, I have warned you, and forewarn you, by giving unto you this word of wisdom by revelation (89:1–4)

"The reason undoubtedly why the Word of Wisdom was given—as not by 'commandment or restraint' was that at that time, at least, if it had been given as a commandment it would have brought every man, addicted to the use of these noxious things, under condemnation; so the Lord was merciful and gave them a chance to overcome, before He brought them under the law." (Joseph F. Smith, in Conf. Rpt., Oct. 1913, 14)

**SOED** *conspire* v. [L. agree, combine] 1. *Intr.* To combine privily to do something criminal, illegal, or reprehensible.

**Ezra Taft Benson:** "The Lord foresaw ... today when motives for money would cause men to conspire to entice others to take noxious substances into their bodies. Advertisements which promote beer, wine, liquors, coffee, tobacco, and other harmful substances are examples of what the Lord foresaw. But the most pernicious example of an evil conspiracy ... is those who induce young people into the use of drugs." (Ensign, May 1983, 53)

**Joseph Fielding Smith:** "We, today, have before us abundant evidence of the evils and designs of wicked men. It is seen in the advertising of tobacco, tea, coffee, liquors and beers and wines. It is also seen in the advertising of prepared foods. So bad did this condition become some decades ago that the National Government had to take the matter in hand and Congress passed laws to control the evils which had arisen. These pure food laws have been very beneficial but even now there are ways by which the laws are evaded." (Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:384)

### 3. What is now prohibited? (General Commandments)

Strong drinks are not for the belly, but for the washing of your bodies.<sup>8</sup> ... Tobacco ... is not good for man. ...<sup>9</sup> Hot drinks are not for the body or belly. (89:5–9)

#### What do terms mean? What else? (harmful drugs)

**Preach My Gospel:** Less. 4: The commandments

"The Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith a law of health called the Word of Wisdom. This law teaches us what foods and substances we should and should not use to maintain the health of our bodies and to keep us free from evil influences. The Lord promises blessings of health, strength, protection against evil, and greater receptiveness to spiritual truths.

"Remember that our bodies are sacred. We should treat them with respect and reverence. The Word of Wisdom teaches that we are to eat healthy foods. It teaches very specifically that we are to avoid harmful substances, including alcohol, tobacco, tea, and coffee. We must also avoid harmful drugs in any form. To be

baptized and confirmed, those you teach must give up these substances. People who obey the Word of Wisdom are more receptive to spiritual truths.

“Your mission president will answer questions about whether other specific substances in your culture are included in the Word of Wisdom. (78)

**True to the Faith:** In the Word of Wisdom, the Lord commands us not to take the following substances into our bodies:

- Alcoholic drinks (see D&C 89:5–7).
- Tobacco (see D&C 89:8).
- Tea and coffee (see D&C 89:9; latter-day prophets have taught that the term “hot drinks” refers to tea and coffee).

Anything harmful that people purposefully take into their bodies is not in harmony with the Word of Wisdom. This is especially true of illegal drugs, which can destroy those who become addicted to them. Stay entirely away from them. Do not experiment with them. The abuse of prescription drugs also leads to destructive addiction.

**For the Strength of Youth:** “Never use tobacco products, such as cigarettes, snuff, chewing tobacco, cigars, and pipe tobacco. They are very addictive and will damage your body and shorten your life. Also, do not drink coffee or tea, for these are addictive and harmful. Any form of alcohol is harmful to your body and spirit. Being under the influence of alcohol weakens your judgment and self-control and could lead you to break the law of chastity or other commandments. Drinking can lead to alcoholism, which destroys individuals and families. Any drug, chemical, or dangerous practice that is used to produce a sensation or “high” can destroy your physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. These include hard drugs, prescription or over-the-counter medications that are abused, and household chemicals. Never let Satan or others lead you to think that breaking the Word of Wisdom will make you happier or more attractive.

