

Optimal Diet

This handout outlines the basics of healthy eating. The recommended diet in this handout is meant to **unburden** your body from toxic and unhealthy foods so that your body can do the job it is innately designed to do - Healing. **The main ideas in healthy eating are: Drink plenty of filtered water, eat cooked as well as raw vegetables with lunch AND dinner, and avoid eating "junk food" (including sweets, fast foods, etc.)**

With this diet you should *not* be hungry until its time for the next meal. If this is happening, try increasing the non-starchy vegetables, nuts, fats and/or protein intake in your meals. Do **not** avoid naturally fatty foods, but limit saturated fats. Avoid hydrogenated oils and fried foods. Try to eat for hunger and not emotional reasons. If you must eat for emotional reasons, eat non-starchy vegetables or lean protein. Snacks should be non-starchy vegetables, nuts or protein foods. (Note: In some cases, I may specifically ask the individual to not eat nuts for various reasons.)

Taking cooking classes or at least getting recipes from cookbooks on whole food eating might be of great value to you- My recommendation is Cynthia's Lair's cook book, "Feeding the Whole Family" which we have for sale at our clinic.

It will also be essential to practice effective stress management techniques to ensure the success of the program.

PROBLEM CARBOHYDRATES (refined and starchy) – The cause of the problem!

- No simple sugars or simple carbohydrates (common table sugar, fructose, sweets, cookies, candy, ice cream, pastries, honey, fruit juice, soda pop, alcoholic beverages, etc.). Anything that tastes sweet (including artificial sweeteners) may raise insulin levels, thus aggravating insulin resistance and increasing your chances of developing diabetes in the future or worsening your diabetes if you already have it. Sweets also perpetuate the cravings for sweets. Note that the herb Stevia (which comes in liquid or powder form) is a good alternative as a sweetener. Avoiding sweets might be difficult at first, but as you move up the ladder of health, your taste buds and the rest of your body will slowly evolve to a point where you won't crave sweets- it's simply a matter of time. So, please do your best and be hopeful in this regard. You can ask me to do acupressure (EFT) on you to help with sweet cravings. **Based on my personal experience with numerous patients, EFT is almost 100% SUCCESSFUL in the treatment of cravings (or addiction) for sweets of all types.**

- Avoid eating dried fruits as they have too much natural sugar.
- Avoid eating almost all of the following processed grain products: Pasta, cornbread, crackers, popcorn, and other refined carbohydrates. The use of whole grain pasta once in a while might be OK. Corn tortillas are OK once in a while.
- Potatoes are OK in very small amounts unless you are diabetic. If you are diabetic, then eating potatoes is NOT recommended at all. (Note: If you have arthritis of any type, avoiding the nightshade family of vegetables- potatoes, tomatoes, egg plant, bell peppers, red pepper- might help alleviate much of your joint pain. You might need to avoid these vegetables for at least a few days up to a few weeks prior to noticing any improvement.)
- Avoid eating **wheat** if at all possible since the gluten (which is found in many grains, including wheat, oats, rye, barley, and spelt) appears to be the most problematic protein for the body to handle. Wheat is probably the most problematic gluten-containing grain, so that is why I recommend that you avoid wheat over the other ones. **Most people feel better (on many levels, physically and/or emotionally) if they avoid gluten.** In some cases, I specifically ask the patient to absolutely avoid all gluten-containing grains. However, in most cases, I simply recommend significant reduction of gluten. If you can (at least at home), try to replace all your gluten-containing foods (or at least wheat) with the gluten-free equivalents as quickly as possible. (More on this subject throughout this handout.)

GOOD CARBOHYDRATES (whole gluten-free grains and legumes)

- Whole grains (whole brown rice, millet, quinoa, amaranth, buckwheat, rye, barley, and spelt) are healthy, but ideally, all grain consumption should be in moderation (even if it is gluten-free). Gluten-containing grains such as wheat, oats, rye, barley, and spelt are NOT as healthy as the non-gluten containing (or gluten-free) grains such as rice (white or brown), millet, teff, quinoa, and amaranth. So, try to eat more non-gluten containing grains in your diet. Note that quinoa is needs to be washed with warm water before you actually cook it. Teff/millet bread is great for making burritos.

