



# BLOOD PRESSURE FIX

THE 10-STEP SYSTEM TO LOWER BLOOD  
PRESSURE IN 8 WEEKS



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# WELCOME TO THE BLOOD PRESSURE FIX!

Throughout The Blood Pressure Fix, I hope to encourage you & teach you how to find a real food lifestyle that you not only enjoy, but can maintain long-term.

By following this plan you will make small changes in your life and your families lives that add up to HUGE change like lower blood pressure and less medications, but really, more time with your family and breaking free from blood pressure.  
#bloodpressureFREE

Here's what you get with The Blood Pressure Fix:

- Mindset Shifts For Success pg. 5
- 10-Step Blood Pressure Nutrition Protocol pg. 14
- 8 Weeks To Implement- 14 Modules pg. 29
- [Blood Pressure Lowering Recipe Bank](#) on Meal Garden
- [Food Swap & Portion Guide](#)

The recipes are located inside Meal Garden- an online platform to access the blood pressure specific recipes so you can save or print from any device.

The modules are 14 trainings on how to actually start incorporating more real food and foods that specifically lower blood pressure into your life. You can read them in this program or if you like to learn by listening you can click on the individual module link that will take you to an online version where you can listen to the corresponding audio.

To help you get the most from this program, I'll be sending you weekly emails that break the program down into easy to digest and implement segments over

the next 8 weeks. The emails will take you to the online version of the modules with the matching audio portion.

Of course, you can read through the 100 + program now but I highly encourage you to TAKE IT SLOW.

Here's an example of how to go through the material, the weekly emails will follow this plan:

WEEK 1	MODULE 1:	WHY DIETS DON'T WORK
	MODULE 2:	WHAT WE EAT MATTERS
WEEK 2	MODULE 3:	MACRONUTRIENTS: PROTEIN
	MODULE 4:	MACRONUTRIENTS: CARBOHYDRATES
	MODULE 5:	MACRONUTRIENTS: FAT
WEEK 3	MODULE 6:	BALANCING BLOOD SUGAR
	MODULE 7:	ADDING IN: VEGGIES
WEEK 4	MODULE 8:	ADDING IN: PROTEIN & FAT
WEEK 5	MODULE 9:	HOW TO DETERMINE PROPER PORTIONS
WEEK 6	MODULE 10:	HOW TO READ NUTRITION LABELS
	MODULE 11:	PROCESSED FOODS
WEEK 7	MODULE 12:	10 TIPS FOR EATING ON THE GO
	MODULE 13:	HOW TO CURB CRAVINGS
WEEK 8	MODULE 14:	MENU PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

## Legal Disclaimer

The information presented in this plan is not intended as medical advice or as a substitute for medical counselling. The information should be used in conjunction with the guidance and care of your physician. Consult your physician before implementing any nutrition program or dietary changes you feel could be harmful to your health.

If you choose not to obtain the consent of your physician and/or work with your physician throughout the duration of your time using the recommendations in this plan, you are agreeing to accept full responsibility for your actions.

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# MINDSET SHIFTS FOR SUCCESS

I want to be straight with you here and get to the point.

Quick fixes aren't going to work.

You didn't end up with high blood pressure overnight and you won't get it under control overnight.

Did you know that what you eat plays a huge role in how your body balances your blood pressure?

Your health is complex and along with your genetics and your medications, your diet is just as important.

You can change what you eat on a daily basis, which will help you get your numbers under control and help your medications to do their job.

Some clients do so well at this that they get to experience the joy of what it means to have their doctor telling them they don't need their medications anymore. (This doesn't happen for everyone, but it's wonderful to know that it is possible.)

Weight loss is a great goal but if you have high blood pressure, what you eat, not how much you eat should be your number one priority. My philosophy is all about what can we ADD into your diet so that you can stay full, have energy, and get your health under control.

Just because your doctor has never mentioned that your diseases, health symptoms and inability to lose weight could all be related to your food doesn't make it not true.

Changing what and how you eat can have a huge impact on your health.

For example, I had a client who was just diagnosed with high blood pressure.