**Gordon B. Hinckley:** Many of you young men to whom I am speaking are high school students. ... Some have even used as an alibi the fact that drugs are not mentioned in the Word of Wisdom. What a miserable excuse. There is likewise no mention of the hazards of diving into an empty swimming pool or of jumping from an overpass onto the freeway. But who doubts the deadly consequences of such? Common sense would dictate against such behavior. Regardless of the Word of Wisdom, there is a divinely given reason for avoiding these illegal substances. [Your body is a temple...] (*Ensign*, Nov 1989, 48)

Joseph Smith defined “hot drinks” as tea and coffee, the two common household beverages of the day. Joel H. Johnson, with whose family the Prophet was intimate, relates that on a Sabbath day in July (1833) following the giving of the “Word of Wisdom,” when both Joseph and Hyrum Smith were in the stand, the Prophet said to the Saints: “I understand that some of the people are excusing themselves in using tea and coffee, because the Lord only said ‘hot drinks’ in the revelation of the Word of Wisdom. Tea and coffee are what the Lord meant when he said ‘hot drinks.’” ... Sometime later, in 1842, Hyrum Smith, the Prophet’s brother, in speaking upon the Word of Wisdom concerning the term “hot drinks” said, “There are many who wonder what this can mean, whether it refers to tea or coffee, or not. I say it does refer to tea and coffee.” Brigham Young ... always taught that “hot drinks” meant tea and coffee. (John A. Widtsoe and Leah D. Widtsoe, *The Word of Wisdom: A Modern Interpretation*, 1937, 85–87.)

“Among doctors, as a result of scientific studies, it is commonly accepted that alcohol consumption is associated with cancers of the esophagus, liver, and pancreas. ... The Nurses’ Health Study, a study of 121,700 nurses followed over a 20-year period, found that even modest alcohol intake was associated with an increased risk of postmenopausal breast cancer.” (William T. Stephenson, “Cancer, Nutrition, and the Word of Wisdom: One Doctor’s Observations,” *Ensign*, Jul 2008, 42–47)

#### 4. What about modern drinks and other things?

**Boyd K. Packer:** Members write in asking if this thing or that is against the Word of Wisdom. It’s well known that tea, coffee, liquor, and tobacco are against it. It has not been spelled out in more detail. Rather, we teach the principle together with the promised blessings. *There are many habit-forming, addictive things that one can drink or chew or inhale or inject which injure both body and spirit which are not mentioned in the revelation.*

Everything harmful is not specifically listed; arsenic, for instance—certainly bad, but not habit-forming! He who must be commanded in all things, the Lord said, “is a slothful and not a wise servant” (D&C 58:26). (“The Word of Wisdom: The Principle and the Promises,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 17)

**Priesthood Bulletin:** “With reference to cola drinks, the Church has never officially taken a position on this matter, but the leaders of the Church have advised, and we do now specifically advise, against the use of any drink containing harmful habit-forming drugs under circumstances that would result in acquiring the habit. Any beverage that contains ingredients harmful to the body should be avoided.” (Feb. 1972, 4)

#### How can I tell what is addictive to me? Experiment

“While the Word of Wisdom does not specifically mention caffeine, it is commonly understood in the medical community that higher doses of caffeine are associated with infertility, Meniere’s disease (a disease affecting balance), insomnia, sudden infant death syndrome (with maternal consumption in utero), and fibrocystic disease of the breasts. In addition, gastric acid disease (ulcers of the stomach and duodenum) may also be linked to consumption of both caffeinated and decaffeinated coffee, lending credence to the Word of Wisdom’s advice to avoid ‘hot drinks.’” (William T. Stephenson, “Cancer, Nutrition, and the Word of Wisdom: One Doctor’s Observations,” *Ensign*, Jul 2008, 42–47)

#### 5. What is NOT prohibited? (Do not add to list!)

##### DON’T ADD TO GENERAL COMMANDMENTS

**Elder Mark E. Petersen:** “I do not believe we should try to establish our personal fads as Church doctrine. I do not believe my eternal salvation will be affected in any way if I eat white bread or white sugar. I do not believe the doctrines of the Church are in any way involved in whether my whole wheat is stoneground or steel-cut.” (CR, Apr 1953)

**Elder McConkie:** “It should be understood that the Word of Wisdom is not the gospel, and the gospel is not the Word of Wisdom. ... There is no prohibition in Section 89 ... as to the eating of white bread, using white flour, white sugar, cocoa, chocolate, eggs, milk, meat, or anything else, except ... tea, coffee, tobacco, and liquor. ... If some particular food or drink disagrees with an individual, then that person should act accordingly without reference to the prohibitions in this particular law of health.” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 845–46.)



