

www.burnthefat.com



The A Food, B Food Lecture

By Tom Venuto

**How To Get
Good Grades on
Your Food Choices**



“The A Food, B Food Lecture”

How To Get “Good Grades” On Your Food Choices

**By Tom Venuto, Author of
Burn The Fat, Feed The Muscle (BFFM)**
www.burnthefat.com
www.fitren.com

**Copyright 2003, Fitness Renaissance, LLC
All Rights Reserved**

Retail Price: \$12.95. This is NOT a free e-book.
This e-report is for personal use for Burn The Fat, Feed the Muscle (BFFM) clients only (www.burnthefat.com).
You do NOT have resale or republication rights to this product. No unauthorized reproduction or
distribution is permitted. Copyright violation and illegal distribution will be prosecuted

Why You Are What You Eat... Literally!

This very minute as you read this, old cells in your body are dying and new ones are replacing them at a rate of about 50,000 cells per second. The raw material for new cell construction comes directly from the foods you eat. You are *literally* what you eat.

The condition of your body today is the sum total of all the food choices you've made in the past. The condition of your body in the future will be the sum total of all the food choices you make today. Most people take their food choices very lightly, not realizing that *everything* they eat has an impact on their physical condition. Even worse, some people give no thought at all to what they eat every day – they choose anything without giving any consideration to the long term consequences.

Choose low grade foods and you'll have a low grade body. Choose high grade foods and you'll get leaner, stronger, healthier, more muscular and more energetic. The problem is, how do you know what to choose? Which foods get good grades and which foods get bad grades? When you walk down a supermarket aisle or look at a restaurant menu, you're faced with a dizzying array of choices. Label claims like "low cholesterol," "low fat", "30% less fat," "all natural," and "100% organic" grab your attention and seem to scream, "pick me!" But how do you *really* know what's a good choice and what's a bad choice? Worry no more, because you now have in your hands a one of a kind rating system you can use to "grade" your food choices.

This rating system is set up in grades, because food choices don't simply fall neatly into two categories; "pass" or "fail." Food quality can range from very poor, to poor, to fair, to good to excellent. It's a scale or a spectrum – the way temperature and color are spectrums. At what temperature does hot become cold? Where does black become white? Black and white or hot and cold are simply two ends of a spectrum. It's the same with food choices. Food quality can range from highly processed with zero nutritional value on the low end (an "F") to all natural with high nutritional value on the high end (an "A").

Here's an example: An apple is an A grade food. An apple is a raw food found in its natural state, un-tampered with by man. Now, what about unsweetened applesauce? It too is nothing but apples, but since the apples have been pureed and are not in their MOST natural state, it has dropped to a "B" (still a good "grade," mind you). Turn it into apple juice and you're down to a "C" (still a passing grade). Then if you add sugar (sweetened applesauce or apple drink), you're down to a "D". Finally, if the apples eventually become a fat and sugar filled apple pie, your grade has plummeted to an "F" (yes, you flunked!)

You could take nearly every food through this type of scale to “grade” it. Your task is simple: Look for places in your diet where your grades have room for improvement (C or lower), then improve them. If you have straight A’s already, or even A’s & B’s, the chances are good that you’re in great health and excellent shape.

The easiest way to improve your food grades

The easiest way to improve your food grades is to eat **natural foods** as much as possible. The foods with the highest grades are always those that are NOT man made, processed or refined. How do you know if a food is “natural” or not? You simply ask: **“Did this food come out of the ground or off the tree/plant this way?”** If the answer is yes, then it’s natural and it’s an A grade food. To take it a step further and include protein foods, you could expand on this definition and say, **“If it grew from the ground, walked, flew or swam, it’s natural.”** (vegetarians, no hate mail please; you can use the first definition).

A-grade foods should make up the majority of your calories, but if you only eat A-grade foods and nothing else, that means your diet would be somewhat restricted and limited (a straight A’s diet is a strict diet). It might also make it difficult to gain (lean) body weight, because many A-grade foods such as green vegetables and lean proteins lack the caloric density required to stay in caloric surplus. That’s why it’s ok to use “B” foods like whole wheat bread or pasta sometimes - especially on a muscle size-gaining program.

Another Simple and Easy Way to Improve Your Food Grades

Before we move on to the actual grading system, here’s another way to quickly and easily improve your food grades: Shop in a health food store, farmer’s market or natural foods market. Not only will this improve your grades almost automatically, but you’ll also find a much greater variety than you would in a regular supermarket. You’ll find shelf after shelf of whole grains and other natural foods. In a regular supermarket, the vast majority of the foods are boxed, canned, packaged and/or highly processed.