Her doctor wanted to start her on medications, but she wanted to try to get her blood pressure controlled on her own so she came to me.

I worked with her by making small changes to her diet.

She called and said ‘I didn’t believe you when you told me I could do this, but I did it anyway’ and she went on to tell me how her blood pressure numbers are in the normal range <120/80!!

Her blood pressure is now controlled with just diet and exercise... NO medications!

All without starving, cutting out all of the carbs, or going without the things she loves.

Are you wondering, where to start with your diet so that you can get your blood pressure under control?

Maybe you don’t know what to eat or maybe you don’t know how to start this new healthy eating lifestyle.

Well, I have done the work for you so that you can worry about all the other stress that comes with life but you won’t have to worry about what to eat, how much, or what to buy at the grocery store.

Throughout The Blood Pressure Fix, I hope to encourage you to find a real food lifestyle that you not only enjoy, but can maintain long-term.

By following this plan for just 8 weeks you will make small changes in your life and your families lives that add up to HUGE change and, of course, LOWER BLOOD PRESSURE.

Let's get started.

## **Make A Commitment**

Making a commitment to make small, realistic changes does not have to be an all or nothing thing. In fact this is the opposite of what I would like you to do.

Making a commitment to eat real food is about changing your relationship with food.

Use the Pledge printout to make your commitment.

This means that you are someone who chooses health, vibrancy and nourishment.

A pleasant side effect of this commitment is lower blood pressure, long lasting weight maintenance, lower blood sugar, less mood swings, and less stress and anxiety.

Food is nourishment for your body.

Food should contribute to health – not detract from it.

## **The Blood Pressure Fix Goals:**

Always make the best possible choices given your circumstances. This means letting go of any and all excuses that arise either out of lack of planning or social situations.

Just make the best possible choice based on your circumstances and you will be sticking with your commitment of eating real nourishing foods.

Since eating real food is not a diet there are no screw-ups, cheat days or reasons for excuses. Sometimes you will feel inclined to veer from your commitment. And that's okay.

Just continue eating real food at your next meal or snack because that's what people who make a commitment to change do.

Imagine living a life where you can feel relaxed and at ease in any eating scenario.

What would that feel like for you ...

Here's an example,

Imagine that you're out with friends and family and it's a potluck dinner at Grandma's house.

Not too long ago this day would have made you anxious. Having to be surrounded by foods that were off limits, watching everyone wolf down cookies and brownies, and you picking halfheartedly at the celery stick from the dreaded veggie platter Aunt Sally always brings.

You would have been resentful, surly, and more than a little jealous. But not now. Not today.

Now, you know what works and what doesn't work. You're not stuck eating celery unless you want to because you know how to use food in a way that makes you feel amazing and keeps you off more medications. (And celery is excellent at lower blood pressure!)

## **Big Reason WHY?**

It's helpful for you to become clear on your big reason why... Why do you want to make these changes in your life?

Why today?

Sticking to your commitment of eating real food and making the best possible choice given the circumstances becomes a no brainer when you are clear on your WHY.

High blood pressure is a very strong motivator, no doubt about it. But what happens when you achieve your goal? Then what?

Think beyond the numbers. What's your real motivator?

- I am so tired. I want to have the energy to be present with my spouse and play with my kids after work.
- My father died in his 60s from a heart attack and I want to be there when my kids graduate.
- I'm embarrassed that I have to inject myself with medications and I don't want to rely on medications or hide anymore.
- I feel like food is controlling me and I want to break free and take back control

Whatever your big reason WHY is I suggest you write it out and review it every day, use the 'The Blood Pressure Fix Pledge' to do this.

Share your big reason WHY with family and friends. Let your big reason why be a constant source of motivation for you. Email me your big reason why to me right now, I really want to know. [Jordann@healthfulprescriptions.com](mailto:Jordann@healthfulprescriptions.com)

### **Think To The Future**

Think about your future and what you want your new eat real food lifestyle to look like. What type of habits do you want to have? What type of foods do you enjoy? How do you feel about yourself?