## 6. What foods are good to eat? (89:10–17)

**True to the Faith:** The Lord declares that the following foods are good for our bodies:

- Vegetables and fruits, which should be used “with prudence and thanksgiving” (see D&C 89:10–11).
- The flesh “of beasts and of the fowls of the air,” which is “to be used sparingly” (see D&C 89:12–13).
- Grains such as wheat, rice, and oats, which are “the staff of life” (see D&C 89:14–17).

**Vegetables, Fruits, Nuts, Grains:** <sup>10</sup> All wholesome herbs God hath ordained for the constitution, nature, and use of man—<sup>11</sup> Every herb in the season thereof, and every fruit in the season thereof; all these to be used with prudence and thanksgiving. ... <sup>14</sup> All grain is ordained for the use of man ... to be the staff of life, not only for man ... <sup>16</sup> All grain is good for the food of man; as also the fruit of the vine; that which yieldeth fruit, whether in the ground or above the ground—<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, wheat for man, ... and barley ... for mild drinks, as also other grain.

SOED herb plants used for food or medicine (e.g., GR vegetables)

“there were some who died with fevers, which at some seasons of the year were very frequent in the land—but not so much so with fevers, because of the excellent qualities of the many plants and roots which God had prepared to remove the cause of diseases.” (Alma 46:40)

“Some have stumbled over the meaning of this expression and have argued that grains and fruits should only be used in the season of their growth and when they have ripened. This is not the intent, but any grain or fruit is out of season no matter what part of the year it may be, if it is unfit for use. The apple under the tree bruised and decaying is out of season while the good fruit is waiting to be plucked from the tree.” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Church History and Modern Revelation*, 1:385)

## 7. What foods should be eaten sparingly?

**Flesh of animals:** <sup>12</sup> Yea, flesh also of beasts and of the fowls of the air, I, the Lord, have ordained for the use of man with thanksgiving; nevertheless they are to be used sparingly; <sup>13</sup> And it is pleasing unto me that they should not be used, only in times of winter, or of cold, or of famine. <sup>14</sup> All grain is ordained ... to be the staff of life, ... for the beasts of the field, and the fowls of heaven, and all wild animals that run or creep on the earth; <sup>15</sup> And these [beasts, fowls, wild animals] hath God made for the use of man only in times of famine and excess of hunger. ... <sup>17</sup> Corn for the ox, and oats for the horse, and rye for the fowls and for swine, and for all beasts of the field, and barley for all useful animals.

Argentina

**Boyd K. Packer:** “Young people, learn to use moderation and common sense in matters of health and nutrition, and particularly in medication. Avoid being extreme or fanatical or becoming a faddist. For example, the Word of Wisdom counsels us to eat meat sparingly (see D&C 89:12). Lest someone become extreme, we are told in another revelation that “whoso forbiddeth to [eat meat] is not ordained of God” (D&C 49:18).” *Ensign*, May 1996, 18)

**“3. Limit red meat—and avoid processed meat.** Research suggests that people who eat more than 18 ounces a week of red meat have a higher risk of colon cancer. So make red meat—beef, pork, lamb—only an occasional part of your diet, if you eat it at all. And skip the processed stuff—bacon, hot dogs, and deli meats—since that’s also been linked to higher cancer risk.” (Harvard)

Top quartile meat eaters 40–60% higher death rate than bottom quartile.

60% of vegetarians make it to age 85.

19% of meat eaters make it to age 85.

Comma changes meaning and is consistent with *sparingly*. No comma from 1833 to 1921. Comma added in 1921 edition.

