Hamburgers are Not Inherently Bad

My daughter looked like the cat that swallowed the canary yesterday when her soccer coach mentioned the importance of nutrition for an athlete intent on playing at the collegiate level.

Perhaps it was because for dinner the night before, she indulged on a bacon cheeseburger and fries from Crownburger.

In general, my daughter does not eat a lot of sugar or drink soda pop and she likes a variety of foods, including vegetables, so I was somewhat surprised at her sheepish reaction when admitting to herself that she ate a hamburger and fries for dinner.

What to eat is not a foreign topic in our home. In fact, I have experimented with our family menu a lot, sometimes tyrannically instituting new dos and don’ts. The problem for us is that we find ourselves reverting back to old habits and recipes after the newness of the latest plan becomes boring or too restrictive.

With this background, and the experience of having my daughter feel awkward after eating a hamburger, I have decided our family needs to focus more on some basic principles, rather than on a particular diet that assumes a particular food or foods are inherently bad.

These seven standards are recurring themes I found in a variety of writings and plans I researched.

1. Decrease the consumption of white flour, white sugar and processed food while increasing vegetables, fruits, nuts and whole grains.

2. Instead of three large meals, eat smaller meals and add in healthy snacks so eating happens every 2-3 hours. Additionally, it is important to eat breakfast.

3. Increase water intake and decrease or eliminate soda.

4. Watch portion sizes.

5. Eat the highest quality meat, dairy and vegetables/fruits available. Grow or choose organic produce. Choose lean meats and fish, a great choice for protein. Organic and pasture fed meat/poultry, as well as wild-caught fish are advised. Consider goat milk and cheese.

6. There are a lot or good fats and good carbs to choose from.

7. Fulfill the principle of “Produce more than you consume” by staying active.

These guidelines have the underlying premise of moderation. Instead of focusing on things we can’t have or shouldn’t have, it provides a framework for things we can do daily to increase our health and nutrition.

It also allows an occasional trip to the hamburger joint without feeling guilty.