For example, in your typical supermarket you would be lucky to find more than a few brands of 100% whole grain boxed cereal. Shredded Wheat is one of the few. If you look at the ingredients list in Shredded Wheat, you’ll see only 100% whole wheat. If you look at most of the other brands, you’ll see refined grains and lots of sugar. Some people consider unsweetened whole grain cereals very bland, but that’s the type of food that gets a high grade. You can always slice up strawberries or bananas on top of the cereal to sweeten it. If you look in a health food store, you will find dozens of 100% whole grain cereals, both cooked and cold varieties.

A-Grade Foods

An A is the highest grade a food can receive. To earn an A grade, a food must be 100% natural (not refined or processed in any way). A-grade foods must also be **extremely nutrient dense**. These top-of-the line "super-foods" are packed with vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, carotenoids, phytochemicals, essential fatty acids, fiber and other healthy stuff that's extremely good for you.

For example, red peppers are the only food with an entire days worth of vitamin C. Tomatoes contain cancer-fighting lycopene. Spinach is rich in calcium and vitamin D. Orange veggies like carrots, sweet potatoes, and butternut squash are packed with carotenoids. Asparagus is loaded with vitamin K. Deep leafy greens like spinach are nutritional powerhouses with ample quantities of Vitamin K, Carotenoids, Calcium, Iron, Potassium and Vitamin C. All fibrous carbs, green veggies and salad veggies get an A grade. Fibrous carbohydrates, (green veggies and salad veggies) would even qualify for an A+ because they have extremely high nutrient density with extremely low calorie density, making them ideal foods for reducing body fat.

Some dieters are afraid of starchy carbohydrates because they've been led to believe they are fattening. However, starchy carbs are not fattening or unhealthy, refined carbs and other man made foods are the real culprits. The A-grade starchy carbohydrates like yams, brown rice and old fashioned unsweetened oatmeal are staples for athletes, bodybuilders and fitness buffs. Other A-grade starches include black eye peas, lentils, beans (navy, pinto, kidney, garbanzo) and barley. It's true that some people are carb sensitive, but don't fall for the "all carbs are fattening" myth. Fat loss is all about calories in versus calories out and the *type* of carbs you eat...

The A grade starchy carbs are 100% natural, eaten almost exactly the way they come out of the ground. Most of these starches (with the exception of white potatoes and carrots) are also either low on the glycemic index or they have a nice balance between carbohydrate and protein, which causes them to be released slowly into the bloodstream as glucose. Even on strict bodybuilding or fitness competition diets, these are the carbs of choice for physique improvement.

Fruits, although they are considered a "simple carb" (fructose), are also on the A-list because they are natural and high in nutritional value. Fat burning nutrition isn't as black and white as complex carbs and simple carbs. Simple versus complex is one consideration, but the far more important selection criteria is whether a food is refined or natural. Some bodybuilding guru's even believe that "fruit is fattening." For very strict fat loss diets for bodybuilding and fitness competition or on low carb diets for the hypoglycemic and insulin resistant, fruit is sometimes temporarily reduced or even removed. However, for overall health, fitness and body composition improvement, fruit should almost always be one of your top picks.

Rounding out the A-grade food category are A-grade proteins, which are the LEAN, complete proteins (those containing all the essential amino acids) and the A grade fats, which are those high in omega-3's and other healthy essential fatty acids. Foods such as Salmon, which are high in protein and heart healthy Omega three fats could even be graded as an A+!

A-grade fibrous carbs

Spinach
Kale
Broccoli
Cauliflower
Brussel sprouts
Green Beans
Asparagus
Collard greens
Green and red peppers
Mushrooms
Tomatoes
Onions
Cucumbers
All other fibrous carbs, green vegetables or salad vegetables

A-grade starchy carbs

Yams
Sweet potatoes
Barley
Oatmeal (Old fashioned unsweetened)
Beans, all types
Black eye peas
Slow cooked brown rice (long grain/basmati)
Lentils
White potatoes
Red potatoes
Carrots

A-grade simple carbs

All fresh fruits (not including canned, sweetened, or juice)

A-grade fats

Flaxseed oil
Udo's Choice essential oil blend
Fish Oil
Fatty fish (salmon, trout, herring, sardines)

A-grade proteins

Chicken breast

Turkey breast

Extra lean ground turkey

Ostrich

Buffalo/Bison/lean game meats

Fish, all types

Shellfish

Egg whites

Non fat cottage cheese

Top round steak (leanest cut of red meat)

Protein powder supplements (whey, casein, or combination)

B-Grade Foods

A "B" is a good grade. Not the best grade, but a "good" grade nonetheless. Physique athletes (bodybuilders and fitness competitors) often drop out B grade foods prior to competitions, opting for 100% A-grade choices. This makes the diet much more restrictive.