“This verse has caused some to ask if meat should be eaten in the summer. Meat has more calories than fruits and vegetables, which some individuals may need fewer of in summer than winter. Also, before fruits and vegetables could be preserved, people often did not have enough other food to eat in winter. Spoiled meat can be fatal if eaten, and in former times meat spoiled more readily in summer than winter. Modern methods of refrigeration now make it possible to preserve meat in any season. The key word with respect to the use of meat is *sparingly* (D&C 89:12).” (CES manual)

“Neither is it the intent of this revelation to include grains and fruits in the restriction placed upon meats, that they should be used only in famine or excess of hunger. The antecedent of ‘these’ in verse 15, may not be clear, but common sense teaches us that it does not refer to grain in the preceding verse. “While it is ordained that the flesh of animals is for man’s food [Sec. 49:18–19], yet this should be used sparingly. The wording of this revelation is perfectly clear in relation to this subject, but we do not always heed it. The designated grains for the use of man, beasts and fowls, is scientifically correct.” (*Church History and Modern Revelation*, 2:148)

## 8. What are other healthy habits?

**Exercise, cleanliness and Sleep:**

Cease to be idle; cease to be unclean; cease to find fault one with another; cease to sleep longer than is needful; retire to thy bed early, that ye may not be weary; arise early, that your bodies and your minds may be invigorated. (D&C 88:124)

“The Lord has commanded you to take good care of your body. ... Observe the Word of Wisdom. ... Eat nutritious food, exercise regularly, and get enough sleep. When you do all these things, you remain free from harmful addictions and have control over your life. You gain the blessings of a healthy body, an alert mind, and the guidance of the Holy Ghost.” (*For the Strength of Youth*)

**Ezra Taft Benson:** “The health of the body affects the spirit, or the Lord would never have revealed the Word of Wisdom. God has never given any temporal commandments—that which affects our stature affects our soul. There are at least four basic areas which make the difference in your health. ... First: righteousness. Sin debilitates; it affects not only the soul but the body.... Second: food. To a great extent we are physically what we eat.... Third: exercise. The body needs the toning up that comes from exercise. ... Fourth: sleep. There are too many enticements to late evening activities. Not only can this weary the body, but a wearied body may be more susceptible to improper activities in the darkness and lateness of the night. Early to bed and early to rise is still good counsel, and a brief nap during the day can be recuperative.” (“In His Steps,” *BYU Devotional*, 4 Mar. 1979, [speeches.byu.edu/TETB](http://speeches.byu.edu/TETB), 476–77)

## 9. What are the promises? (89:18–21; Prov. 3:8; Isa. 40:31)

<sup>18</sup> All saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones;

Prov. 3:5–8 ¶ Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. <sup>6</sup> In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. <sup>7</sup> Be not wise in thine own

eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil. <sup>8</sup> It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.

NIV This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.

<sup>19</sup> And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures;

To avoid cancer ... is not as important as being able to dream dreams, entertain angels, or get answers to your prayers. (JMcConkie)

**Elder Packer:** Stay in condition to respond to inspiration. ... A fundamental purpose of the Word of Wisdom has to do with revelation. ... We teach you to avoid tea, coffee, liquor, tobacco, narcotics, and anything else that disturbs your health. ... If someone "under the influence" can hardly listen to plain talk, how can they respond to spiritual promptings that touch their most delicate feelings? As valuable as the Word of Wisdom is as a law of health, it may be much more valuable to you spiritually than it is physically. Even if you keep the Word of Wisdom, there are some things that can happen to you physically, but those things don't generally damage you spiritually. (*Ensign*, Nov 1979, p20)

**Joseph B. Wirthlin:** When we obey the Word of Wisdom, windows of personal revelation are opened to us and our souls are filled with divine light and truth. If we keep our bodies undefiled, the Holy Ghost "shall come upon [us] and ... dwell in [our] heart[s]" and teach us "the peaceable things of immortal glory." (*Ensign*, Nov 1995, 75-78)

<sup>20</sup> And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint.

But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint. (Isa. 40:31)

Isa. refers to mortal and immortal health. (Don Parry)

let us run with patience the race that is set before us, (Heb. 12:1)

<sup>21</sup> And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them. Amen. Passover

**Marion G. Romney:** "The Lord told the Prophet Joseph Smith that because all flesh was corrupted before him, and the powers of darkness prevailed upon the earth, [destroying] angels were 'waiting the great command to reap down the earth, to gather the tares that they may be burned.' That was in 1831. In 1894, President Woodruff said: 'God has held the angels of destruction for many years lest they should reap down the wheat with the tares. But I want to tell you now, those angels have left the portals of heaven, and they stand over this people and this nation now, and are hovering over the earth waiting to pour out the judgments. And from this very day they shall be poured out. Calamities and troubles are increasing in the earth, and there is a meaning to these things.' ... If we will clothe ourselves with bodies purified through observance of the Word of Wisdom, these destroying angels will pass us by, as they did the children of Israel, and not slay us[.]" (CR, Oct. 1952, 32-33.)