You can shop for gluten-free products (breads, cold or hot cereals, waffles, pancake mix, crackers, cookies, noodles, macaroni, etc.) at Whole Foods, PCC, Fred Meyer, and some other local health food stores. Of course, you should avoid cookies and other non-healthy foods even if they are gluten-free! Pancakes and a number of crackers (even the gluten-free type) are processed foods (as opposed to whole foods which are better for you). Eating gluten-free pancakes or crackers once in a while (1-2 times a month) is OK unless you have a significant blood sugar imbalance as diabetics do.

Generally speaking, gluten-free breads from a gluten-free bakery are more delicious than the ones you can obtain from a health food store.

- Legumes are good sources of carbohydrates. Examples of legumes are: Beans, lentils, peas, peanuts, soybeans, etc. Some legumes are healthier or easier to digest than others. For example, lentils are legumes just like beans, but are much easier to digest. I recommend a small cup of lentil soup a few times a week to nourish your body with a good source of carbohydrates and vegetarian protein. Peas are also good. Peanuts (raw or in the form of peanut butter) are a type of legumes, and should be consumed only on rare occasions. Note that other nut butters such as almond, cashew, sesame, and sun flower butter are healthier than peanut butter. Keep all nut butters in the refrigerator so the oil does not become rancid. Soybeans and soy products (including tofu and soy milk) should be consumed no more than 1-2 times a week. I do not recommend soy protein powder or even soy milk at all since many people's digestive tract do better without these foods. On the other hand, tofu is fine, especially if eaten in moderation (a few times a week).

- Small amounts of fruit are OK. Keep the consumption of extremely sweet fruit such as bananas and oranges to a minimum (no more than twice a week). No dried fruit. Berries are best.

EXCELLENT CARBOHYDRATES (non-refined and non-starchy)

- Eat lots and lots (at least two cups with lunch and two cups with dinner) of non-starchy vegetables (refer to the table on the last page.) Raw or lightly cooked vegetables are best. These should be the main source of carbohydrates in the diet. Fresh vegetables are best and frozen are OK (Frozen veggies are very easy to cook since they are already cut up.) Canned vegetables are to be avoided except for canned tomatoes and tomato sauce. **Pre-washed, ready to eat, fresh, organic salad greens are a great way to get your vegetables.**

- Drink fresh vegetable juices as often as you can. Fresh vegetables or vegetable juices contain the necessary enzymes our bodies need to function.

PROTEINS

- Moderate amounts of lean meats, seafood and fish. Good examples are wild fish, wild game animals, free-range chicken, turkey, range-fed beef and naturally grown lamb. Avoid grain-fed animals as it means more saturated fats and omega-6 oils. Wild and range-fed animals will have less of these and more omega-3s. The more omega-3s, the better. Avoid eating farm-raised fish at all costs.

- If you do not have a dairy allergy, some dairy is OK. The best dairy products are lower fat dairy products such as low or no-fat cottage cheese, unsweetened yogurt and kefir. Use "better butter" (butter + olive oil) and no margarine.

- Eggs from free-range chickens are fine unless you have allergies to them. They are high in omega-3 oils. Best is no more than 7 per week
- For most people, moderate amounts of nuts (walnuts, macadamia nuts, almonds, cashews, pecans, etc.) and seeds (flax, sesame, sunflower, pumpkin, etc.) are fine. Raw is best. Walnuts are high in omega-3s. Nut and seed butters are fine in moderation. These include the following nut butters: Almond, cashew, sesame (tahini), and sunflower butter.
- Legumes: Soybeans (and soy products, with the exception of tofu), and peanuts are not recommended. Beans are fine, but keep the portions limited. Lentils are great, and a small cup of lentil soup a few times a week would be great. Peas in moderate amounts would also be fine.