Write all of these things down. It might feel uncomfortable or unattainable. That's okay. Write whatever comes to you.

We all have a vision for ourselves of the kind of life we want, the kind of people we want to be. The family who goes for a nightly bike ride instead of watching TV or the mom who gets up at 5 am to go for a walk before the rest of her family is awake.

Write a vision for yourself to achieve over the next 8 weeks. Write it out as if you've already achieved it. It's helpful if you start your goal with the future date and I am feeling...

For example - It's (insert date- 8 weeks from today) and I am feeling happy. I put on my jeans today with ease and felt confident in my body. I am proud of myself that I committed to following The Blood Pressure Fix and now my blood pressure is within a healthy range.

Setting your standards so high by creating an unachievable goal is a waste of time and sets yourself up to fail. Make your goal realistic for you.

Print out the next page with your goals and your why so that you can review it daily.

Place in on your bedroom mirror, the fridge, or keep it in your makeup bag (this is what I do because I know I will look it at it everyday!).

This will be a reminder of your purpose and value for what you are doing, and it will give you the inner strength and mindset that will guide you on your journey.

**The Blood Pressure Fix Pledge:**

My goal for the next 8 weeks:

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My big reason why:

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Over the next 8 weeks I am committing to using food as nourishment. There is no messing up, as long as I am adding in healthy whole food to my everyday life it is adding to my health.

**Food is nourishment.**

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Signature

Date

## **Follow Through**

We are all very good at starting things but sometimes lack follow through. I recognize that making changes is hard. When you start to feel like you want to give up remember your big reason WHY and your goal.

Keep these thoughts at the top of your mind. Take out your pledge and look at it. Allow yourself the freedom to feel whatever feelings you have. Even if those feelings are uncomfortable.

Pick something on your pledge or a smaller goal you would love to do right now and just do it. And then celebrate it!

I like to turn the music up and have a dance party to recognize how far I have come. Dance parties boost confidence and give you motivation- it's science. =)

A win's a win, no matter how big or small. You got this, one step at a time. Now, take a deep breath and follow through with your goals.

I can't wait to hear about your success! Seriously, I would love for you to tell me all about it by emailing me [jordann@healthfulprescriptions.com](mailto:jordann@healthfulprescriptions.com) so that I can have a virtual dance party with you!

Jordann

# THE 10- STEP BLOOD PRESSURE NUTRITION PROTOCOL

Along with eating real food, you can adjust the specific macro and micro nutrients of your daily intake so that you can maximize your health and help your body lower your blood pressure naturally.

We'll be going over how to implement this protocol slowly into your life & tips and strategies to be successful throughout the 14 modules. Or you can start with 1 step and master it, then move to the next step. It's ok if things are out of order. In fact, you might notice that hitting step 2 will actually help you reach steps 3 & 4!

Daily 10- step nutrition protocol:

1. Drink half your bodyweight in ounces
2. Fiber 30 - 40 grams
3. Potassium 4700 mg
4. Magnesium 500 mg
5. Calcium 1250 mg
6. Sodium less than 2300 mg
7. Protein 20% of total daily calories
8. Carbs 55% of total daily calories
9. Fat 25% of total daily calories
10. Less than 25 grams of added sugars

Get even faster results when you add in these lifestyle changes:

- Get at least 7- 8 hours of sleep
- Increase your steps & daily activity

## **Step 1: Drink Water**

Many people are in a low level state of chronic dehydration due to a poor diet and low daily water consumption.

High blood sugar levels can contribute to dehydration (even when you have high blood pressure). When blood sugar levels are high, the body increases urine production to help eliminate sugar from the body. If this is not matched with an increase in fluid intake, dehydration can occur.

Foods high in refined carbohydrates lead to increases in blood sugar and insulin levels. Increased concentration of sugar in the blood will require water from other tissues to be utilized to dilute this concentration.

Stealing this water away from other tissues causes dehydration in other cells of the body.

High insulin levels (from foods like refined carbohydrates & added sugars) can also cause the body to retain more sodium by increasing the reabsorption of sodium in the kidneys.

