

# Healthiest foods are raised natural

Last week's column was about the first wellness-based principle of nutrition I was taught in chiropractic school; namely, that the processing of foods damages their nutritional value. The leading example is sugar, which is important in our diets as part of a whole food but poisonous when used in its highly processed form.

The second principle I was taught is that the quality of a food is affected by the conditions in which it was raised. Cows raised naturally are free to roam and eat whatever plants they encounter, and they naturally choose the foods that are best for them. By contrast, factory-farmed beef cattle are fed grains to "fatten them up." This diet not only makes them overweight, it stresses their entire systems and makes them prone to infection. Because of this, many are kept on a steady diet of antibiotics. In addition, up to two-thirds of beef cattle are given growth hormones. They also are raised in pens where their movement is limited, often ankle-deep in their own waste, during the last few months when they are in a feedlot.

It only makes sense that the meat from these animals would not be as healthy as the meat from a grass-fed, active, drug-free, less-stressed animal. Looking at the composition of the meat, we can see this is true. Grass-fed beef has more vitamins E and A and a healthy balance of essential omega-3 fatty acids. Grain-fed beef has very little omega-3 and up to twice as much overall fat content.

The same is true for farmed salmon. For example, the meat from farmed salmon is gray, not orange; this is because the farmed fish are fed processed pellets of food instead of their natural diets. For this reason, the fish are fed chemicals to restore the color. Salmon is considered a very good source of healthy omega-3 fats. But just as with beef, farmed salmon has a lot less omega-3 than wild caught and, perhaps not surprisingly, many more toxins, such as PCBs.

Based on this same principle, vegetables grown in healthy, organic soil will be more nutritious for you than veggies grown on depleted soil with artificial fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides. And while studies have shown mixed results in the nutritional value of organic veggies, a 2014 review of 343 previous studies showed organic crops to have significantly higher levels of some nutrients, especially antioxidants, and much lower levels of pesticides and herbicides.

Organic produce tends to be  
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Doug Kimmel (right) with his husband, Ron Schwizer, at their Hancock home. Kimmel and Schwizer met in the late 1960s and with the recent change in Maine law, after 44 years together, they were legally married. Aging LGBT individuals and couples are concerned that their sexual orientation will affect the personal care they might need, both at home or possibly in nursing homes.

## The fears of an aging LGBT community

### SAGE Maine educates baby boomers about accessing home care services

BY MEG HASKELL  
BDN STAFF

It has never been an easy path to walk, but by some measures growing up lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender in the 1950s, '60s and '70s was even tougher than it is now. Long after the Stonewall riots of 1969 launched the early gay liberation movement, pronounced social, legal and cultural stigma lingered.

"Most of us have lived through a period of rampant, overt discrimination and violence," said 72-year-old psychologist Doug Kimmel, who lives with his husband, Ron Schwizer, in Hancock. "We learned to keep a low profile if we wanted to succeed in life."

In recent years, American culture has become more accepting, Kimmel said, and younger individuals who identify as LGBT are more likely than in earlier times to find support and community if they reveal their gender identity and sexual orientation.

"But many older people are still much less open about their orientation," Kimmel said. "We're not sure how open we can be, even now."

That poses a problem for Maine's aging LGBT community.

Kimmel is the executive director of SAGE Maine, a nonprofit organization that supports the interests of older LGBT Mainers. It's part of the national organization of SAGE, which stands for Services and Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Elders. There are SAGE affiliates in 20 states and the District of

Columbia. Maine's office was established in 2013, after a formal needs assessment — conducted by AARP Maine with support from national SAGE, the University of New England, the Religious Coalition Against Discrimination and other groups — revealed specific concerns within the statewide community of LGBT people 60 and older. Chief among these were fears that access to knowledgeable, LGBT-friendly health care and home-based support services may be hard to come by as demand grows with the aging of the population.

Comprehensive data on LGBT demographics are not easy to come by. According to the Williams Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles, which researches state and national LGBT issues, there are about 4,000 same-sex couples in Maine, including about twice as many female couples as male, according to 2010 census data. Same-sex couples are concentrated in the Portland area and other population centers in the state but also live in every county in the state, including its most rural communities.