FATS

- Reduce saturated fats such as those found in dairy products (cheese, butter, etc.) and most commercial red meats.
- Moderate amounts of healthy oils. Monounsaturated oils (found in olive oil, nuts, and avocados) are best. Olive oil is best for cooking. Polyunsaturated oils high in omega-3 oils (found in flax oil, fish oil, and walnuts). Feel free to add liberally to salads, sauces for vegetables and when cooking lean meats. Flax oil is high in omega-3 oils but goes rancid very easily. Keep flax oil refrigerated and do not heat and add only after cooking.
- Avoid hydrogenated oils and fried foods. Some ***low heat*** stove top frying with olive or coconut oil is OK. Don't fry the food for too long (especially if you use olive oil which is not extremely heat resistant).

MISCELLANEOUS

- *Drink lots of pure water.* Drink half of your body's weight in ounces of water. For example, if you weigh 200 pounds, you need to drink 100 ounces of water daily. Water is by far the best detoxification medicine on earth, so please don't just rely on natural supplements to cleanse your body. Drink most of your water away from meals, not with meals as it will dilute the digestive "juices". Wait for at least 45 minutes after you eat a meal to start drinking water. Avoid drinking a lot of water in the evening as it will probably cause frequent urination at night which will disturb your sleep.
- Organic is always best when available.
- ***Avoid microwaving*** your food/drinks as it chemically changes the nature of your food/drinks, and thus will damage the nutrients inside the very food that is supposed to heal and nourish your body.
- In general, ***ALTERNATE YOUR FOODS***. For example, if you like to eat oatmeal for breakfast, don't eat it every single day of the week. Alternate it with some other grains. The reason for this is that you tend to develop allergies to foods that you eat often. That is why most people are allergic to dairy and wheat—the two foods that most people grow up with, and typically love the most!
- If you crave sweets, try adding Stevia (a natural sweetener) to your herbal teas and/or other beverages. Try not to abuse Stevia use either. It's OK to add a few drops of liquid Stevia to a cup of your favorite beverage. Avoid using other sweeteners such Splenda, NutraSweet, and Sweet and Low. If you crave sweets, here are some other suggestions for you: Drink sweet tasting teas, such as Egyptian Licorice Mint which comes in bags (made by Yogi Tea). Ask us for a free sample of Isagenix "Snacks" so that you can decide whether you need/want an entire bottle. Also, you can talk to us about the possibility of ordering Isagenix Shake (chocolate as well as Vanilla flavored) to help with those moments when you just want something like ice cream or some other sweet desert. This might be very helpful and it is actually rather healthy. Patients (who are undergoing dysbiosis therapy) should avoid the Isagenix Shake unless otherwise approved by Dr. Sharif. Another sweet dessert idea: Once in a while, you can have a small amount of baked sweet potatoes or yams (by themselves or in some other creative & healthy recipe).
- Cut down on salt, but feel free to use other spices liberally.
- For ice cream lovers, eating frozen, organic berries (mix or individually) is a wonderful alternative.
- It is usually safe to assume that most processed foods will interfere with this diet, even if low carb.
- Avoid bottled or canned beverages (even vegetable juices) ***unless*** the ingredients are simply pure food with no additional additives (including Vitamin C). For example, benzene (a cancer causing agent) can form in beverages that contain (added) Vit C or the preservative benzoate salt.
- Drink "detox" teas such as Traditional Medicinals "Everyday Detox" tea. You can also drink dandelion root tea. Can obtain this herb from herb shops. Two cups a day of each of these teas on alternating days (or one cup of each per day) would be wonderful help for your liver which is the most important organ in the body, biochemically speaking.

