The Sugar Free Lifestyle Food Plan™

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CAUTIONARY NOTE: Break Free from the Sugar Blues and the Sugar-Free Lifestyle Food Plan™ are designed to promote awareness about cutting sugar as well as blood sugar and diabetes control and to provide information, tools, and techniques that will enable individuals to make healthy lifestyle choices.

The coaching techniques are not intended to replace medical advice or to address any individual's specific medical problem(s). Always seek the advice of a physician before beginning any diet, exercise, or nutritional program. Diabetes and pre-diabetes are serious medical conditions. It is important that program participants do not reduce, change, or discontinue any medication or treatment without consulting their physician.

You should check with your physician about food choices you would like to make in the context of your state of health or treatment plan. This is critical if you are on any medications. Changing your eating patterns can lead to lower blood sugar levels, and you need to avoid having blood sugar levels go too low. You must work with your medical provider to manage medications appropriately.

The materials in the Sugar Free Lifestyle Food Plan do not replace professional help for mental health care. If you are experiencing anxiety, depression, or an eating disorder that requires professional care, seek assistance from a mental health care provider. If you are experiencing extreme depression or having suicidal thoughts, seek assistance from a professional ASAP.

Published by Great Life, Inc.
October, 2024
Ardmore, PA

Implement a Food Plan that Eliminates Personal Trigger Foods

Coach on Your Shoulder

Living a Sugar Free Lifestyle is not the same thing as going on a diet.

The Sugar-Free Lifestyle Food Plan™ is designed to help you to develop a personal food plan that is a self-motivated vision of how you want to eat to support your health. Using this guide, you are determining what you want to eat, when you want to eat, and how much of certain foods you want to eat on a day-to day basis.

The plan does not contain hard and fast rules but is a guide to serve as your foundation to eat and LIVE in harmony with how your body works and putting a food plan into action that works for YOUR biochemistry.

The Benefits of Using a Food Plan to Eat in Harmony with How Your Body Works

In this chapter, you are going to learn how to change your body composition through a healthy eating plan based on how your body works. The goal is to empower you to create a sugar-free lifestyle where you can create a balanced physical state that allows your body mechanisms to function in harmony without following strict menus or counting, weighing, and measuring.

Many programs are time-consuming and challenging to follow, such that after a while, most dieters give up. The Break Free from Sugar Food Plan™ is simple in its concept (eat more non-starchy vegetables and protein, include healthy fats and go light on refined carbohydrates that cause sharp/fast increases in glucose and insulin levels). This plan enables you to pick foods from a wide variety of sources based on your unique biochemistry and food preferences.

Learning to eat in harmony with how your body works has many benefits, including:

Why a Food Plan is different than a "diet"

The Sugar-Free Lifestyle Food Plan™ takes a "non-diet" approach to eating well for balanced sugars. There are many reasons that dieting does not work for the majority of people, which explains why so many Americans experience yo-yo dieting and frustration. Traditional diet approaches do not attack the underlying causes of sugar addiction or blood sugar health issues head on. Instead, they tell you to have willpower, to count calories or carbs, to eat very restrictively, and to exercise

more. As a result, most people, at best achieve temporary results, but sooner or later cravings and roller-coaster blood sugars return because the roadblocks preventing individuals from successfully maintaining a sugar free lifestyle were never totally eliminated.

Below are some of the key reasons why going on a diet is not a helpful option to conquer sugar and related blood sugar health issues including insulin resistance, pre-diabetes, and full-blown diabetes.

- Diets are temporary. Most diets do not teach you how to eat for the life. Instead, they offer you a quick fix that is not attainable over the long term.
- Diets distort your relationship with food. Very importantly, diets teach you not to listen to your body. Instead, they instruct you to follow rigid menus, count calories, measure your food, and in general to ignore your hunger with will power.
- Diets lead to boredom and frustration. People often get bored or frustrated on diets and begin to cheat "just a little" and then soon abandon the diet.
- When you diet, you are likely to lose muscle and gain body fat. When you go back to your old habits, you will gain back the muscle you've lost as body fat, and this in turn contributes to the vicious cycle of insulin resistance.

Key Concepts

Adopting a Quality Carbohydrate Approach vs. Low Carb or Keto

Of all the foods in your plan, the amount and type of carbohydrates that you eat will have the most dramatic impact on your blood sugars.

This guideline is the hardest one for most people to grasp and to follow. Understanding how carbohydrates work in your body will help you to make choices that will support normal blood sugar levels.

- Keep in mind that you are not going to avoid all carbohydrates. To the contrary, if you keep the following guiding principle in mind when selecting carbohydrates, you will rarely go wrong: "the longer your body has to wrestle with a carbohydrate to break it down into glucose, the slower the rise in glucose in your blood."
- The key to including carbohydrates in your diet is remembering that all carbohydrates are not created equal.

- You want to strive to include good quality complex carbohydrates in your food plan that are 1) unrefined, 2) nutritious, 3) high in fiber, and 4) do not contribute to dramatic swings in your blood sugar and subsequent spiked insulin responses.

Choosing to eat (or reject) a food based on the amount of carbohydrate it contains only gives you a small piece of the carbohydrate puzzle. In order to successfully manage blood sugars, a number of factors should be considered, including the type of carbohydrate, the amount of processing, and the amount of carbohydrate consumed.

The Sugar-Free Lifestyle Food Plan™ is a Quality Carbohydrate plan that focuses on eliminating carbohydrates that cause fast/sharp rises in blood glucose levels while including carbohydrates that provide needed nutrition and moderate blood sugar and insulin levels. The plan does not rely on carb counting but does incorporate some aspects of low carb food plans, which actually exist on a continuum from very low (Keto) to more moderate amounts of carbohydrates.

There is no definitive definition for what constitutes low carb. What is low carbohydrate for one person may not be for another.

Basically, all low carb food plans are designed to reduce the number of carbs you eat from your norm. As a general rule, however, a low carb diet typically includes anywhere from 50 to 100 grams (g) of carbohydrates per day. Below that amount is considered a ketogenic diet, while 100 to 200 grams of carbohydrates per day is generally considered a moderate-carb diet.

Some plans are based on "net carbs" (total carbohydrate amount minus fiber + sugar alcohols*) while others calculate daily carbohydrates based on total carbohydrate amount.

*NOTE: some plans only permit subtracting the full amount of the sugar alcohol erythritol (and ½ of any other sugar alcohol such as maltitol).

The Sugar-Free Lifestyle Food Plan™ IS NOT designed to put you in a state of Ketosis. It is recommended that if you desire to consume the grams of carbs required for you to be in a state of Ketosis that you work with your physician to do so.

Tips for Making the Break Free from Sugar Food Plan Work for You

- **Keep it simple**: Any plan that is overly complicated will soon be discarded, and before you know it you will be back to your old eating habits. If you develop a simple, easy to implement food plan that is grounded in sound nutritional and behavioral concepts, you will find that making food choices within the context of the plan will become second nature.

- **Balance consistency with flexibility**: Planning what you will eat on a daily basis will enable you to avoid the pitfalls of impulse eating. The more predictable your food intake is, the more predictable your glucose levels are going to be, and you are less likely to experience cravings and chaotic food choices.

- **Develop a plan that fits your lifestyle and supports your overall vision of health:** It is critical that your food plan is one that you are prepared to live and fits your lifestyle and particular needs. For example, if you are a vegetarian, you will want to incorporate ways of getting your protein from sources other than animal foods. If you have a hectic professional life or eat on the road often, you need to take these situations into consideration.

- **If you are diabetic, check your blood sugars 1- 2 hours after eating**. The bottom line is that it doesn't matter whether you are told you can or cannot eat a certain food. All that matters is how your body reacts to it. If you experience a rapid rise in blood sugar levels soon after a food is consumed or your blood sugars remain high 1-2 hours after eating, it is not a good choice for you. Even if you are not diabetic, your body will give you clues if you have experienced a blood sugar spike followed by a crash. Did you feel tired or sleepy after eating, or did you find yourself experiencing cravings the rest of the day?

The Sugar-Free Lifestyle Food Plan Succes Strategies

As you create your daily food plan, remember that a particular food is not inherently good or bad, and there is no perfect way to maintain a sugar-free lifestyle. Based on your unique goals, physical condition, and biochemistry, you can select or leave out any of the foods in the recommended list of options. You should avoid personal trigger foods or foods that cause a fast and sharp rise in blood sugar levels.

The reality is that there is no perfect way to eat. Everyone metabolizes food slightly differently. You will know what works for you based on your own results (i.e. blood sugar levels based on daily monitoring, weight loss, your energy levels, etc.).

That being said, there are some guiding principles that will help you to manage your blood sugar levels as well as cholesterol and triglyceride levels. Your food plan should also help you to maintain a desirable weight, consume adequate nutrients, and diminish cravings.

Remember, the guidelines set forth in the Food Plan Success Strategies are strategies for optimizing your food plan. They are not rules. The guidelines are meant to be flexible, and it is important to avoid a rigid attitude towards food that generally discourages the ability to stick with a food plan. With these guidelines in mind, you will be able to develop a daily food plan that supports your individual needs.

Crowd Out foods that Cause a Fast/Sharp rise in blood glucose levels

Action Steps

- Eliminate Added Sugar (stop adding to beverages and recipes, replace processed foods containing added sugar with no sugar-added products)
- Eliminate "Hidden Sugar" (foods that behave like simple sugars during the digestion process and cause a sharp/fast rise in blood glucose levels)
    - Grain-Based Flour Products
    - White Potatoes
    - Rice
- Cut Back on Fruit and the Natural Sugar Fructose
- Go Easy on the Natural Sugar Lactose

Eliminate personal trigger foods

Action Steps

- Identify your personal trigger foods
- Eliminate personal trigger foods from your kitchen and food plan

Nourish your body with foods that support vibrant health

Action Steps

- Change Your Plate & Develop a daily food plan that is based on:
    - 50% Non-Starchy Vegetables
    - 25% Healthy Protein
    - 25% Combo of Health Fats & Quality Carbohydrates
- Increase Fiber **(try to include at least 25-30 grams of fiber daily)**

Stay Hydrated

Action Steps

- Consume enough water and other healthy liquids

Adopt new habits that improve not just what you eat but HOW you eat

Action Steps

- Watch Portion Sizes
- Eat Mindfully
- Be aware of your eating schedule and avoid nighttime eating
- Snack Smart
- Build a Better Breakfast
- Make Food Prep Easier

Food Plan Overview and Sugar-Free Lifestyle Food List

This section provides an overview of food choices for daily meal and snack planning, based on the guidelines in the Food Plan Strategies and Action Steps.

Now that you know what happens inside your body when you consistently eat foods that cause fast/sharp rises in blood glucose levels, it will come as no surprise that creating a food plan that avoids carbohydrates and sugar sources that can quickly raise blood glucose levels is a core principle for maintaining a sugar-free lifestyle.