## 10. Statistical good news

A study included "5,231 high priests and 4,613 of their wives. ... 'Compared to the other groups, the study found the Mormons had an average of 53 percent fewer fatal cancers ... 48 percent fewer deaths from heart disease and 53 percent fewer fatal illnesses of all kinds.'" (Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, Nov 1990, 51")

## 11. Statistical bad news

"Studies show that Mormons in the state of Utah are, on average, less physically active and [5 to] 10.5 pounds heavier than their non-Mormon neighbors. ... On average, Mormons eat fewer fruits and vegetables and weigh significantly more than members of other religions in Utah. ... We have more body fat in the state of Utah than we have ever had before in history." (Aldana).

"Mormons on average weigh 4.6 pounds more than other Utahans. ... Members ... were 14 percent more likely than nonmembers to be obese. That was 18 percent for men, and 9 percent for women. ... The most recent numbers, while still high, showed there has been some improvement since 1996, when Mormon adults were found to be 5.7 pounds heavier on average and 34 percent more likely to be obese. (BYU study from data obtained in 1996, 2001 and 2003-2004 by the Utah Health Status Survey.)

**Ezra Taft Benson:** "To a significant degree, we are an overfed and undernourished nation digging an early grave with our teeth, and lacking the energy that could be ours because we overindulge in junk foods." ("In His Steps," BYU Devotional, 4 Mar. 1979, [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu); *TETB*, 476-77)

## Now Mormons are close to average. Adventists are healthiest.

Larry Tucker: Many years ago Mormons and Seventh day Adventists were significantly healthier than the national average. Now Mormons are more like the national average. Smoking has gone down from about 44% to about 25%. Average among Mormons is about 15%. Seventh day Adventists are the healthiest.

## 12. More statistical good news

"Mormons in the state of California who exercised regularly, did not smoke, and got adequate sleep had death rates due to cancer and cardiovascular disease that were 70-80% lower than the rest of the nation. Males in this population lived an average of 11 years longer than comparable U.S. males, and females lived 7 years longer. ... There is no doubt that if they had a healthy diet and maintained a healthy weight, the extensions of life they experienced could have been even greater." (Aldana, *Culprit*, 7)

People who	Live extra	Adventists
Are vegetarian	1.5 years	*
Exercise regularly	2.4 years	*
Eat nuts five times a week	2.5 years	*
Normal blood pressure	3.7 years	
Not <i>diabetic</i>	6.6 years	
Maintain <i>normal weight</i>	11 years	*
Do not smoke	14 years	*

## Not Diabetic (Utah Gov. Health 2008 pub)

There is an alarming increase in the number of youth with type 2 diabetes that, until recently, was rarely seen until middle or late adulthood. Some studies suggest that, in some groups, as many as 45 percent of new cases of diabetes in youth are type 2. This growing prevalence is directly linked to the increasing youth obesity rates. Nationally, the prevalence of overweight in adolescents has nearly tripled in the past two decades.

## 2009 Obesity (BMI of 30+)

Obesity: BMI of 30+

(51.0% of Utah adult diabetics; 29.4 OW; 19.6 OK)

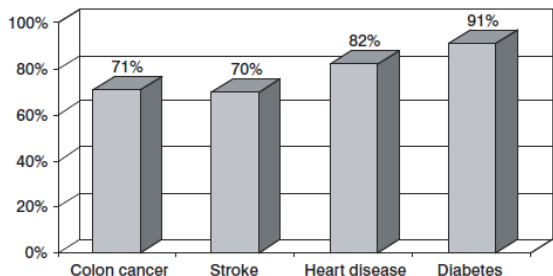
(19.8% of Utah adult NON-diabetics; 36.4 OW; 43.8 OK)

