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# Natural Health<sup>®</sup>

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## Get closer

12 ways to strengthen your relationships & improve your health

## \*Vegetarian meals you'll want to eat every day

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New rules: For a healthy body, make high-quality, whole foods a must.



## Be a qualitarian



Seven years ago, Ashley Koff, R.D., a celebrity dietitian and founder of [ashleykoffapproved.com](http://ashleykoffapproved.com), was on a fly-fishing trip in Montana when she had an “aha” food moment.

“I was a vegetarian at the time, and I refused the local organic buffalo meat that our guide provided. He offered me a vegan protein bar instead, but said *he* didn’t think that was the better choice since it had processed ingredients,” says Koff. “And I had this realization: All of the diet labels that end in ‘ian’—like vegetarian or pescatarian—focus on what you *can’t* eat rather than what you can and should eat. And that’s not right.”

So Koff created the label *qualitarian*. While she doesn’t eat meat, she notes that it’s her

## The simple shift that will change your diet for the better

own preference, and instead celebrates eating a diet rich in all kinds of healthy, organic, whole foods, including wild fish, and she avoids what she calls a non-quality food group of “chemistry lab projects.” The result? “I’m eating food that’s actually food, and my body thanks me by giving me better energy and optimal health,” says Koff. “The bottom line is that when you give the body quality foods, it recognizes those foods and knows what to do with them,” she says.

Excited to become a qualitarian yourself? Here are Koff’s simple guidelines:

**Listen to your gut** » Both your stomach and your intuition can guide you to better quality food choices. And this means you shouldn’t always follow common food “rules.” “You might have read that an apple is better for you than pineapple, but if the pineapple looks and tastes fresh and juicy, and the apple is mushy or covered in pesticide film, go for the pineapple,” says Koff.

**Prep healthy “fast” foods** » The reality is that you *have* to eat on the run sometimes. But that doesn’t mean you have to sacrifice quality. Every Sunday, cut up vegetables and fruits and prepare meats and other proteins so you have foods you can grab and go throughout the week. And if you forget your snack? Koff provides her Ashley Koff Approved (AKA) list free on her website.

**Take regular stock of your pantry** » “Every three months, I clean out my cupboards,” says Koff. “It’s the best way to give yourself the opportunity to say, ‘Uh-oh, I bought non-organic cereal for the kids once and it became a habit. Let me get back on track and try an organic one like Nature’s Path.’”

**Focus on what you (and your kids) eat most** » In an ideal world, you’d choose only high-quality foods every time you eat. But that’s not always going to be possible, so Koff says it’s crucial to clean up what you’re eating the most. “What we’re exposed to most often is either going to nourish us or cause disease,” she says. “So, if your child eats dairy at every meal, bring a qualitarian focus to the organic cheese, yogurt and milk you buy.” ❖