Aging Mainers in general are concerned about issues related to growing older, including social and geographic isolation, declining health, the risks of financial fraud and elder abuse, the complexities of the health care system and the availability of services to help them stay safe in their homes and communities. For aging LGBT individuals and couples, these concerns are com-



Among Doug Kimmel (left) and Ron Schwizer's family photos are pictures of the couple in New York City in 1971, where they lived before moving to Maine.

pounded by fears their sexual orientation will affect the personal care and other services they need, both at home and in an assisted-living or nursing home setting.

These fears are not groundless. SAGE Maine board president John Hennessy recently described calls he received while working as the director for advocacy at

Maine's AARP offices. One came from a 57-year-old disabled man in rural Penobscot County who had been receiving personal care assistance, including bathing, at home.

"His male home care provider found out he was gay and began threatening him financially,"  
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## Fitness tips for changing bodies

For older Mainers, working out is about overall health and well-being

BY MEG HASKELL  
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Along with our bodies, our fitness goals change as we mature, according to Valerie Marr of Age Right Fitness in Hallowell, a gym and workout center just for Mainers 40 and older.

"Most of our clients tell us they're not training for competition," she said. "They're mostly exercising to be healthy as they live their lives. They want to be strong all the time, not just be a weekend warrior. They know their bodies don't work that way anymore."

Regular physical activity is widely recommended to prevent and control a range of age-related problems, including cardiovascular and respiratory disease, diabetes, osteoarthritis, pain and depression. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that healthy

adults 60 and older spend a minimum of 150 minutes each week exercising at a "moderate or vigorous" level.

That's 30 minutes, five days per week, though the CDC says it's OK to spread it out into segments as short as 10 minutes each and best to vary activities for a full-body regimen that boosts strength, flexibility and balance.

Though the start of a new year often inspires the best of intentions, Age Right Fitness doesn't typically see a flood of new clients in January.

"That whole New Year's resolution thing — at this point in our lives, we've figured out it doesn't really work," Marr said. But the gym does see a predictable bump up each spring, as adults who have been less active over the winter prepare for warm-weather activities such as hiking, biking and kayaking.



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George and Kate Giffin of Bangor work out together in 2013 as part of a fitness class at the Hammond Street Senior Center in Bangor.

Losing weight is another common goal, although, again, older individuals typically are more interested in boosting their overall health than in perfecting a "beach-worthy" body.

Marr, 55, and her partner, Bob Sweet, founded Age Right Fitness 10 years ago in response to their own awareness that older adults often felt anxious

and out of place in other workout environments.

"If you go to most gyms and look around, you'll see a lot of younger people in their 20s and 30s," she said. "There's a lot of spandex, a lot of really loud music. And it can be really crowded." An older adult environment, by comparison, is more laid back.

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## Knowing when it's no longer safe for your parent to drive

Imagine for a moment that a well-meaning family member decides it's no longer safe for you to drive and takes away your keys. You have been driving all your adult life with no major mishaps. The only issue, as far as you're concerned, is that you're not quite as young as you used to be.

Chances are you would be quite upset and perhaps a little panic-stricken at the thought of losing your independence. That's what happened when Becky told her 86-year-old mother she was concerned about her driving.

Driving her car was Becky's mother's greatest pleasure. On weekends, she would have the newspaper spread out on the passenger seat, open to the page that

listed all the local yard sales. Other days, she might grab her keys and go for a long ride in the country or pop in on a dear friend. Her car was her antidote for worry and stress. But it had become a major source of worry and stress for Becky and her siblings. The problem was that even though most of them would not ride in the car with her anymore, they hated to take away her freedom, and she was not about to give it up without a fight!

The turning point came when Becky's mother's doctor told her she shouldn't drive anymore because her reaction time was slower than it should be and she was also showing signs of confusion due to early Alzheimer's disease.

### Warning signs that it's no longer safe to drive

Here's a list, courtesy of the Alzheimer's Association, of common warning  
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