Adult: 44. Utah (22.5%); = 6<sup>th</sup> best

10-17: 50. (tie) Minnesota (23.1%) and Utah (23.1%)= tie for 1<sup>st</sup>

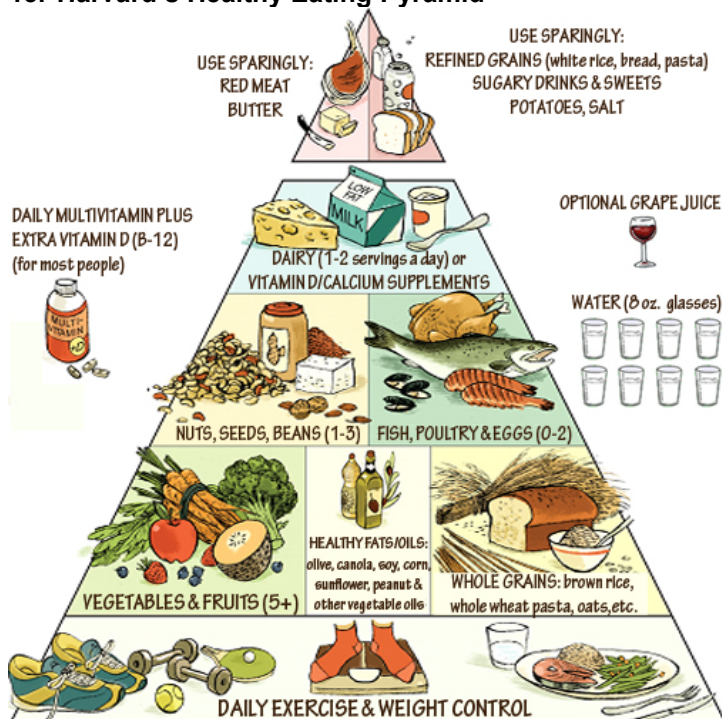
**To Get Extra Years of Life:** (1) Don't smoke; (2) Accumulate 30 minutes or more of moderate intensity physical activity on most, preferably all days of the week; and (3) Eat a healthy diet. Doing this can prevent or control 70–90% of chronic diseases like heart disease, cancer, and diabetes. (Aldana; CDC)

**Percent of selected chronic diseases that are avoidable**



“Chronic diseases—such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes—are the leading causes of death and disability in the United States. Although chronic diseases are among the most common and costly health problems, they are also among the most preventable. Adopting healthy behaviors such as eating nutritious foods, being physically active, and avoiding tobacco use can prevent or control the devastating effects of these diseases.” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

**13. Harvard's Healthy Eating Pyramid**



Adapted from <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/>

	1800s	1900s
Physical activity	Many hours	Easy to avoid
Grains	Whole	Refined, bleached, fort.
Homemade bread	100–95%	95–5%
Drinks		Sodas, energy/sports
Food production	Local farm, garden	big farms, chemicals,
Food preparation	Homemade	Mass production
Food preservation	Can, dry, cellar, ice	Refrigerator, chemical

We now enjoy a tremendous variety of food and are confident that most foods are safe and protected from toxins and bacteria. Virtually any food can be acquired at any time of the year. Compared to 100 years ago, today's diet consists of less fiber.

fewer fruits and vegetables, and more meat, sugars, fats, and vitamins. (Steven G. Aldana, *The Culprit and the Cure*, 13–14)

**Comparison of Western and Prudent Diets**

- **Western diet:** (Red meat, processed meat, french fries, high fat dairy foods, refined grains, sweets and deserts) 59% higher diabetes, 64% higher heart disease than average.
- **Prudent diet:** 16% lower diabetes, 34% lower heart disease

Only 21.7% of UTAH adults have the recommended 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day. (May 2008 Utah pub)

Larry Tucker: Assigns students to eat at least 5 veg/fruit servings a day. Most only average 1 a day.