Food Plan Overview

Eliminate "Added Sugar"

Eliminate/Avoid Grain-Based Flour Products

Based on your biochemistry & trigger foods you can include small amounts of:

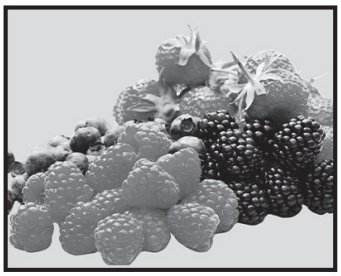
- Starchy Vegetables (squash, sweet potatoes, peas, etc.)
- Dairy (low in lactose)
- Dark Chocolate (no sugar)
- Sweeteners of Choice, such as Stevia, Monkfruit. & Allulose

Eliminate/Avoid White Potatoes

Eliminate/Avoid Rice

Go Easy on Foods with "Natural Sugars"

Choose Low Glycemic Fruit



Drink Water & Other Blood Sugar Friendly Beverages

Focus on Non-Starchy Vegetables, Healthy Protein & Healthy Fats

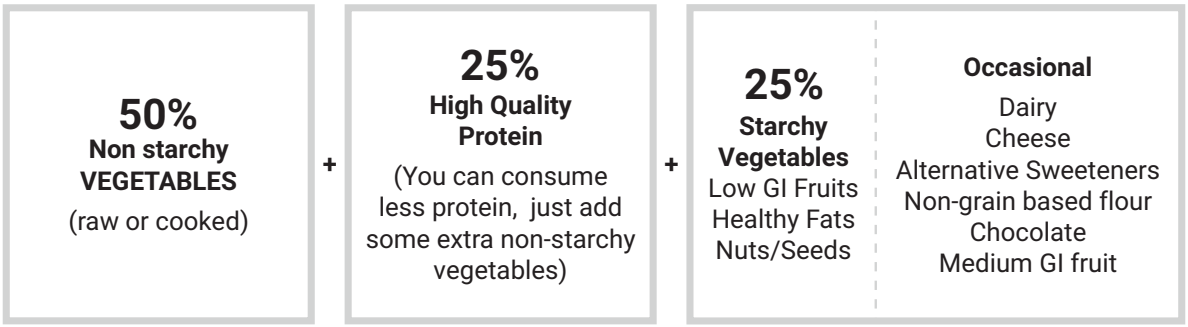
Food Plan List

Non-Starchy Vegetables		
Green: Alfalfa sprouts, Artichokes, Arugula, Asparagus, Broccoli, Broccolini, Bok Choy, Broccoli Rabe, Brussels Sprouts, Celery, Cucumbers, Endive, Fennel, Green Beans, Green Bell Peppers, Green Cabbage Leafy Greens/Lettuce (Arugula *Bib Lettuce, Butterhead Lettuce, Collard Greens, Dandelion Greens, Endive, Iceberg Lettuce, Kale, Mesclun, Romaine Lettuce, Parsley, Swiss Chard, Watercress*) Leeks, Okra, Snow Peas, Scallions, Spinach, Watercress, Zucchini	**Red:** Radicchio, Radishes, Red Okra, Red Onions, Red Peppers, Rhubarb, Tomatoes (whole and small cherry tomatoes) **Orange:** Carrots, Rutabagas, Yellow & Orange Bell Peppers, Yellow Summer Squash **Purple:** Eggplant, Purple Cabbage **White:** Cauliflower, Garlic, Ginger, Hearts of Palm, Jerusalem Artichokes, Jicama, Kohlrabi, Mushrooms, Onions, Sauerkraut, Shallots, Water Chestnuts	**Marine Plants:** (Seaweed, Arame, Dulse, Hijiki, Irish Moss, Kelp, Kombu, Nori, Sea Lettuce, Wakame) **Technically Fruits:** (Avocado, Hot Peppers, Olives)
Healthy Protein		
Beef: (Lean, Grass Fed) **Fish:** (Best: High Eco Rating, low mercury content, high Omega 3 content) Examples: Wild Salmon, Sardines, Herring, Sablefish, Albacore Tuna from U.S./Canada **Pork:** (Lean) (Occasional-Bacon) **Poultry:** (Organic, Free Range) **Shellfish & Other Seafood:** (Calamari, Lobster, Oysters, Mussels, Shrimp)	**Legumes:** (Canned or Dried – Includes Lentils and Beans) **Beans:** (Adzuki, Anasazi, Black, Black-eyed peas, Borlotti, Cannellini, Chickpea, Edamame, Fava, Flageolet, Great Northern, Lima, Lupin, Kidney, Mung, Navy, Pink, Pinto, Soybeans) **Lentils:** (Brown, Green, Red/Yellow, French, Black Beluga)	**Eggs:** (Best: Pasture Raised) **Protein Powder:** (Casein, Collagen, Egg White, Hemp, Pea, Rice, Soy, Whey Isolate or Isolate/Concentrate) **Tempeh** **Tofu**

Dairy (source of protein, carbohydrates, and fats) Best: No Added Sugar, Low Lactose, Fat % choice determined by your biochemistry & state of health		
Butter: (if possible, Grass Fed) Coconut Creme Cream Cheese Cottage Cheese Ghee Mascarpone Ricotta Cheese Sour Cream Yogurt (No Added Sugar Greek, Skyre--- Source: Cow's Milk, Goat's Milk, or Plant/Nut Alternative)	**Cow's Milk or No Added Sugar Plant/Nut Alternatives:** (Almond, Oat, Cashew, Coconut, Hazelnut, Hemp, Macadamia, Soy, Walnut) Goat's Milk **Kefir:** (No Added Sugar-Cow's Milk, Goat's Milk, or Plant/Nut Alternative)	**Hard/Soft Cheeses:** (Blue, Brie, Colby, Cheddar, Feta,Goat, Gorgonzola, Gouda, Mozzerella, Muenster, Parmesan, Provolone, Swiss)
Healthy Fats		
Oils: (Avocado, Coconut, Olive, or oils from Nuts/Seeds Listed in the Food Plan List) **Oil from Fruit Sources:** (Avocado, Coconut, Olives)	**Nuts:** (Almonds, Brazil, Hazelnuts, Macadamia, Peanuts, Pecans, Pine Nuts, Pistachios, Walnuts) **Occasional:** Cashews	**Seeds:** (Chia, Flax, Hemp, Psyllium, Poppy, Pumpkin, Sunflower, Sesame, Poppy) **Nut/Seed Butter:** (No Sugar Added from nuts & seeds listed in the Food Plan List)
Starchy Vegetables, Grains, Chocolate & Sweeteners		
Winter Squash: (Acorn, Buttercup, Butternut, Delicata, Hubbard, Kabocha, Pumpkin, Red Kuri, Spaghetti)	**Quinoa:** (technically a seed high in protein that is traditionally used as a rice substitute) **Occasional:** Barley, Buckwheat, Steel Cut Oats, Sprouted Grain Bread	**Chocolate:** Minimum 60% Cacao, no sugar added (small amount occassionally) **Sugar Alternatives:** (Monk Fruit, Stevia, or another sugar-free source based on preference)
Fruit		
Low Glycemic Berries: (Berries (Strawberries, Blueberries, Raspberries, Blackberries)	**Other Low Glycemic Fruit:** (Avocado, Coconut, Lemons, Limes)	**Occasional Choices:** (See Fruit Chart in Appendix)

Putting it all Together: Meal Planning

Your food intake should "approximate" the percentages shown in the diagram below over the course of the day.



Ideally 75% of what you eat on a daily basis will consist of non-starchy vegetables and high-quality protein. But, for long term success, remember that eating is not a science.

Each day strive to get as close to the Sugar-Free Lifestyle Food Plan™ as possible, based on the food suggestions set forth in this workbook. BUT you don't have to be exact, and you don't have to give up enjoying all your favorite foods or follow a food plan of deprivation.

If you have a day where you ate mostly starchy vegetables, fruit, cheese, and sprouted grain bread or even some grain-based flour-products, that is OK. The key is that if you find yourself getting into that that pattern over several days, it is time to recommit to the food plan basics and get back on track.

Another category that is very personal to most people is the type and amount of protein consumed. You can customize your protein based on your eating style, including whether you are carnivorous, pescatarian, vegetarian, vegan, or a combination of any of these. You can also increase or decrease the amount of protein and adjust your consumption of vegetables accordingly.

Another way to look at menu planning is to visualize what your plate might look like at each meal based on the percentages shown in the diagram above. It is deliberately a simple plan. There is no need to count or measure. Just keep an eye on the percentages, watch portion sizes and be extra vigilant with personal trigger foods. If you are planning a one pot meal such as a stew or a meal with multiple ingredients such as a stir fry, estimate the percentages of the ingredients and add a salad for good measure.

*NOTE: Breakfast is one meal where you might not consume as many vegetables, but try to include a serving of vegetablesat least 3-5 times per week.

Action Steps

Eliminate Added Sugar

Added sugar includes sugar added to foods during preparation and processing. The Food Plan Daily Food List does not include any foods with added sugar. When you select whole foods from this list, read labels to avoid brands of processed foods with added sugar and refrain from using added sugar in food preparation. Whether you choose to occasionally consume certain foods that contain added sugar depends on your health goals, unique biochemistry and trigger foods.

If you have diabetes, pre-diabetes, or insulin resistance, it is strongly recommended that you eliminate all added sugar. Likewise, if you have a physical or emotional addiction to sugar, added sugar is best avoided, including any trigger foods containing added sugar.

We covered the topic of Eliminating Added Sugar in Phase 1. If you have not completed the Action Steps found in Chapter 9 or want to revisit them, the Action Steps include:

- Read Labels to Find Added Sugar
- Stop Adding Sugar to food, recipes, and beverages
- Learn About Alternative Sweeteners
- Eliminate Soda (including diet)
- Replace Salad Dressings that Contain Added Sugar
- Replace Yogurt Containing Added Sugar with Plain Yogurt (and Flavor the Yogurt Yourself
- Replace High Sugar Smoothies with No Added Sugar/Low Natural Sugar Alternatives
- Replace Pantry Items (such as condiments, canned goods, sauces, etc. with brands containing no Added Sugar)

Eliminate Hidden Sugar (Grain-Based Flour Products)

Not all complex carbohydrates behave the way you expect them to. For example, grain-based flour products, rice, and starchy vegetables, like white potatoes, behave more like simple sugars during the digestion process, breaking down quickly into glucose and causing a sharp rise in blood glucose levels along with a large insulin response. I refer to these foods as "hidden sugar." To maximize your efforts, avoid hidden sugars and choose complex carbohydrates that release glucose more slowly into the bloodstream

About Grains, Flour, Bread, Pasta, Rice & Potatoes

For success with blood sugar control, avoid grains, or consume certain whole grains very judiciously. If you choose to include grains in your food plan, the best choices are cooked whole grains (quinoa, oats, barley, rye) or high fiber sprouted whole grain breads. Quinoa is often considered to be a grain, but it is actually a seed. If you are diabetic, you should check your blood sugars two hours after eating grains or grain-based products to confirm their effect on your blood sugar levels.

Avoid all grain-based flour products as well as gluten free flour made with potato or rice flour. White rice should be avoided, and brown rice can be consumed occasionally, in very small quantities, unless it is a trigger food or or if it causes a fast, sharp rise in your blood sugar levels.

- Grinding grains into flour increases the surface area upon which enzymes work to more quickly convert starch into glucose. This means that any grain-based flour products have the same effect on blood sugar, whether the flour is produced from whole grains or not.
- Sprouted grain products are digested more like a vegetable with slower digestion and less of a spike in blood sugar. Sprouted grain breads will not have "flour" in the ingredients but should still be eaten in moderation.
- If you are diabetic, you should check your blood sugars two hours after eating grains or grain-based products to confirm their effect on your blood sugar levels. Avoid all grain-based flour products.
- Best breads: Paleo/Keto Bread (Store bought or homemade), non-grain-based flour breads (made with nut, bean, or coconut flour), golden flax meal, Sprouted Whole Grain.
- Not all complex carbohydrates behave the way you expect them to. Avoid starchy vegetables such as white potatoes that behave more like simple sugars, breaking down quickly into glucose and causing a sharp insulin response.

When reading labels of bread products, look for the word flour in the ingredients. If there is flour from a grain, avoid this food product. This includes any product traditionally containing grain-based flour, such as bread, muffins, tortillas, wraps, pancakes, waffles, crackers, cakes, and snack chips. This does not mean that you can never eat bread, crackers, or breakfast foods such as pancakes or waffles. Below are some alternatives. The only foods that should be completely avoided, even in an alternative form, are trigger foods.

- Bread, Wraps, Tortillas, Flatbreads, English Muffin, and Pasta Options:
    - Purchase products made with an alternative flour (nut flour, bean flour, coconut flour, ground flax meal).