If you're a perfectionist, you might strive for "straight A's," and that's fine. But keep in mind that it's not only okay for you to eat some B grade foods most of the year, it might actually be a good thing because it makes your diet much easier to maintain. Adherence to your nutrition program is much easier when you give yourself more options. On the other hand, if you are preparing for a physique competition or you're on a "peaking" phase, then you should "tighten up" your diet and get as many A-grade foods as possible.

There are many good B grade foods to choose from. Allowing products that are 100% whole grain, yet slightly processed (whole wheat bread, cereal or pasta, for example), opens up a whole new world of options and adds great variety to your diet. Why doesn't whole wheat bread get an "A?" The only reason whole wheat bread doesn't get an A is because it is processed. Although it may be whole grain, a loaf of bread doesn't grow on a tree does it? It's unsweetened (except for a tiny amount of corn syrup) but it is slightly processed. An all-natural food is one you eat in the same form that it came from in nature.

B-grade proteins include those which are still low in fat, but are not as lean as their A-grade counterparts. For example, flank steak is great, but not as lean as top round steak, so the top round gets an A and the flank gets a B.

B-grade Carbohydrates

100% whole grain, unsweetened boxed cereals
100% whole grain cooked cereals
100% whole grain pastas (amaranth, quinoa, wheat, etc)
100% whole grain breads (100% whole wheat, rye, spelt, etc)
100% Whole wheat pitas
100% Whole grain, unsweetened muffins
Quick brown rice
Quick oatmeal (unsweetened)

B-grade Proteins & dairy products

Flank steak
Extra Lean top sirloin
Extra lean ground beef
Extra lean red meats, other
Lowfat ground turkey
Non fat or 1% low fat sour cream
Non fat or 1% low fat cheese
Non fat or 1% low fat cream cheese
Nonfat or 1% low fat, sugar free yogurt
1% low fat cottage cheese
Whole eggs (1 whole egg per 5-6 whites is a good ratio)

B-grade Fats

Extra virgin olive oil & olive oil salad dressings
Natural peanut butter
Olives
Avocado
Nuts & seeds
Reduced fat, reduced calorie salad dressings

C-Grade Foods

A "C" is an average grade; not poor, not failing, but not good either. If most of your diet consists of "C" grade foods, your results will be average...not poor...not absent....but not good either. Breakfasts cereals like Cheerios are C list foods.

Most boxed cereals such as Cheerios only get a C because even though they're made from whole grain oats, they're sweetened with white sugar. If you go to a health food store you can often find generic brand Cheerios (usually called "oat o's or "Oat circles, etc.) This would bump the grade up to a B. Any cereal sweetened with refined sugar automatically gets bumped down to a C. If the cereal is mostly sugar (think "Fruit Loops" or "Sugar Smacks") it gets a D or an F.

C-grade carbohydrates are those which are processed or sweetened slightly, but most of them are still made from a whole grain. Starches that are processed (white rice) also get C's because even though they are complex carbohydrates, they are rapidly absorbed and stripped of much of their original nutritional value. C-grade carbohydrates also include very calorie dense carbs, like fruit juice. Fruit juice is a fairly healthy food, but the high calorie density is not good when your goal is calorie control for a fat reducing diet.

C-grade proteins are those which are moderate in fat content and relatively unprocessed. Very low fat lunch meats are C foods, but generally lunch meats are not good choices because they are processed foods (not real meat, but a meat "product.")

C-grade carbohydrates

Grits

Cream of rice

Cream of wheat

White rice

Pasta made from enriched flour (durum semolina)

Whole grain, low fat snack foods (pretzels, crackers, etc)

Bagels

Cheerios

Sweetened and /or flavored oatmeal

Raisin Bran cereal (wheat flakes, sweetened)

Enriched wheat bread

Unsweetened fruit juice

C-grade proteins

Turkey thighs or dark meat

Chicken thighs

Ground turkey

Lean Sirloin steak

Lean ground beef

Lean red meats, other

Very low fat sliced chicken breast (lunch meat)

Very low fat sliced turkey breast (lunch meat)

Very low fat sliced ham (lunch meat)

Low fat ham or pork

Low fat (2%) cheeses

Low fat (2%) cream cheese

Low fat (2%) cottage cheese

Low fat (2%) sour cream

Low fat (2%) unsweetened yogurt

D-Grade Foods

A "D" is a poor grade, no doubt about it. If you're eating a lot of D-grade foods, your results will be poor for sure. Most D-grade foods are also bad for your health. D foods are those that are high in refined sugars or made primarily from bleached white flour. D-grade foods also include proteins that are moderately high in total fat and saturated fat and proteins that are highly processed and refined. You might think you're doing well by eating "low fat hot dogs," but refined meat products – even those low in fat – should not be a regular feature in your diet.