“In a BYU study, 337 volunteers ages 43 to 81 completed a 40-hour educational course over four weeks, where they learned about basic exercise, diet and nutrition. ... Those who adopted what they learned saw dramatic results. ... ‘After six weeks, we saw large and significant improvements in cardiac health risks: Cholesterol improved with around a 25 percent reduction. Blood pressure improved dramatically. Blood glucose for those who are insulin sensitive (... a pre-diabetic indicator) improved somewhat. And at eight weeks out, they lost a lot of weight.’” (Aldana)

It is easier to get one to take a pill than to change his lifestyle. The body can't tell the difference between famine and some diets.

**14. Develop a personal Word of Wisdom**

“We teach them correct principles and the govern themselves.”

**Joseph Fielding Smith:** “There would be less disease and mankind would live longer if all would also heed the counsel of the Lord concerning the use of wholesome foods. Many a man thinks he keeps the Word of Wisdom, who knows only the 'don'ts' which is but a part of its great meaning.” (*Church History and Modern Revelation*, 2:148)

**Joseph Fielding Smith:** “‘Why does not the Lord give us further revelation to cover the many other stimulants and drinks and the proper foods for the body?’ Such revelation is unnecessary. The Word of Wisdom ... points the way and gives us ample instruction in regard to both food and drink, good for the body and also detrimental. If we sincerely follow what is written with the aid of the Spirit of the Lord, we need no further counsel. ... By keeping the commandments we are promised inspiration and the guidance of the Spirit of the Lord through which we will know what is good and what is bad for the body, without the Lord presenting us with a detailed list separating the good things from the bad that we may be protected. ... There are many ways in which we may break the Word of Wisdom. We break it when we eat more than is needful, even of wholesome foods. We have been commanded to do all things in moderation, “with judgment, not to excess, neither by extortion.” (Ibid., 59:20.) The Lord has not condemned the use of white flour, nor white granulated sugar.

There are some among us who cannot eat whole wheat bread and the coarser foods because of peculiar physical conditions. ... Some persons are allergic to one thing and others to another, yet what they cannot take are wholesome to others. Any perfect food that is good for the body, can be harmful by over-indulgence. According to the promise of the Lord we will have wisdom to understand these things by virtue of faithful observance of ... the Word of Wisdom. A safe guide to each and all is this: If in doubt as to any food or drink, whether it is good or harmful, let it alone until you have learned the truth in regard to it. If anything offered is habit-forming, we will be safe in concluding that it contains some ingredients that are harmful to the body and should be avoided. (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, 1:197.)



**Gordon B. Hinckley:** “The Word of Wisdom ... proscribes alcohol and tobacco, tea and coffee, and emphasizes the use of fruit and grains. This Word of Wisdom came to us from the Father of us all, the God of heaven, for our blessing and the blessing of all who would observe it. I regret that we as a people do not observe it more faithfully.” (“Mormon Should Mean ‘More Good’,” *Ensign*, Nov 1990, 51”)

### Seek wisdom for self

**Intuitive Eating:** <http://www.intuitiveeating.com/>

**Food Allergies:** Several years ago,... [Sister Nelson] began to suffer untold pain and problems. ... Her illness was characterized by severe headaches, trembling, hot and cold flashes, dizziness, abdominal cramping, diarrhea, and extreme nervousness. Each spell seemed worse. ... At this darkest of times she asked ... for a blessing. The following day “the name of a new doctor came so forcibly to me that I could not ignore it—even though I had promised myself that I could never go to another doctor. I called immediately.” When she met the doctor, she described six symptoms. “He smiled at me and handed me a sheet of paper with the title ‘Seven Symptoms of a Delayed Food Allergy.’ All six of my symptoms were listed clearly and I had the seventh, but had never connected it with the others. ... Here was the answer to my prayers and a direct result of that priesthood blessing!” Sister Nelson learned that she was extremely allergic to wheat, corn, milk, nuts, beans, onions, garlic, chocolate, or any of their derivatives. “I have my own special ‘word of wisdom,’ ” she notes, “and my private year’s supply.” (Susan H. Aylworth, “Trials Taught Me to Care,” *Ensign*, Apr 1983, 64)