    - Use Sprouted Grain Products that do not have flour in the ingredients. (Sprouted grain products are digested more like a vegetable with less of a spike in blood sugar levels).
    - Try an alternative to bread such as lettuce wraps in place of bread for sandwiches.
    - Explore pasta alternatives made with alternatives to grain-based flour, including "noodles" made with egg whites and egg white wraps that can be used in place of lasagna noodles. (Two popular brands are "egglife" and "crepini")
- Crackers and Chips Options:
    - Make your own from no-grain based flour flatbreads, wraps or tortillas.
    - Buy store bought brands that contain no grain-based flour.
    - Use vegetables instead of crackers or chips (cucumber or zucchini rounds, carrot chips, red/yellow/green pepper slices, cherry tomatoes, broccoli or cauliflower florets).
- Pancakes and Waffle Options:
    - Make your own pancakes and waffles with a no-grain based flour recipe or a store-bought product that contains no grain-based flour.
    - Make chaffles with ingredients that typically include eggs, cheese and flavorings of choice (some recipes also include a small amount of no grain-based flour).

Cut Back on Fruit and the Natural Sugar Fructose

Most fruits contain a combination of several natural sugars, including glucose, sucrose, and fructose. For example, one cup of raw blueberries (approximately 148 grams) contains the following types and amounts of sugar:

- Total Sugars: 14.74 grams
- Fructose: 6.76 grams
- Glucose: 6.06 grams
- Sucrose: 1.36 grams

These figures are approximate as the precise amounts of each sugar can vary depending on factors like the specific variety of blueberry, growing conditions, and degree of ripeness (Source: USDA's National Nutrient Database).

Unlike glucose, fructose is primarily metabolized in the liver and its processing does not raise blood sugar levels in the same way as glucose or stimulate insulin secretion significantly. This is why whole fruits that contain fiber, and other healthy nutrients, are included in most diet programs. Although fructose can be converted into glucose or glycogen, it also triggers something called "lipogenesis" (the process of converting excess carbohydrates into fatty acids in the liver and adipose tissue).

These fatty acids can then be converted into triglycerides for storage, and excessive consumption of fructose can have a propensity to increase triglyceride levels. New studies are also showing a link between high fructose consumption and insulin resistance.

When it comes to fruit, moderation is the best approach. You don't have to avoid all fruit but be aware of both the amount and type of sugar as you make decisions about which fruits and the amount to include in your food plan. If you are insulin resistant, diabetic, have high cholesterol and/or high triglycerides, it is best to limit fruit and fructose intake. I often tell my clients to include fruit like you would a condiment, for example, as a topping or added to a salad for a touch of sweetness.

As fruit ripens, the overall amount of carbohydrates does not change. But the sugar content increases as more starches turn to sugar. So, while really ripe fruits do taste delicious, be aware that they will have a higher sugar content. Below are recommended fruits to enjoy and those to avoid, followed by a chart to help you select fruit for consumption.

BEST Choices for normalizing blood sugars & crushing cravings:

- Lemons, Limes
- Avocados
- Berries (Strawberries, Blueberries, Raspberries, Blackberries)
- Unsweetened Acai (frozen or Powder)

BETTER option than high glycemic fruit choices (in moderation):

- NON-RIPE banana (1/2-1/4)
- Apples, Pears (slice & try to eat with some protein)
- Oranges, Grapefruits
- Grapes, Cherries, Kiwi, Mango, Peaches
- Watermelon

AVOID:

- Ripe bananas
- Pineapple
- Dried Fruit, Raisins
- Very Ripe Cantaloupe, Honey Dew

Fruit Consumption Guide

Source: Nutrition Data: Know What You Eat [USDA SR-21

FRUIT/AMOUNT	Carbs (grams)	Fiber (grams)	Starch (grams)	Sugars (grams)	Sucrose	Glucose	Fructose	Glycemic Load

BEST								
Avocado 1 cup cubed (150 grams)	12.8	10.1	0.2	**1 g**	90 mg	555 mg	180 mg	3
Avocado 1 cup pureed (230 grams)	19.6	15.4	0.3	**1.5**	138 mg	851 mg	276 mg	4
Lemon 1 Medium (58 Grams)	5.4	1.6	0.0	**1.5**	No Data	No Data	No Data	1
Lime 1 Small/Medium								
Tomato 1 Medium (123 grams)	4.8	1.5	0.0	**3.2**	0.0	1537 mg	1685 mg	2
Strawberries ½-3/4 cup Raw (100 grams)	7.7	2 g	0.0	**4.9**	470 g	1990 mg	2440mg	2
Blackberries ½-3/4 cup (100 Grams)	10.2	5.3	0.0	**4.9**	70 mg	2310 mg	2400 mg	3
Blueberries 50 Berries raw (68 Grams)	9.9	1.6	0.0	**6.8**	74.8 mg	3318 mg	3379 mg	3
Raspberries 1 cup whole raw (123 grams)	14.7	8 g	0.0	**5.4**	246 mg	2288 mg	2890mg	3
CONSUME OCCASIONALLY								
Grapefruit ½ raw (small -123 grams)	13.1	2	0.0	**8.5**	4317 mg	1980 mg	2177 mg	4
Orange 1 small 2-3/8 in diam (96 grams)	11.3	2.3	0.0	**9.0**	No Data	No Data	No Data	3
Watermelon 1 cup diced (152 grams)	11.5	0.6	0.0	**9.4**	1839 mg	2402 mg	5106 mg	3
Peach 1 small (2 ½ in dia-130 grams)	12.9	1.9	0.0	**10.9**	6189 mg	2535 mg	1989 mg	4
Apple 1 cup slices (109 grams)	15.1	2.6	0.1	**11.3**	2257 mg	2649 mg	6431 mg	3
AVOID OR CONSUME SPARINGLY								
Banana (small) 101 grams	23.1	2.6	5.4	**12.4**	2414 mg	5029 mg	4898 mg	8
Cantaloupe 1 Cup Cubes (160 grams)	14.1	1.4	0.0	**12.6**	6959 mg	2464 mg	2992 mg	4
Honeydew 1 Cup Cubes (170 Grams)	15.5	1.4	0.0	**13.8**	4216 mg	4557 mg	5032mg	4
Pear Raw 1 small (148 Grams)	22.9	4.6	0.0	**14.5**	1154 mg	4085 m	9222 mg	5

Pineapple 1 cup chunks (165 grams)	21.6	2.3	0.0	**16.3**	9883 mg	2855 mg	3498mg	6
Watermelon 1 Wedge (approx. 1/16 of melon) (286 Grams)	21.6	1.1	0.0	**17.7**	3461 mg	4519m g	9608 mg	6
Cherries 1 cup with pits (138 grams)	22.1	2.9	0.0	**17.7**	207 mg	9093 mg	7410 mg	7
Grapes 1 cup Thompson Seedless (151 Grams)	27.3	1.4	0.0	**23.4**	227 mg	10872mg	12276 mg	9
Mango 1 cup sliced (165 grams)	28.1	3	0.0	**24.4**	No Data	No Data	No Data	8

Go Easy on Dairy Foods that Contain the Natural Sugar Lactose

There are several types of dairy products, including:

- Milk: the base form of all dairy products (Whole, 2%, 1%, Skim).
- Cream: the high-fat layer skimmed from the top of milk.
- Butter: made by separating the butterfat from the buttermilk in cream.
- Cheese: made by coagulating one of the proteins in milk called casein.
- Yogurt: made by fermenting either milk or cream to convert milk sugar into lactic acid.
- Kefir: Kefir is a fermented dairy product that is made by mixing 'kefir grains,' composed of a complex structure of bacteria and yeasts with proteins, lipids, and sugars, with milk. The microorganisms ferment the naturally occurring milk sugar, lactose, into a sour, carbonated, beverage with a consistency similar to thin yogurt.

Dairy foods are a source of:

- CARBOHYDRATE: which includes the natural sugar lactose.
- FAT: The amount of fat varies and affects the way dairy foods/lactose are metabolized.
- PROTEIN: including casein, which is digested slowly and provides a steady release of amino acids into the bloodstream, and whey, which is digested faster than casein.

Chemically, lactose is a disaccharide composed of two simpler sugars: glucose and galactose. It's primarily responsible for the subtle sweetness inherent in fresh milk. Lactose molecules break down when they arrive in the small intestine as part of the digestion process. An enzyme called lactase splits lactose into the smaller molecules: glucose and galactose. For many people, lactose is easily digestible; however, a significant portion of the global population lacks sufficient levels of the enzyme lactase, and as a result, they can experience lactose intolerance, leading to various digestive discomforts.

Many people can tolerate small amounts of the natural sugar lactose in their food plan without negative effects, while for others, even a small amount will trigger cravings and blood sugar spikes.

3 factors determine the effect of lactose on your glucose and insulin levels immediately and over time.

- The amount of protein and fat contained in the dairy product or contained in other foods that are eaten along with the dairy product. (Fat and protein typically help glucose enter the bloodstream more slowly and steadily, blunting fast/sharp blood sugar & insulin spikes).
- The amount of lactose in the dairy product (and the amount of any added or hidden sugars)
- Your biochemistry and unique response to sugar/lactose

Knowing your health goals and having clarity about your trigger foods will help you determine whether to consume lactose and the amount to include in your food plan. The bottom line is that it's best to consume dairy and lactose in moderation. If you have health concerns or are being treated for diabetes or any type of heart disease, talk to your physician about the best approach to consuming dairy for your particular health issues.

Eliminate Personal Trigger Foods & Complete the Trigger Foods Worksheet

As we discussed in earlier chapters, the draw to food is both physical and psychological. Physically, sugar can lead to the release of dopamine in our brain, triggering feelings of pleasure, which makes it addictive. Additionally, eating a diet of foods that cause fast/sharp spikes in glucose and insulin can result in both roller coaster blood sugar levels and insulin resistance.

It is a complex process that progresses over time and, for many individuals, reaches a point where a pattern emerges of eating trigger foods that drive physical cravings for either more of the same food or that lead to cravings and binging on other foods. This starts a continuing cascade of high blood sugar levels along with the release of dopamine, sharp/fast releases of insulin, followed by crashes that leave individuals hungry for more sugar not to mention the desire for another dopamine hit.

Many times, people do not even realize that they are eating trigger foods and can't understand why their cravings do not go away or get worse. The bottom line is that unless your personal trigger foods are eliminated, no amount of willpower will stop the cycle. You might be able to suck it up and use willpower to follow a diet for a week or even months. But if food triggers are introduced knowingly or unknowingly, the cravings will reappear.

If you want to quit sugar for the long term and get roller coaster blood sugars and cravings under control, it is critical to eliminate personal trigger foods. For most people that means all added sugars, and then figuring out what other foods are trigger foods for you.

We all have a unique biochemistry and so you can't rely on an expert's blanket statement that apples or blueberries or sugar substitutes, bread, grains, or any other food is OK. The real question is how does that food affect you? It may take a little detective work, but finding and eliminating your trigger foods makes a big difference.

There is a difference between a trigger food and what motivates you to take the first bite, and the Trigger Food worksheet takes both into account. As with all change, identifying your trigger foods is a process that will most likely reveal itself over time. In Phase 3, we will delve deeper into the topics of identifying trigger foods, changing habits and reversing emotional eating. You can revisit your Trigger Foods Worksheet as you develop your food plan, revise the foods you choose to eat, and as you continue to identify the trigger foods that sabotage your efforts.