- Add ½ tsp of lemon juice to a small amount of water, and drink before meals. Do this as often as you can remember. This will not only stimulate your stomach to function better, but also help your liver with its critical job of detoxifying your body from its day-to-day toxic load.
- Add garlic/ginger paste (which comes in a bottle, prepared) to every meal.
- When you cook for children, chop up vegetables very, very small so that they can't detect them in food. This is a smart way of getting children eat vegetables.
- Sea salt is a lot healthier for you than regular table salt.
- Finally, it must be emphasized that **exercise (movement)** and **stress management** are essential components for success. (Consult your physician on type and amount of exercise as the recommendations for exercise varies from one condition to the next.)

Some sample GLUTEN-FREE breakfast ideas:

- 1) Gluten-free grain products (gluten-free cold and hot cereals such as cream of rice and Quinoa Flakes hot cereal). You can add hemp milk, cow's milk (assuming you're not allergic to dairy) or rice milk to your cold cereal.
- 2) Gluten-free toast (such as millet bread, etc.) plus eggs
- 3) Gluten-free waffles with a small amount of butter or nut butter on top, plus eggs with a glass of milk. Nut butters include cashew, almond, sun flower seed, and peanut butter.
- 4) Protein shake (1 scoop of non-soy "vegetable" protein powder or even rice protein powder, plus ¼ cup of frozen mixed berries, one Tbsp of flax oil or flax seed powder, half a banana, some rice or cow's milk, a few nuts). Blend this up and drink.
- 5) Steamed vegetables can make a good breakfast. Use a combination of veggies. If you like yams, and if you don't have diabetes, you can enjoy steamed yams for breakfast. I cook yams in a pressure cooker in a matter of minutes. Simply chop up the yams, add a small amount of water to the pressure cooker, and cook for 20 minutes or so. Since yams are very starchy, I'd recommend eating them only once in a while.

VEGETABLES:

Highly recommended vegetables. Eat as many of these as possible for the best health. Low or non-starchy vegetables			Vegetables to use in moderation.	Vegetables to avoid or to use minimally
Artichoke	Collard greens	Parsley	Beets	Potatoes
Asparagus	Cucumber	Peppers (all kinds)	Carrots	Parsnip
Avocado	Dandelion greens	Purslane	Green beans	Pumpkin
Beet greens	Endive	Plantain	Eggplant	Rutabaga
Bok Choy	Escarole	Radish	Jicama	Sweet potatoes
Broccoli	Fennel	Seaweed	Peas (actually a legume)	Corn (actually a grain)
Brussel sprouts	Garlic	Spinach	Squashes	
Cabbage (green and red)	Kale	Swiss chard	New potatoes	
Cauliflower	Kohlrabi	Tomatillos	Taro	
Celery	Lettuce (avoid iceberg)	Tomatoes	Yams	
Chicory	Mushrooms	Turnips greens		
Chinese cabbage	Mustard greens	Turnips		
Chives	Onions	Watercress		
		Zucchini		

SAMPLE HOME COOKED MEALS FOR ONE DAY FOR ONE PERSON

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A one or two free-range egg omelet with a tablespoon of cottage cheese, chopped scallions or other vegetables, spices, pepper and a dash of sea salt. [Takes 10-12 minutes to make but while cooking go to making lunch.] • A cut up apple with cashew butter. [1 minute.] • Water and tea. <p>[Clean up takes 5 minutes.]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large salad with red leaf lettuce, red cabbage, scallions, other vegetables and walnuts or other nuts or seeds (made fresh that morning). With a natural low sugar/carb commercial dressing (Olive oil, vinegar, spices, sun-dried tomatoes, etc.). [Takes 10-12 minutes to make.] • 4-5 ounces of baked wild salmon with garlic, spices (a piece of a salmon baked earlier in the week). • A fresh fruit. • Water and tea. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6-ounce lean range-fed sirloin steak with some garlic and olive oil added while cooking. • 2-3 cups of steamed broccoli, carrots, onions and/or other vegetables with a sauce. • The sauce is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - one quarter cup of tahini (sesame seed butter), - lemon or lime juice to taste, - tsp of tamari or soy sauce, - tbs of flax oil, and - spices to taste. • Water and tea. • A piece of fruit as dessert.