High saturated fat content also lowers your grades. The role of saturated fat in disease is controversial, but at this time it still appears wise to keep your saturated fats low, regardless of what the "low carb gurus" are saying. High saturated fat foods are D's and F's. Also remember, fat and carbs together are a nasty combination. The lower your carbs, the more fat you can eat, but in this grading system (in the context of a low or moderate fat diet), foods high in get low grades (C or D).

D-grade carbohydrates

Sweetened boxed breakfast cereals with no whole grains

Snack foods made from white flour (pretzels, crackers, etc.)

Bleached, enriched white bread (i.e., "wonder bread") or white bread products

Muffins and baked goods made with white flour, sugar and or hydrogenated oils

D-grade proteins & dairy products

Low fat sliced chicken breast (lunch meat)

Low fat sliced turkey breast (lunch meat)

Low fat sausage

Low fat ground beef

Cream cheese, full fat

Cottage cheese, full fat

Sour cream, full fat

Butter

Cream, half and half

High fat cuts of red meat

Roast Beef

Ham, pork

Reduced fat beef jerky

Reduced fat Hot dogs

Reduced fat Sausage

Reduced fat Bacon

F-Grade Foods

F foods are the foods you should almost never eat. And if you do ever eat them, it should be a rare occasion indeed (holidays, celebrations, once weekly "reward" meals, etc). These are the foods that not only spell disaster for your physique; they're also horrible for your health. F-grade foods include the following categories: 1) foods containing trans fats, 2) foods high in saturated fats, 3) Highly processed or refined foods, 4) highly sweetened foods or foods that are pure sugar, 5) foods that are high in refined sugars and fats, 6) processed, high fat meats.

Foods very high in saturated fats and or trans fats

Hydrogenated tropical oils (Palm oil, Palm kernel oil, Coconut oil)

Hydrogenated vegetable oils

Anything deep-fried

Margarine

Very high calorie and high fat cuts of pork

Very high calorie and high fat cuts of red meat such as porterhouse and prime rib

Foods made mostly of white sugar or other refined carbohydrates (corn syrup, etc)

Candy

Sweets

Chocolate

Cookies

Soda (Coke, Pepsi, etc)

Sugar Sweetened beverages

Pastries and Baked goods high in both fats and sugars

Pies

Doughnuts

Croissants

Éclairs

Cinnabons

Cakes

Foods high in both refined carbohydrates and saturated fat

Fettuccine Alfredo

Potato chips

Hot Dogs on white bun

Fast food hamburgers on white buns (even worse with cheese, bacon)

Sweetened peanut butter

Chocolate milk (full fat, whole milk)

Meats that are processed and high in fat

Sliced full fat ham (lunch meat)
Sliced full fat turkey breast (lunch meat)
Sliced full fat chicken breast (lunch meat)
All other full fat luncheon meats and cold cuts
Bologna
Hot dogs
Salami
Beef jerky
Beef sticks ("Slim Jim")
Sausage
Bacon

Your Score?

So how did you do? Did you pass? Did you get straight A's? Did you flunk? Don't worry, if your "grades" weren't so good, it doesn't matter. What's in the past is done. What matters now is that you look ahead and make an effort to improve your grades. Don't feel like you *must* get straight A's. If you get mostly A's & B's, you'll get fantastic results. Just do your absolute best to improve your grades by improving your choices, starting with your very next meal.

Remember, you are what you eat – literally. From a cellular and physiological perspective, there's no such thing as standing still or maintenance; everything you eat helps or hurts. One of the few things in life you can always be certain of is change. Make sure your body is changing for the better by choosing the highest grade foods possible.

About the Author:

Tom Venuto is a lifetime natural bodybuilder, personal trainer, gym owner, success coach, freelance writer and author of "[Burn the Fat, Feed The Muscle](#)" (BFFM): Fat Burning Secrets of the World's Best Bodybuilders and Fitness Models. Tom has written over 160 articles and has been featured in IRONMAN magazine, Natural Bodybuilding, Muscular Development, Muscle-Zine, Olympian's News, Exercise for Men and Men's Exercise. Tom's informative and inspiring articles have been featured in literally dozens of websites and e-zines worldwide. You can visit Tom on the web at www.fitren.com or www.burnthefat.com. You can subscribe to his monthly E-mail newsletter at www.fitren.com/listserv.cfm