Sample Trigger Foods Worksheet

Trigger Food Motivators	Description & Action Step	My Trigger Foods
Convenience & Ultra Processed Foods	What foods with added sugar, hidden sugar, or high natural sugar do you eat/buy because of their convenience? Examples: Pizza, Deli Sandwiches, French Fries, Canned Fruit, Pasta	Pizza Deli Sandwiches Fries Pasta
Habit	What foods with added sugar, hidden sugar, or high natural sugar do you eat out of habit? Examples: bagel or pastry for breakfast, snacks while watching TV, potatoes for dinner, crackers before bed, latte while out shopping	Breakfast: pastries Lunch: Sandwiches Dinner: Potatoes, Rice Snacks: Cheese/ Crackers
Life Situations	List 3 life situations that motivate you to eat trigger foods. What trigger foods do you eat in those situations? Examples: Holidays/Celebrations, Going Out to Eat, Office Parties	Birthday Parties: Cake Restaurants: Bread, Potatoes, Dessert Office Parties: Cookies or other sweets

HALT	What trigger foods do you eat if you let yourself become too Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired?	H: Cookies, Crackers A: Cookies, Crackers, Fries L: Cookies, Chocolate T: Cookies
Emotional Eating	List 3-4 emotions that motivate you to eat trigger foods. What trigger foods do you eat when you feel these emotions?	Anxious/Stressed Afraid/Worried Depressed Bored Cookies, Cake, Chips, Ice Cream, Lattes

Trigger Food Worksheet

Trigger Food Motivators	Description & Action Step	My Trigger Foods
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Habit	What foods with added sugar, hidden sugar, or high natural sugar do you eat out of habit? examples: bagel or pastry for breakfast, snacks while watching TV, potatoes for dinner, crackers before bed, latte while out shopping	Breakfast: Lunch: Dinner: Other:
Life Situations	List 3 life situations that motivate you to eat trigger foods. What trigger foods do you eat in those situations? Examples: Holidays/Celebrations, Going Out to Eat, Office Parties	
HALT	What trigger foods do you eat if you let yourself become too Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired?	H: A: L: T:

Emotional Eating	List 3-4 emotions that motivate you to eat trigger foods. What trigger foods do you eat when you feel these emotions?	

Change Your Plate: Add in 50% Non-Starchy Vegetables

Filled with vitamins, minerals, fiber and antioxidants, fresh vegetables are critical for helping you maintain healthy blood sugar levels, avoid insulin resistance, and steer clear of roller coaster blood sugar levels. Try to include raw and lightly steamed vegetables along with other preparation methods such as stir frying and roasting vegetables**.** Choose as many richly colored vegetables as possible that provide needed micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) and Phytochemicals.

Micronutrients: include Vitamins & Minerals that are essential to work with enzymes in our body (as co-enzymes and co-factors) so that enzymes can perform vital bodily functions that keep us alive and healthy.

Classifications include*:*

- Fat Soluble Vitamins: A, D, E, K
- Water Soluble Vitamins: B Complex, C
- Major Minerals: Calcium, Phosphorus, Potassium, Sodium, Chloride, Magnesium, Sulpher
- Minor Trace Minerals: Boron, Chromium, Copper, Iodine, Iron, Manganese, Molybdenum, Selenium, Silicon, Vanadium, Zinc

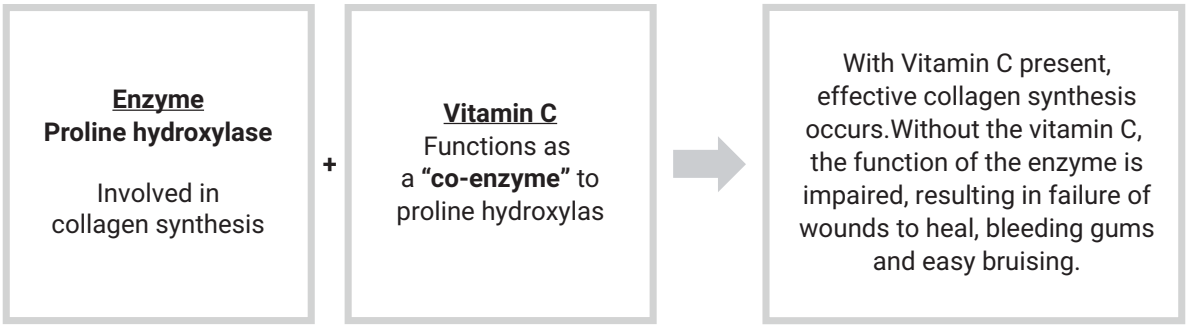
Phytochemicals are nutrients from plant foods that enhance health and fight disease, including helping cells repair themselves and acting as antioxidants to neutralize damaging free radicals.

- **Flavonoids** are found in cranberries, strawberries, apples, onions, tea, cocoa, and red wine. Studies show a link between a high intake of flavonoids and reduced risk of heart attack and stroke.
- **Carotenoids** are responsible for the red, orange, or yellow color of many fruits and vegetables. Their presence is masked by chlorophyll in dark green leafy vegetables.
- **Isoflavones**: Soybeans are the most common source in human food.

How Vitamins and Minerals Support Health

The role of vitamins and minerals is to help enzymes perform their function of catalyzing the chemical reactions that sustain our health. If an enzyme is lacking an essential vitamin or mineral, it cannot perform properly.

The diagram below shows an example of the synergy between vitamins and enzymes.



Non-Starchy Vegetables

Type	Recommended Choices	Notes & Guidelines
GREEN	Alfalfa sprouts, Artichokes, Arugula, Asparagus, Broccoli, Broccolini, Bok Choy, Broccoli Rabe, Brussels Sprouts, Celery, Cucumbers, Edamame* Endive, Fennel, Green Beans, Green Bell Peppers, Green Cabbage Leafy Greens/Lettuce (Arugula *Bib Lettuce, Butterhead Lettuce, Collard Greens, Dandelion Greens, Endive, Iceberg Lettuce, Kale, Mesclun, Romaine Lettuce, Parsley, Swiss Chard, Watercress*) Leeks, Okra, Snow Peas, Scallions, Spinach, Watercress, Zucchini	*Edamame is also classified as a bean.
PURPLE	Eggplant, Purple Cabbage	
RED	Radicchio, Radishes, Red Okra, Red Onions, Red Peppers, Rhubarb, Tomatoes (whole and small cherry tomatoes)	
WHITE	Cauliflower, Garlic, Ginger, Hearts of Palm, Jerusalem Artichokes, Jicama, Kohlrabi, Mushrooms, Onions, Sauerkraut, Shallots, Water Chestnuts	
YELLOW & ORANGE	Carrots, Rutabagas, Yellow & Orange Bell Peppers, Yellow Summer Squash	Carrots are considered by some to be a “high carb” vegetable, but they can be eaten occasionally, in moderation, unless they are a trigger food for you.
MARINE PLANTS	Seaweed (Arame, Dulse, Hijiki, Irish Moss, Kelp, Kombu, Nori, Sea Lettuce, Wakame)	Full of nutrients, various seaweeds can be included as part of your vegetables for the day.

FRUITS typically eaten as vegetables	Avocado, Hot Peppers, Olives	These foods are technically fruits but can be included in your vegetable portion for a meal or snack

What About Organic?

Using organic foods will help to avoid the growing list of additives from artificial sweeteners to coloring agents that are finding their way into increasingly overly processed commercialized foods. Organic products must be produced using agricultural production practices that foster resource cycling, promote ecological balance, maintain and improve soil and water quality, minimize the use of synthetic materials, and conserve biodiversity. This section provides an overview of the key requirements and various labeling categories allowed under the USDA organic regulations as well as the Environmental Working Group's ranking of fruits and vegetables based on their level of pesticide ranking.

You can go to www.foodnews.org to see the Environmental Working Group's 2024 list of fruits and vegetables and their ranking in terms of pesticide levels. If your budget is a consideration, try to purchase organic for foods that are high in pesticides.

- Among the cleanest are sweet corn, avocados, pineapple, onions, papaya, sweet peas, asparagus, honeydew melon, kiwi, cabbage, watermelon, mushrooms, mango, sweet potatoes, and carrots.
- Those highest in pesticides are strawberries, spinach, kale, collards, mustard greens, grapes, peaches, pears, nectarines, apples, bell peppers, hot peppers, cherries, blueberries and green beens.

To claim that a product is **"100 percent Organic"** (or similar statement)

- The product must contain 100 percent organically produced ingredients (excluding salt and water, which are considered natural)

To claim that a food is **"Organic"** (or similar statement)

- The product must contain at least 95% organic ingredients, not counting added water and salt.
- Up to 5 percent of ingredients may be nonorganic agricultural products and/or nonagricultural products on the National List (nonorganic agricultural products and several nonagricultural products on the National List may only be used if they are not commercially available as organic)

To claim that a product is **"Made with Organic Ingredients"** (or similar statement)

- The product must contain at least 70% organic ingredients, not counting added water and salt.

To claim that a product has some organic ingredients

- Specific organic ingredients may be listed in the ingredient statement of products containing less than 70 percent organic contents—for example, "Ingredients: water, barley, beans, organic tomatoes, salt."

Tips for Adding More Non-Starchy Vegetables to Your Daily Meals

It's a Snap!

- Serve Raw Vegetables with Dip, Cheese, or Favorite Spread:
- Grill an Onion
- Munch on Some Edamame
- Use Lettuce Leaves as substitute for Bread
- Munch on some celery with almond or peanut butter
- Make a tomato and onion salad
- Add onions, corn & red pepper to black beans (hot or cold salad)

Pretty Easy

- Flavor Up Salad Dressing with finely chopped veggies
- Make Some Salsa
- Use Frozen Vegetables for Easy Salads and Side Dishes
- Make a Stir Fry with Vegetables & Protein of Choice
- Add Vegetables to Quinoa (hot or cold salad)
- Lightly steam or boil some Kale
- Make a creamy soup with leftover vegetables
- Make a cucumber salad

Hmm…Looks a Little Harder

- Cook homemade vegetable soup in a crock pot
- Prepare vegetarian chili with vegetables
- Roast a Variety of Vegetables
- Press Some Red or Green Cabbage

Vitamins and Antioxidants

Everyone's biological makeup and nutritional needs are unique. Simple blood tests can reveal low levels of key vitamins/minerals such as vitamin D and magnesium. There are also newer genetic tests that can tell you what supplements may be helpful based on the presence of gene variations that influence a person's overall health.

On the following pages you will find a list of some targeted nutritional supplements that are worth looking into. The list is not exhaustive but is comprised of some of the key vitamins, minerals, and herbal supplements that have been showing some promise in helping in the overall management of blood sugar levels as well as diabetes and its complications. You should always consult your physician or other member of your healthcare team before adding supplements to confirm that they do not interfere with any current medications and that they do not have any harmful effects based on your specific physical condition.

Alpha Lipoic Acid	Alpha lipoic acid is a sulfur containing compound that helps burn glucose, converting it to energy that powers your heart, brain, and other organs. Glucose is a potent generator of free radicals, which cause much of the cell damage and complications associated with diabetes. Alpha Lipoic acid is a powerful and versatile antioxidant that serves to protect the body against free-radical damage. It is almost unique in that it is both water and fat soluble, enabling it to enter virtually all areas of the cells to neutralize free radicals. Alpha Lipoic Acid has been demonstrated to improve insulin sensitivity and may help diabetics by facilitating better conversion of sugar into energy. By lowering glucose levels in the bloodstream and improving insulin sensitivity, alpha lipoic acid greatly reduces a major source of free radicals. Alpha Lipoic Acid shows promise in protecting individuals against diabetic complications, including improving diabetic neuropathy. Studies have shown that it reduces the glycosylation of proteins, improves blood flow to peripheral nerves, and stimulates the regeneration of nerve fibers.
Co-Enzyme Q10	CoQ10 improves energy production in our bodies and serves as an antioxidant. These effects are especially beneficial in the prevention of heart disease and cancer. Studies also show a benefit for improved glucose control.