**Heart condition:** Susan Goodwill avoids aspartame (diet drinks and sugar-free gum) and caffeine (chocolate).

**Diabetes:** “I am a 57-year-old grandmother who was diagnosed with diabetes in June 2006. In addition to using medication, I turned to the Word of Wisdom for help. I learned the value of regular exercise and a healthy diet. I lost 88 pounds (40 kg) and have kept the weight off. I felt very blessed for my obedience to the Word of Wisdom the day my doctor discontinued my medications for diabetes and high blood pressure. I have a testimony of the Word of Wisdom because the spiritual and physical blessings I have received through obedience to it continue to bless my life.” Beverly Rutherford, (“Run and Not Be Weary,” *Ensign*, Jun 2009, 66–69)

**Chemicals:** In early 1978, it became clear that certain chemical compounds made [Bro. Miller] very ill. Items like cold cream, perfume, and strong cleansers could bring not only physical sickness, but also acute anxiety or deep depression. ... Brother Miller had suffered a breakdown of the immune system which left him intolerant not only to common allergens but also to a vast array of modern chemicals. ... He left the hospital with a long list of things to avoid so that his immune system would have time to recuperate. He was to drink only bottled water, eat only foods from farms where chemicals and pesticides were not used, wear all-cotton clothing, remove synthetic furnishings from the place where he lived, and stay clear of the chemicals he already knew affected him. ... His health improved during the next five months while they followed the doctor’s instructions. ... [In the 1980s] Brother Miller had begun to feel promptings that he would be well in the not-distant future. Gradually, the promptings became more frequent. “Also, I began to know what to do to promote healing. I began to know what to eat,” he recalls. Heeding the promptings, he did a lot of walking and stretching exercises in the solitude of

the bedroom. He cut his water consumption to mere sips, then gradually increased his intake again.” In 1981, he no longer needed to take special precautions. (Don Searle, “Only through the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, Apr 1984, 40)

### 15. Conclusion

**Ezra Taft Benson:** “We are an overfed and undernourished nation digging an early grave with our teeth.

**Elder Bednar:** “Our physical bodies ... are temples of God. Consequently, you and I must carefully consider what we take into our temple. ... The Word of Wisdom is about readiness and receptiveness to receive revelation. And secondarily the Word of Wisdom also produces physical benefits. Just as only worthy persons are permitted to enter into the house of the Lord, so we should likewise be careful to take into our bodies only those things that will positively affect us both spiritually and physically.” (*Ensign*, Sept. 2001, 14)

**SEEK SPIRIT:** “Let them [eat/drink/exercise], as they shall counsel between themselves and me. <sup>26</sup> For behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things [by giving more lists]; ... <sup>28</sup> For the power [Holy Ghost] is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves.” (D&C 58:25–28)

### Quotes

**Elder Packer:** “Our physical body is the instrument of our spirit. In ... the Word of Wisdom we are told how to keep our bodies free from impurities which might dull, even destroy, those delicate physical senses which have to do with spiritual communication. The Word of Wisdom is a key to individual revelation. It was given as ‘a principle with promise, adapted to the capacity of the weak and the weakest of all saints’ (D&C 89:3). The promise is that those who obey will receive ‘great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures’ (D&C 89:19). If we abuse our body with habit-forming substances, or misuse prescription drugs, we draw curtains which close off the light of spiritual communication” (*Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled*, 211).

**Elder Bednar:** “Our physical bodies ... are temples of God. Consequently, you and I must carefully consider what we take into our temple. ... The Word of Wisdom is about readiness and receptiveness to receive revelation. And secondarily the Word of Wisdom also produces physical benefits. Just as only worthy persons are permitted to enter into the house of the Lord, so we should likewise be careful to take into our bodies only those things that will positively affect us both spiritually and physically.” (*Ensign*, Sept. 2001, 14)

**Ezra Taft Benson:** “To a great extent we are physically what we eat. Most of us are acquainted with some of the prohibitions, such as no tea, coffee, tobacco, or alcohol. What need additional emphasis are the positive aspects—the need for vegetables, fruits, and grains, particularly wheat. In most cases, the closer these can be, when eaten, to their natural state— without overrefinement and processing—the healthier we will be. To a significant degree, we are an overfed and undernourished nation digging an early grave with our teeth, and lacking the energy that could be ours because we overindulge in junk foods.” (“In His Steps,” *BYU Devotional*, 4 Mar. 1979, [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu); *TETB*, 476–77)