Vitamin C	Because insulin helps transport vitamin C into cells, diabetics are prone to having low intracellular concentrations of this vitamin, even if blood levels are normal. Vitamin C strengthens the blood vessels, especially the small capillaries, boosts the activity of the immune system, and helps protect against cardiovascular disease. Some studies suggest that vitamin C may reduce the accumulation of sorbitol in the cells, another probable cause of diabetic complications. If you are using a CGM (Continuous Glucose Monitor) you may be advised to restrict your consumption of vitamin C.
Vitamin E	Vitamin E functions primarily as an antioxidant in protecting against damage to the cell membranes. It is comprised of compounds known as tocopherols, which are needed to protect the lipids, or fats, in cell walls from damage. Vitamin E provides benefit in protecting against heart disease and strokes. Some studies suggest that vitamin E improves insulin action and exerts a number of beneficial effects that may aid in preventing long-term complications of diabetes, especially cardiovascular disease.
B Complex Vitamins	B3 is a player in many important functions, including energy production as well as the metabolism of carbohydrates and the action of insulin. Biotin helps the body metabolize carbohydrates, proteins and fats. It is thought to help lower blood glucose levels by improving insulin sensitivity while also stimulating the activity of an enzyme called glucokinase, known to play a role in the glucose uptake by the liver. B6, B12, and Folic Acid are shown to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. Vitamins B6 and B12 may also be beneficial in preventing diabetic neuropathy. Folic acid has been shown to help control homocysteine levels. Although all the reasons are not fully clear, there is increasing research that shows that there is a link between high levels of homocysteine in the blood and diminished arterial health.
Vitamin D	Vitamin D regulates the absorption and use of calcium and phosphorous. New research shows it also plays a role in the regulation of normal blood sugars.

Minerals

Vanadium	Vanadium has been identified as one of the few compounds other than insulin that can activate GLUT-4 transporters, in essence mimicking the action of insulin. (Insulin stimulates GLUT-4 transporters to rise to the surface of the cell and carry glucose inside).
Chromium	Chromium has been shown to improve the activity of insulin and to facilitate the uptake of glucose into the cells. Chromium also supports carbohydrate, protein and lipid metabolism.
Magnesium	Magnesium has been shown to improve insulin production and response, thus further promoting optimal blood sugar levels. In addition to the many functions magnesium performs in our bodies, it has a relaxing effect on the smooth muscle tissues that line the arteries (resulting in improved blood flow, lower blood pressure, and a reduction in the likelihood of arterial spasms that may contribute to heart attack). Magnesium can help decrease the risk of diabetic complications associated with arterial problems such as heart disease and retinopathy.
Calcium	In addition to helping strengthen bones, calcium may serve as a protective factor against high blood pressure.

Change Your Plate: Add in 25% Healthy Protein

Protein is an important part of your food plan. Your body requires amino acids that are genetically encoded in proteins in order to function properly. Nine of these amino acids are "essential amino acids" that can only be obtained from protein foods. The body can produce the other amino acids from the essential amino acids that you ingest from various foods. You can obtain protein from both animal and plant sources, depending upon your lifestyle and preferences. Plant sources include legumes/beans, soy products, grains, nuts, seeds, and vegetables. Typical animal protein sources are fish, poultry, eggs, dairy products, and lean meat. If you include animal protein in your food plan, closely monitor the saturated fat content.

Protein Overview & Tips for Choosing Healthy Protein

Poultry	**Best Choice**: Organic (chickens raised on organic feed with no pesticides, chemicals, or antibiotics)	If organic is not available, try to purchase poultry that is antibiotic free (note all chicken is hormone free based on USDA Standards)
Beef	**Best Choice** Lean, Grass-Fed Beef	Meat from grass-fed animals contains more conjugated linoleic acid (a component of fat that boosts fat burning and the buildup of lean muscle mass) and more Omega-3 fats.
Pork	**Best Choice**: Lean Cuts **Occasional**: Ham, Bacon (Sugar Free Brands)	Consider nitrate free brands
Fish	Wild Salmon, Sardines, Herring, Sablefish, Albacore Tuna from U.S./Canada	Try to choose fish with: High Eco Rating, low mercury content, high Omega 3 content
Shellfish & Other Seafood	Calamari, Lobster, Oysters, Mussels, Shrimp	
Eggs	**Cage Free**: Hens are able to roam vertically and horizontally in indoor spaces while having access to fresh food and water. **Free Range**: The same conditions as Cage Free with access to the outdoors during their laying cycle. **Pasture Raised**: Hens are raised with access to plants, insects, outdoor space, fresh air, & protection from the elements as needed. **Organic**: Hens are fed food free of animal by-products, pesticides, chemical additives, or synthetic fertilizers, and they must be free to roam in their houses and have access to the outside (no antibiotics are given unless needed for infection).	NOTE: The USDA has banned the use of hormones for all hens. All eggs, even without this label are hormone free. Omega 3 Enhanced Eggs: Chickens are fed a diet of flaxseed and/or fish oils.

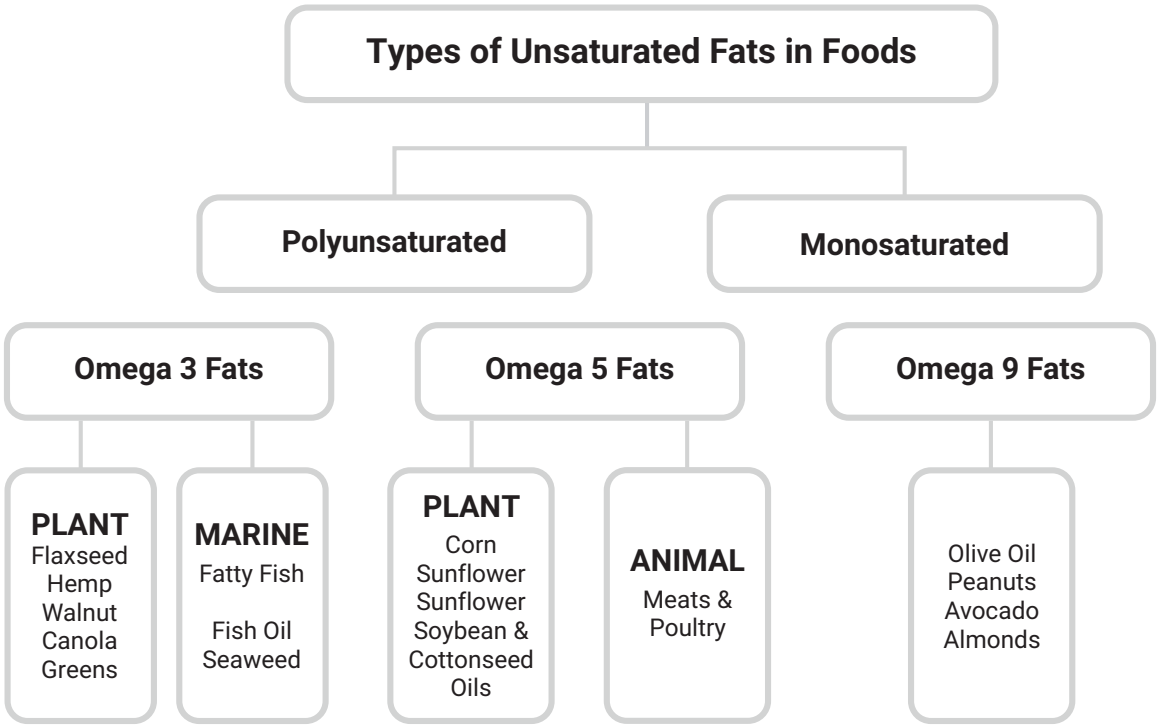
Dairy Products	**Milk**: the base form of all dairy products (Whole, 2%, 1%, Skim). **Cream**: Whipped, Sour, Clotted, Half and Half, Cream, Light and Crème Fraiche. **Butter**: Types include Unsalted, Salted, Sweet Cream, Cultured, Ghee, Organic, Grass-Fed, and Plant-Based. **Cheese**: Hard & Soft Cheeses **Yogurt**: Types include: Traditional, Greek, Skyre/ Icelandic, Australian, French, Lactose-Free, Dairy Alternative Yogurts. **Kefir:** A drink similar to drinkable yogurt but with a longer fermentation process. What makes kefir unique is that kefir grains are blended into the milk.	Consume dairy in moderation, and discuss consumption with your physician if you have any conditions where fat content is an issue. Dairy contains the natural sugar lactose (composed of two simpler sugars: glucose and galactose.) Avoid dairy products with high amounts of lactose or added sugar. (if you are lactose intolerant, choose lactose-free dairy products)
Legumes: Lentils & Beans	**Beans:** Adzuki, Anasazi, Black, Black-eyed peas, Borlotti, Cannellini, Chickpea, Edamame, Fava, Flageolet, Great Northern, Lima, Lupin, Kidney, Mung, Navy, Pink, Pinto, Soybeans **Lentils:** Brown, Green, Red/Yellow, French, Black Beluga	**Beans** are a great source of protein and soluble fiber. If you are concerned about phytic acid in beans, the best way to reduce the amount of phytic acid is to soak your beans overnight before cooking them. If you use canned beans, rinse them well to reduce the sodium content.
Nuts & Seeds	**Seeds**: Chia, Flax, Hemp, Pine Nuts, Pumpkin, Sesame, Sunflower **Nuts**: Almonds, Cashews, Hazelnuts, Macadamia, Pecans, Pistachios, Walnuts	
Soybeans & Products	Edamame Tofu, Tempeh	Avoid overconsumption of highly processed soy products.

High Protein Grains	Wheat Berries, Teff, Amaranth, Farro, Oats, Millet, Buckwheat, Barley	Consume whole grains in moderation. Avoid highly processed grain products and all grain-based flour that cause a sharp increase in blood glucose levels and rapid/high influx of insulin.
Quinoa	Although technically a seed, quinoa is considered a pseudocereal that is a source of protein, fiber, and carbohydrates. **Types**: Red, White, Yellow, Black	Quinoa is a gluten free, complete protein, containing all nine essential amino acids.
High Protein Vegetables	**Non-Starchy**: Asparagus, Artichoke Hearts, Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, Cauliflower, Collard Greens, Mushrooms, Mustard Greens, Spinach **Starchy**: Green Peas, Split Peas, Sweet Corn, Sweet Potatoes,	
Protein Powder	Animal Sources: Whey Protein, Bone Broth, Casein, Collagen, Egg White Plant Sources: Hemp, Pea, Rice, Soy	Look for brands with No Added Sugar. The best whey protein powder is free of bovine growth hormones, preferably whey protein isolate or a combo of whey protein concentrate and isolate. (isolate contains more protein with less fat and lactose per serving)

Change Your Plate: Add in 25% Combo of Healthy Fats and Quality Carbohydrates

In moderation, it is important to include certain "good for you" fats into your food plan. Among other things, fats are required for hormone production, facilitation of oxygen transport and calcium absorption, as well as for the absorption of the fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K.

Fats are made up of building blocks called fatty acids. The structure of the fat molecule determines whether a fat is considered saturated or unsaturated. There are two types of unsaturated fats in the foods that we eat: Polyunsaturated fats and Monounsaturated Fats. These are shown in the chart below:



Essential Fatty Acids Overview

EFA's (generally)	Essential fatty acids are a type of fatty acid that cannot be produced in the body and must be obtained through diet or supplementation. Following ingestion, EFA's are ultimately converted to substances called prostaglandins that act like hormones to help regulate a myriad of physiological functions, including cardiovascular health and fat metabolism. EFAs come in two common classes: Omega-3's and Omega 6's.

Omega 3	Three essential fatty acids are found in omega-3 fats and oils: alpha-linoleic acid, eicosatetraenoic acid (EPA), and Docosahexaenoic acid (DHA). Omega 3's provide a number of benefits including: relaxing constricted arteries, repairing tissue damage caused by clogged arteries, reducing levels of VLDSs (very low-density lipoproteins, which are clusters of lipids linked to heart disease), lowering the rate at which the liver makes triglycerides, and stabilizing heart cells, making them more resistant to irregular beats that can cause heart attacks.
Omega 6	The most important of the omega-6 fatty acids for the diabetic is gamma-linolenic acid (GLA). This fatty acid is derived from the EFA linolenic acid. You can get linoleic acid from vegetable, nut and seed oils, but many diabetics are deficient in GLA because they often have problems converting the linolenic acid to GLA. Without the enzyme delta-6-desaturase (D6D), omega-6's won't transform themselves into GLA. We lose D6D as we grow older and it is suppressed by a diet including a lot of sugar, alcohol, margarine, or other partially hydrogenated oils. Supplemental GLA may be helpful in helping to improve peripheral neuropathy, which is caused by inflammation and deterioration of the peripheral nerves, usually in the legs and feet. Sources of GLA include evening primrose and borage oil.
Nattokinase	An enzyme which has been shown to promote healthy circulation and reduce the risk of blood clots.

- Omega 3 Fats and Omega 6 fats have opposite effects in the body. Omega 6 fats impede the benefits of Omega 3 fats, and if these two fats are not properly balanced in your diet, the overload of Omega 6 fats can dramatically affect your health.

- Omega 3 fats fight inflammation and keep blood vessels healthy by decreasing blood pressure and triglycerides, keeping arteries flexible and wide for smooth blood flow, and decreasing clotting and clumping of blood cells. Additionally, Omega 3 fats keep brain cell membranes healthy and fluid. Omega 3 fats from plant sources differ from Omega 3 fatty acids found in seafood. Plant sources contain ALA, which is known as a "short chain" "fatty acid" that can be turned into EPA and DHA. These are the two longer chain fatty acids that provide the many powerhouse benefits of Omega 3 fats.

- High amounts of Omega 6 fats increase inflammation, blood clotting, and insulin resistance. For optimal health try to limit the consumption of Omega 6 fats and increase

your intake of Omega 3 fats. Most dietary Omega 6 fats come from salad dressings, cooking oils, and spreads. One way to decrease your consumption of Omega 6 fats is to eat more monounsaturated fats which have no negative effect on Omega 3 fats and also lower cholesterol. Olive oil is the lowest in omega 6 fats. In moderation, nuts and avocados are also excellent sources of healthy fats.

- Limit the amount of saturated fats in your diet. Saturated fat raises levels of LDL cholesterol and increases heart disease. Depending on your condition, you can include small amounts of certain saturated fat in your food plan, (such as organic butter from grass fed cows, coconut butter, Ghee, certain cheeses). But always discuss this with your physician if you have a serious diabetic complication, such as heart disease.

- The only fats that should be totally avoided are trans fatty acids. These are chemically altered vegetable oils that typically show up in foods as hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oil. Trans fatty acids are commonly found in margarine, peanut butter, commercial snacks, baked goods, and fried foods. These fats increase the risk of heart disease to a greater degree than saturated fats because in addition to raising total cholesterol, they lower protective HDL cholesterol. Growing research indicates that trans fats are connected not only to cancer, heart disease and aging, but also to immune system suppression and diminished ability to utilize essential fatty acids. Read labels carefully, and always choose products that don't contain these damaging fats.

Increase Fiber

Fiber provides tremendous benefits, including managing blood sugar levels. Remember to start adding fiber to your diet slowly to avoid gas/bloating and build up to 20 to 30 grams daily. Fiber is the part of food that cannot be digested or broken down into a form of energy for our body. It is considered a type of complex carbohydrate, but it cannot be absorbed to produce energy. Fiber comes only from plants, fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, and grains. No animal products contain fiber.

Fiber comes in two forms: insoluble and soluble fiber. While we need both types each day, soluble fiber appears to play an especially important role in glucose control. This is because it forms a thick gel that interferes with the absorption of glucose in the intestine, thereby reducing the ups and downs of blood sugar levels. It also helps to bind cholesterol in the intestinal tract, which is why it may help to lower cholesterol levels.

	Soluble Fiber:	**Insoluble Fiber:**
DEFINED	Technically called pectin, gum and mucilage, soluble fiber dissolves and breaks down in water forming a thick gel.	Technically called cellulose, hemicellulose, and lignin, insoluble fiber does not dissolve in water or break down in your digestive system.
FUNCTIONS	Prolongs stomach emptying time so that sugar is released and absorbed more slowly. Binds with fatty acids which are the building blocks of fat.	Moves bulk through the intestines Controls and balances the PH (i.e. degree of acidity or alkalinity) in the intestines.
BENEFITS	Helps to regulate blood sugar levels, lower cholesterol and remove toxins from your body. Slows the absorption of food after meals, thereby slowing down the conversion of carbohydrates to sugar. This in turn, allows glucose to be burned more efficiently instead of being stored as fat.	Promotes regular bowel movements and prevents constipation. Removes toxic waste from the colon. Helps prevent colon cancer by keeping an optimal pH in intestines to prevent microbes from producing cancerous substances.
SOURCES	Soluble fiber is abundant in beans, oats, barley, fruits, and many vegetables.	Insoluble fiber is the roughage found in vegetables and the skins and outer coatings of grains, fruits, and legumes.

In addition to helping to regulate blood sugars, fiber rich foods tend to be lower in calories and also curb appetite. A hormone produced by your small intestine stimulates a feeling of fullness that tells you to stop eating. The combination of nutrients and fiber in your food helps increase the production of this hormone and fiber plays a role in prolonging its presence in your system, thereby enhancing your satisfaction from food.

The easiest way to ensure getting enough fiber in your diet is to follow food plan success strategies: eat a wide variety of foods centered around a diet rich in high fiber nutrient-dense vegetables, low glycemic index fruits, and healthy protein. In addition to vegetables, some good sources of fiber include:

- Flax: Always grind flax seeds before eating. You can grind your own or purchase ground flax seeds. Ground flax can be added to recipes, sprinkled on yogurt and salads, or included in your favorite smoothly

- Nuts: If you don't have any nut allergies, include a few handfuls of almonds, walnuts, pecans, or hazelnuts to your diet every day.
- Legumes: Beans have high soluble fiber content and can be consumed in numerous ways. Enjoy them in salads, as side dishes, or in your favorite chili recipe are just a few ways to incorporate beans into your food plan.

Stay Hydrated.

Do you ever feel hungry soon after eating or tired when you know you have had a good night's sleep? Guess what? You may be dehydrated. Often drinking a glass of water when you have these symptoms will relieve the tiredness or feeling of hunger. Other signs of dehydration include constipation or dark urine.

Water is essential for the proper functioning of every cell in your body and provides a number of important functions from lubricating joints, transporting nutrients to your muscles and carrying away waste such as carbon dioxide and lactic acid. If you have diabetes, when you don't drink enough water, the glucose in your bloodstream becomes more concentrated, which leads to higher blood sugar levels.

Drinking water as your main source of liquid is conducive to a healthy lifestyle because your body is largely made up of water, and it is necessary for healthy body functions. While it's true that, for most people, plain water is the best thing to drink to stay hydrated, there are plenty of alternative beverage options if you don't like the taste of plain water or want some variety. You can also get water into your system from food sources, such as soup, fruits, and vegetables that contain a high percentage of water.

How Much Water is Enough?

Although many experts recommend drinking six to eight, 8-ounce glasses of water or other liquids each day, this is more of a guideline than an exact requirement. Your actual hydration needs will depend upon the climate where you live, your age and physical condition. People who live in hot climates or who exercise frequently often need more water than more-sedentary individuals who live in temperate places. Most healthy people can stay hydrated by following their bodies' cues and drinking to thirst.

Common signs of dehydration include fatigue, headaches, nausea and dizziness. Your best defense against dehydration is to become conscious of drinking liquids throughout the day and including some foods with a high percentage of water in your daily food plan.

If you are not sure how much liquid you should be consuming, discuss this with your physician. He or she can help you determine the amount of water that's right for you. If you are under a physician's

care for congestive heart failure, vascular disease, lung disease, or renal disease, increasing your fluid intake should not be attempted without consulting with your physician.

AVOID Soda (including Diet) & Fruit Juice

Both soda and fruit juice contain way too much sugar. Additionally, a growing body of research indicates that drinking artificially sweetened diet sodas on a regular basis may set you up for weight gain and increased cravings for sweets. Artificially sweetened sodas can also interfere with your body's signal to tell you to stop eating. An occasional diet soda, such as when you are eating out, is probably OK, unless it is a trigger food for you.

What About Drinking Tea?

When I delved into research on the topic of hydration, I found various opinions on whether part of your hydration needs can be met with tea.

The pros of this option are the many established health benefits, including heart-protecting and disease-annihilating antioxidants. The cons mainly centered around the debate concerning whether the caffeine in black, green, white, & oolong tea makes it a poor choice for hydration.

For those of you who like to drink tea, the good news is that newer studies are finding that the benefits of tea outweigh any effects of the caffeine, and that when consumed in moderation (2-3 small to medium cups per day) there is no significant dehydrating effect from the caffeine (There are also many brands that make de-caffeinated options).

Most people are familiar with black, oolong, green, and white teas. But there are many different healthy tea options.

- Black tea and oolong tea leaves undergo the most processing that includes a crushing and fermentation process.
- Green tea leaves are not fermented, they are withered and steamed. Green tea is produced from leaves that have not withered or oxidized.
- White tea comes from young leaves and buds. White tea is the least processed of all teas and has a sweeter, milder flavor than green
- Another type of tea Rooibos (pronounced ROY-boss) (also referred to as Red Tea) comes from a different plant, and unlike the teas above, it does not contain any caffeine.
- Other herbal choices include teas like chamomile, peppermint, and lavender.

Another type of tea that most people don't know about is an all-natural tea brewed from vegetables. For a relaxing, energizing tea that also quiets sugar cravings, try the following sweet vegetable tea.

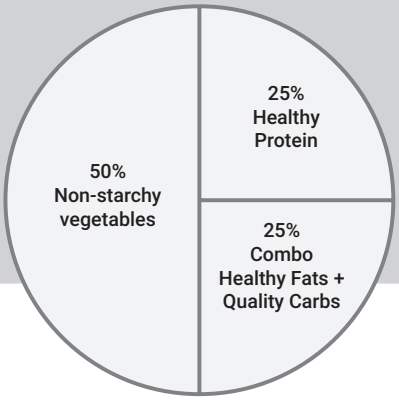
Bring 3 cups water to a boil, then lower heat and add ¼ cup onions, ¼ cup carrots, ¼ cup cabbage, and ¼ cup either parsnips or butternut squash. The vegetables should be cut in small chunks. Simmer covered for 15-20 minutes. Strain the tea, discard the vegetables, and then pour the liquid into a cup, and enjoy.

Hydration Tips & Ideas

- Strawberries, orange slices, lemons, limes, blueberries, watermelon, cucumbers, and mint are delicious options for flavoring water.
- If you are drinking a lot of iced tea, try making your own with decaf teabags.
- Set a large glass of water by the bed when you go to sleep and drink it first thing when you wake up in the morning. This pulls out toxins left from the previous day and refreshens your system, preparing it for the day ahead.
- Keep a bottle of water accessible throughout the day, whether you're on the go or sitting at a desk. Having water close by will remind you to take a sip when thirsty. The first sip of water will usually let you know how much you need.
- If you have most of your water before early evening, the possibility of interrupted sleep will not be an issue because you will not crave a big glass before bed.
- A cup of hot chamomile tea at night is a relaxing way to end your day.
- You can also get water into your system from food sources, such as soups and vegetables that contain a high percentage of water.

Create Your 7 Day Meal Plan

7 DAY MEAL PLAN



DAY 1	DAY 3
B:	B:
L:	L:
D:	D:

DAY 2	DAY 4
B:	B:
L:	L:
D:	D:

7 DAY MEAL PLAN

DAY 5

B:

L:

D:

DAY 7

B:

L:

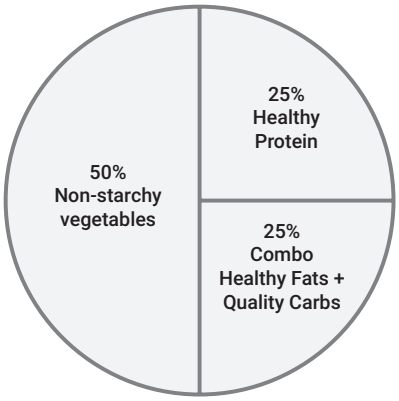
D:

DAY 6

B:

L:

D:



Adopt New Habits: Watch Portion Sizes

- One serving is approximately equivalent to:

Fruit & Vegetables

- ½ cup cooked or raw veggies
- 1 cup salad
- 1 medium piece of fruit
- ½ chopped fruit
- ¾ cup vegetable juice

Protein Foods

- ½ cup cooked beans
- 1 whole egg, 3 egg whites, or 2 egg whites with one yolk
- 2-3 oz. Meat, Fish or Poultry (approx. size of deck of cards)
- 4 oz. Tofu, ½ cup soy milk, ½ cup soy protein
- ¾ cup vegetable or fruit juice

Whole Grains

- 1 slice bread
- ½ cup cooked grain or pasta
- ½ -1 cup dry cereal
- 3-4 crackers

Dairy

- 1 cup milk
- 4 oz. Cheese (4 cubes)
- ½ cup cottage cheese or part-skim ricotta
- 1 cup yogurt

Fats, Nuts & Seeds

- 1 TBSP oil
- 2 TBSP nuts, seeds or nut butters

Adopt New Habits: Eat Mindfully

Mindfulness is a mental state that's achieved when you focus your awareness on the present moment while noticing and accepting your feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations without judgment.

Eating mindfully helps you to make a connection with your food by breaking mindless eating routines, such as eating in front of the TV, or eating while multi-tasking, or when you are bored. When you are eating mindlessly, you are barely aware of what you are eating, and this can lead to overeating and having problems with portion control. In this state, you are moving on to the next bite before you have experienced the bite that you have in your mouth.

When you slow down enough to taste and enjoy food, you:

- begin to enjoy what you eat,
- eat less, and
- make better decisions about what to eat.

Action Steps for Mindful Eating:

- **Heighten your awareness of what you are eating**: This means slowing down when you eat, paying attention to what you are eating, and really tasting and enjoying your food.
- **Become aware of mindless eating**: Here are some common reasons that people engage in mindless eating. Be aware if any of these apply when you are eating food. Don't beat yourself up if you find yourself eating for reasons other than hunger for food; becoming aware is a first step towards changing habitual eating habits.
    - To relieve boredom or stress
    - To find comfort in tough situations
    - To quiet negative thoughts or to numb emotions
    - Out of habit (example: to use food as a reward or to eat while watching TV)
    - To navigate social situations (such as mindlessly eating at a party when you aren't really hungry)
- **Stop or limit multitasking when you eat**. Giving your food your complete attention enables you to connect with your body and supports eating out of hunger, not to feed your emotions.

Mindful Eating Exercise

In this exercise, you are going to explore slowing down to enjoy the actual experience of eating either a small piece of sugar-free dark chocolate, a ripe strawberry, a spoonful of nut butter, or another type of ripe fruit (or, if these are trigger foods for you, a piece of cooked vegetable of choice) (I don't recommend using a raw vegetable or anything crunchy for this exercise and it should be something that you like to eat).

FIRST, take a minute to understand how you typically consume food. What is your state of mind when eating? No matter where you are in the spectrum below, take a few minutes to really savor either a few squares of chocolate or another food of your choice.

- Most often I am mindlessly unaware, multi-tasking when eating, and unaware of portion sizes (for example eating directly out of a bag of or standing in front of the refrigerator eating).
- Most often I am eating rapidly, taking big bites, I tend to finish everything on my plate.
- Most often I am very inattentive to what I am eating, not really tasting the food.
- Sometimes I am aware of portion sizes. Occasionally I notice taste, texture and smell of my food.

- Sometimes, I am alert. 25% of my eating experience, I chew my food several times and my attention is directed to eating.
- I make a conscious effort to be mindfully aware when I eat. I chew at least 25 times when I eat or at the very least, I am aware of every bite and full chew it before swallowing. I pay attention to the sensations of the food I am eating. I enjoy every bite.

When you are ready, select the food for your Mindful Eating Exercise, place it on a small plate, and move through the steps below in a quiet space. Make sure to turn off your phone and remove yourself from any other distractions.

1

What does the food you chose look like? How food looks is one of the first things that either attracts or repels us away from a food, and makes us want to eat more or less of it. Imagine you are a Martian scientist. You just arrived on Earth and have never seen this food before. Look at it carefully. What does the essence of the food bring to mind? Do you have a pleasant or negative reaction to this food? Is your reaction because of what the food actually looks like or something else?

2

Experience the aroma: The aroma of food has a lot to do with our enjoyment of that food. Bring the food up to your nose. Experience smelling the food, and then describe what you smell. Is it a pleasant or negative experience? Notice what thoughts come into your mind as you do this. The smell of a certain food can bring up some powerful feelings and memories. Deeply Inhale. Do any critical thoughts come up like, "I shouldn't eat this?" If so, let the thoughts come and go as if you are letting go of a balloon.

3

How does the food feel in your mouth? Slowly take a small bite of the food (YES, do not put the whole piece of chocolate, or whatever food you chose in your mouth at one time…). Don't chew or swallow it yet, just let it sit on your tongue and for a moment become aware of the taste and sensations of the food on your tongue. How does it feel and taste as it releases its flavors to your taste buds?

4

Experience the flavor and texture before chewing: very slowly swirl the food around to savor it for a moment in your mouth. What is the flavor sensation? Sweet? Bitter? What about the texture? Smooth? Creamy? There are hundreds of words to describe the experience of tasting. Try to notice the moment where you feel like you want to swallow. Then, slowly chew and then swallow the chocolate (or other food chosen), focusing on the sensations as it disappears from your mouth and notice any lingering tastes or sensations.

5

Continue eating the food in very small bites until it is finished. What came to mind as you were eating it? Were you "bored," eager to finish, or was eating mindfully a new but interesting or good experience? Do you want more? If yes, is your appetite really hungry for more, sort of wanting it, or do you feel like you have had enough? Having a second piece or spoonful of the food you chose is fine. Repeat the exercise as you eat it. If you find that you still want more after your second helping---stop and take some deep breaths or just close your eyes and relax for a moment. Have a cup of water or hot tea and see how you feel after.

The next time you are eating a snack or meal, remember this exercise and consciously slow down to experience and enjoy your food.

Adopt New Habits: Be Aware of Your Eating Schedule and Avoid Nighttime Eating

Do You Experience Night-Time Eating?

Do you ever find yourself eating way past dinner, often with multiple snacks throughout the evening? For many this could just be a habit that can be broken with some basic behavioral changes.

But, based on new studies, repetitive nighttime eating can be an actual eating disorder called Night Eating Syndrome.

- People with NES feel very hungry after dinner and tend to graze on snacks repeatedly at night.
- They may wake up from sleep feeling a strong urge to eat. It may also feel like they can't go back to sleep without eating.
- NES is more common in people with diabetes or who are overweight, which may be related to disturbed sleep patterns and altered metabolism.
- NES is also often associated with insomnia because people with NES feel so hungry at night, they have trouble getting to sleep, wake up at night to eat, or can't go back to sleep without eating.
- A history of depression, anxiety, and substance abuse are also more common in people with NES.
- Sleep troubles that come with NES also may contribute to weight gain and/or difficulty losing weight. It might also make it more difficult to manage blood sugar levels.

Possible Causes of Night Eating Syndrome:

The exact cause of night eating syndrome and its link to addiction and depression is not clear. There may be a number of contributing factors leading to NES.

- One theory is that night eating syndrome involves a disruption in the hormones that regulate sleep, appetite, and mood--specifically, an alteration or disruption in the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis.
- It is possible that night eating syndrome may be a form of "self-medication," since a large proportion of snacking late at night generally involves carbohydrate-rich or "comfort" type foods.
- Those with night eating syndrome may also be high achievers who work through lunch, and may then make up the caloric debt by eating more at night.

- Night eating syndrome can also be viewed as a response to dieting. With restriction of calories during the day, persons typically overcompensate at night by eating greater amounts.
- Night eating may also be a response to stress bottled up during the day, with eating serving as a way to self-medicate, according to some persons with the syndrome.

Is Nighttime Eating an Occasional Habit or a More Serious Health Issue?

The first thing is to evaluate your situation to determine whether this is an ongoing issue that could negatively affect your overall health or just a an occasional "situational" occurrence of wanting a snack in the evening.

If the characteristics listed below resonate with you, it may be Night Eating Syndrome. (NOTE: most nighttime eating in this category occurs when you are awake---there is a related condition characterized by sleep eating which is different)

Below is a summary of the key characteristics of Night Time Eating Syndrome:

- At least 25% of your food intake is eaten at night i.e. dinner and beyond (It could also start with very late afternoon snacking very close to dinnertime).
- It may take the form of grazing in small amounts throughout the evening (it does not have to involve binging on large amounts of food eaten at one or more meals or snacks).
- You often skip breakfast and/or are not very hungry throughout the day preferring to eat late afternoon, dinner, and beyond.
- 2-3 nights a week you wake up from sleeping to eat and feel like you won't be able to sleep unless you eat something.
- You often eat to ease anxiety or to self soothe at night.
- Along with night eating you experience anxiety or depression throughout the day and/or night.
- You feel unable to stop and out of control when you eat at night.
- You have interrupted sleep or insomnia several nights per week.

If you have any of these symptoms, Night Eating Syndrome may be at play. The good news is that there are many ways to conquer this night time eating with the solutions differing depending on your particular underlying causes.

GAIN CLARITY AROUND YOUR NIGHTTIME EATING BY GOING THROUGH THE CHECKLIST AND QUESTIONS BELOW.

If you answer yes to a majority of the questions in BOLD ITALICS, this could be an indication of Night Eating Syndrome that you can explore further with your healthcare team.

The checklist is designed to help you gain more clarity and awareness around your nighttime eating and to give you the opportunity to take next steps. This is not a diagnosis or diagnostic test and does not replace medical care.

My strong suggestion is that you can use your new knowledge to start to address your night eating patterns and improve your habits that impact your night eating, and if you have concerns speak with your physician or other member of your healthcare team.

NES CHECKLIST AND QUESTIONS:

- ***Do you overeat in the evening, especially after dinner?***
- ***Is at least 25% of your food intake is eaten at night? (either dinner and beyond or late afternoon and beyond).***
- When does your nighttime eating start and end?
- ***Can your night eating be described as grazing and eating small amounts of different foods throughout the evening?***
- In the evening hours after dinner do you binge eat?
- ***Do you crave sweets and carbs in the evening?***
- What are the foods you typically eat at night?
- ***Do you eat to ease anxiety or self sooth?***
- ***Do you eat at night even though you're not hungry?***
- Do you eat at night out of boredom?
- What in particular triggers eating? (Watching TV, doing work for your job?)
- Do you eat carbs when you are tired or to stay awake?
- ***Do you wake up during the night and eat? Do you recall waking up and eating?***
- If you wake up to eat, approximately, how many times a week does this occur?
- ***Do you experience insomnia four or five nights a week?***
- ***Do you have a belief that eating is necessary to get to sleep or get back to sleep?***
- ***Do you have no appetite in the morning?***
- ***Do you often skip breakfast?***
- ***Are you not very hungry throughout the day preferring to eat late afternoon, dinner and beyond?***
- ***Do you often have feelings of sadness, stress, anxiety, or depression?***

- ***Do feelings of sadness, stress, or anxiety trigger your eating?***
- ***If you have depression, does your depressed mood that get worse during evening hours?***
- ***Do you eat to lighten your mood?***
- Are you experiencing weight gain?
- Are your blood sugar levels higher in the morning and does this differ after a period of night eating as opposed to no night eating?

If you answered yes to a majority of the questions in BOLD ITALICS, this could be an indication of Night Eating Syndrome that you can explore further with your healthcare team. As I noted in this section, many nighttime eating issues can be addressed by changes in behavior and habits that can be as straightforward as changing daytime eating patterns, making your snacks and meals more blood sugar friendly, and changing routines. If you have an eating disorder or your answers cause you to suspect you have issues of trauma or a disorder that requires care, speak to your physician who can refer you to the appropriate resources.

Adopt New Habits: Snack Smart

There are many different expert opinions about including snacks into your daily Food Plan. When I am practicing Intermittent Fasting, my routine is 2 meals plus a snack around 3pm. It all depends on your biochemistry, lifestyle, and how snacks affect your ability to stay on track with your food plan. Some guidelines for snacking, include:

- Snacks should be planned, and eaten on a plate. Do not eat snacks out of a box or bag, and always prepare a single serving of whatever you are including in your snack.
- Your snack should never include trigger foods. If you find yourself going back for more or have cravings after eating a snack, reevaluate your snack choice.
- Do not graze. Sit down and eat your snack mindfully, even if it is a small portion.
- If you are diabetic and trying a snack food for the first time, measure your blood sugar levels after consuming your snack. If it is too high one or two hours after consumption, eliminate the snack and choose something else.

Below are some snack ideas:

- Pumpkin Seed Mix (1/4 cup) (pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, chopped pecans or walnuts-optional mini sugar-free chocolate chips)
- ¼ cup nuts (almonds, walnuts, pecans) with a slice of low-fat cheese or raw veggies.

- 1 TBSP almond butter with a piece of non-grain-based bread or apple slices
- Edamame with flavored "salts," Gomashio, or Ponzu Sauce
- Turkey rollups with avocado
- Chopped salad with beans, diced tomatoes, red onions, avocado and dressing of choice
- Cherry tomatoes with tuna or chicken salad
- Deviled egg (if desired, with hummus substituted for mashed egg yolk)
- Hummus or Bean Dip with raw vegetables
- ¼ cup part-skim ricotta cheese (or Greek Yogurt) with unsweetened cocoa and a tablespoon of chocolate protein powder. (Add Stevia or Truvia to taste). To make it extra luxurious, swirl in some melted Sugar Free Dark Chocolate.
- Cucumber or zucchini rounds with hummus, smoked salmon/cream cheese, or tuna salad
- Air Fried Chicken Strips with "no-grain based flour coating"
- Spicy, Roasted Chickpeas
- Guacamole with Jicama sticks
- Cup of bone broth (some popular brands are Kettle & Fire, Brodo, Bare Bones, Kitchen Basics and Pacific Foods) or soup (vegetable, lentil, bean soups with combo of protein and vegetables)
- Sardine salad with cucumbers & vegetables
- Simple Cucumber Salad (optional add diced tomato and slices of onion)
- Homemade Low Carb Crackers or Triscuits with smoked salmon & cream cheese
- Baby spinach "rollups" with Laughing Cow Cheese and walnuts
- Avocado Slices with Lemon or Lime
- Silver Dollar "no grain-based flour" Pancakes
- Mini Chaffle Pizza (add some Pepperoni or vegetables on top)
- Antipasto platter (olives, roasted peppers, hummus, pickled vegetables, cheese)
- Protein Smoothie (Low glycemic fruit only)
- Small Mezze plate with a combo of protein, cheese, and vegetables
- Small serving of marinated olives with hummus
- Cooked shrimp with cocktail sauce
- Marinated vegetables
- Air fried Zucchini Rounds
- Artichoke Hearts

Adopt New Habits: Build a Better Breakfast

Everyone's biochemistry is different, and there is no definitive answer to the question, what should I eat for breakfast? Having said that, the best breakfast foods are those that do not cause huge

blood sugar spikes, set the stage for balanced blood sugars the rest of the day, and leave you feeling satisfied. As a rule of thumb, the more nutritionally dense the foods are the better you will feel. If you are doing "intermittent fasting" you can break your fast at the appropriate time with any of the breakfast foods below.

Below are some ideas for "breaking your fast."

- Eggs or tofu scrambled with vegetables of choice. (TIP: keep some sautéed onions in the fridge. In the morning toss them into scrambled eggs or tofu. For added flavor add chopped peppers, broccoli, or sun-dried tomatoes)
- Choco-Greens Powder Smoothie or Very Berry Smoothie
- Hard boiled or deviled eggs (if desired, substitute hummus for mashed egg yolk)
- Crust free mini quiche (with vegetables and cheese of choice)
- Yogurt with protein powder, berries and chopped nuts
- Almond butter/ricotta spread ½ sprouted whole grain English Muffin, Minute Keto English Muffin or piece of Keto/low carb bread. To make the spread, combine 1 TBSP Almond Butter with ¼ cup part skim ricotta cheese and sweeten with sugar alternative of your choice (Add some protein powder or ground flax seed for extra nutrients).
- Turkey breast rollup with low fat cheese, avocado and sprouts
- Non-Grain-Based French Toast or pancakes with blueberries, or Easy Blueberry Syrup
- Breakfast Chaffles
- Almond flour or (other grain-based flour) protein pancakes (make your own pancakes or start with a mix). For extra protein, mix in some ricotta cheese.
- Smoked salmon, low fat veggie cream cheese, onion, and tomato on non-grain-based bread or sprouted whole grain bread
- Poached salmon with cucumber salad
- Avocado Toast on Keto/low carb Toast or Hummus, avocado, red onion, and tomato on non-grain-based bread or sprouted whole grain English Muffin
- Egg in the Hole made with Keto/low carb bread
- Regular Size or Mini Egg Muffins (combo of eggs, cheese, veggies and/or breakfast meat of choice baked in muffin tin)
- Tempeh or Turkey Bacon with eggs of choice and side salad

- Bone Broth, Miso Soup or other broth (with some vegetables and/or some protein like tofu or shredded chicken added in) Some popular brands are Kettle & Fire, Brodo, Bare Bones, Kitchen Basics and Pacific Foods.
- Swedish Breakfast Plate

Adopt New Habits to Make Food Prep Easier

One of the things I hear from members and my clients is, "I know what I need to do; I just don't have the time." Can anyone relate? If you are trying to eat better and feeling stressed, sometimes cooking is one of the first things people let go of. Unfortunately, self-care does take some time. There is no way around it, but here are some tips to make it easier.

- **Use the "almost from scratch method" to prepare meals and snacks and keep a well-stocked pantry**: This is my go-to way to stay sane. Things I always keep on hand to make quick meals and snacks include rotisserie chicken, sugar-free sauces & marinades, low carb wraps, canned artichoke hearts, canned beans, frozen veggies, good quality cheese, cooked quinoa in pouches, baked tofu, chicken and vegetable broth, olives, hummus & other healthy dips, pre-cut veggies etc. Having a well-stocked pantry of items that don't have to be cooked from scratch makes it easy to shave time off of preparing meals and snacks.
- **Make mini cheese/charcuterie/mezze plates**: There are so many nights I just don't feel like cooking. Putting together a beautiful plate that is a combo of things I have on hand solves the problem and provides a visually appealing and satisfying meal. I often do themes such as 1) Italian with a plate of meats, cheeses, olives, peppers, and dips 2) Greek with hummus, tabbouleh, olives, feta cheese, and salad 3) Japanese with deconstructed sushi and cauliflower rice or 4) Mexican with beans, guacamole, lettuce, and tomatoes. You get the idea.
- **Prep ahead**: Doing some prep one day a week makes it even easier to do tips 1 & 2 above. I usually take 1 or 2 hours on a Saturday to do things like prepare pickled onions for salads, caramelize onions for stir fries/omelets or quinoa dishes, cook a pot of quinoa, cut up veggies, and make a pot of soup, stew or meatballs that can be used throughout the week. Nothing feels better than having some pre-cooked food when you are in a hurry and really hungry.
- **Have the ingredients for one or two "GO TO" options that you can eat when all else fails**. I always have the makings for a filling protein-based smoothie. There has been many a night when I cannot figure out what I want to eat and I prepare a filling smoothie and a half of a low carb wrap of some sort.

- **Finally, KEEP IT SIMPLE**. A beautifully put together plate of simple foods is extremely satisfying when eaten slowly and mindfully.

Takeaways & Highlights

Putting Your Food Plan into Action

- **Get support.** You have many options, including working with a health counselor, health coach, dietician, trainer, joining a support group or just teaming up with a friend. (A word of caution: be wary of fad diets or programs that are hard to follow and don't meet your long-term objectives).

- **Take the Veggie Challenge.** Do you know how many servings of vegetables you eat in a day? A week? Use a daily journal and note how many vegetables you consume in a day or seven-day time period. The results might surprise you.

- **Start keeping a daily food journal.** Keeping a food journal will help you to get a handle on what you are "really" eating throughout the day and allow you to observe both your food choices and patterns of eating that affect your blood sugars.

- **Each week, select a vegetable that you don't eat regularly and add it to one of your meals.** Good choices include: asparagus, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, collard greens, cucumber, kale, onions, green and red peppers, tomatoes, zucchini, and carrots (note: although carrots are higher on the glycemic index, they are a good source of nutrients and OK in moderation).

- **Limit your intake of "starchy" vegetables, particularly white potatoes.** Sweet potatoes, yams, peas, turnips, and corn are good sources of nutrients when eaten on occasion and in small portions.

- **Stay hydrated, stop adding sugar to beverages, and eliminate soda: Water is the best beverage for staying hydrated.** It can be "jazzed up" with infusions of fruit or vegetables such as cucumber. Tea is also a good choice and if you are concerned about caffeine, many companies offer decaffeinated brands.

- **Avoid Diet Soda.** Many studies show that consuming diet soda can set off cravings for sweets and that drinking diet soda makes it harder to keep blood sugar levels under control.

- **Become familiar with the different types of sweeteners.** Experiment with alternative sweeteners to determine whether they are an option or whether you need to avoid them totally. If they are not a trigger food for you, there are a variety of monk fruit and Stevia liquid-flavored drops that work well in beverages.
- **Take an action step each day to avoid added sugar.** Do this regularly until you are comfortable with your sugar-free lifestyle.
- **Eliminate Grain-based flour products.** The next time you want to have a sandwich, try Sprouted Grain or a non-grain-based bread made with nut, bean, golden flaxseed, or coconut flour (or a combination of any of these flours). Skip the bread and try using a lettuce wrap, or instead create a salad with your sandwich ingredients.
- **Try substitutions for rice.** The next time you plan to eat rice, try quinoa or "cauliflower rice."
- **Try something different for breakfast.** There are no set rules for what to eat for breakfast. The key is to start the day with a satisfying breakfast that does not cause a sharp rise in blood sugars, setting the stage for healthy eating throughout the rest of the day.
- **Experiment with different protein and healthy fat options.** Both protein and healthy fats promote satiety and help to control blood sugar levels. Try different protein options and cooking methods based on your eating style (carnivorous, pescatarian, vegetarian, vegan). You can include healthy fats in various ways, including in salad dressings, marinades, or as additions to salads and recipes.
- **Bring healthy snacks to work.** The work environment is stressful, and that 3 p.m. "gotta have a snack" craving will get you every time if you are not prepared. Nut and seed mixes, low-fat cheese, almond butter with a slice of non-grain-based bread, a cup of bone broth, or vegetables with dip are all good alternatives to the vending machine.
- **Keep a well-stocked pantry**. Being prepared is the best way to avoid turning to trigger foods when you are hungry or preparing a meal. People always ask me what I keep in my refrigerator, freezer, and pantry. Use the lists provided in this chapter as a starting point to fill your refrigerator, freezer and pantry with foods that support your sugar-free lifestyle. In Chapter 17 (Eliminate Clutter in Your Space to Create and Environment that Supports Lasting Change) I will lead you through your own Kitchen & Pantry Makeover and share a list of recommendations and items that I keep on hand for fast and easy food preparation.