When the body is in a state of dehydration, even if it is mild, capillaries of the cardiovascular system begin to shut down to keep water in the crucial parts of the body.

The shutting down of capillaries puts extra strain on other blood vessels, increasing overall blood pressure. Also, when sodium concentrations are high,

your body will require water from other tissues to dilute the concentration of sodium thus further dehydrating the other cells of the body.

Staying properly hydrated is an easy way to help lower blood pressure naturally.

### How Much Water to Drink

How much water should you drink in a day?

An easy way to calculate an average daily required water intake is to take half your weight in pounds and consume that amount in ounces of water daily. This is just a general guideline to get you started drinking more water, you may need more or less depending on your body and the activities that you do.

Since everyone's water needs are different, make sure to take a look at your urine. The color will indicate whether you are drinking enough water. Drink until your urine is almost colorless or light yellow.

Overhydration can also occur and cause other issues that we don't want. Keep an eye on your urine to know when you are fully hydrated and cut back on the water, if needed.

Drink more water to displace a high sodium meal or high sugar meal so that your kidneys can eliminate the extra salt and sugar.

Here's an example of how much water to drink:

If someone weighs 176 lbs, they would consume 88 ounces or 11 cups of water daily.

176 lbs divided by 2 = 88 ounces Since there are 8 ounces in a cup then 88 ounces = 11 cups.

That person needs to drink 11 cups at minimum per 24 hours. This is about 3 Liters since 12 cups = 3 Liters (L). To make sure you are not drinking too much, cut back on the water if your urine is colorless.

Here's how to drink 3 L in a typical day: Drink a big glass (2 cups) of water right when you wake up. You are most dehydrated when you wake up in the morning. I know I love coffee too, but I always drink a large glass of water with my coffee.

Drink another big glass 30 minutes before every meal. So that's one before mid-morning snack, lunch, afternoon snack, and dinner.

Drink another big glass a couple hours before bedtime so that you can process the fluid and go to the bathroom before going to sleep so that you don't wake up in the middle of the night.

Extra tips so that you can reach your hydration goals:

Keep a water bottle with you at all times. Sip from it whenever you remember. If you drink from it only when you are thirsty, you may already be dehydrated and behind schedule. When your bottle is empty, refill it. Keep track of how often you refill it during the day to track how much water you've consumed.

## **Step 2: Eat Fiber**

What exactly is fiber? Fiber is a part of the structure of plants that helps build plant molecules, including cellulose, lignins, and pectin.

Fiber actually contains zero calories since it essentially can't be digested by humans, and although it's found in carbohydrate foods like vegetables, fruits, nuts and whole grains, it doesn't contribute any carbs to our diets.

The effects that soluble fiber have on the rate at which the stomach empties helps slow down digestion and keeps blood sugar levels stable. This improves insulin sensitivity and can help control blood sugar spikes.

According to studies, within the body there's an inverse association between levels of glucose in the blood and dietary fiber; increasing fiber by following a high-fiber diet can prevent insulin resistance that forms from elevated glucose levels over time.

Research shows there's an inverse association between insoluble fiber intake and systolic and diastolic blood pressure, total cholesterol levels and triglycerides.

In fact, the higher-fiber diet you have the less likely you are to have high blood pressure and heart disease.

### Fiber in Your Diet (The Manufactures Sneaky Little Secret)

Knowing the public looks for foods with fiber to add into their diet, manufacturers of processed foods now go out of their way to add fiber where it naturally doesn't occur — such as in yogurt, refined grains or cereals, artificial

sweeteners and protein bars. The best way to get fiber into your diet is by adding in foods that naturally contain a lot of fiber like fruits and vegetables, not processed bars and cereals.

The recipes provided for you is an example of a high-fiber diet. If you are not ready for a strict regimen, do not focus on removing any foods from your diet just yet, start to ADD in high-fiber foods.

If your goal is to reduce your weight, fiber can help, since it makes you feel fuller after eating and can prevent snacking or overeating at your next meal.

Women need 25 grams of fiber per day, and men need 38 grams per day, according to the Institute of Medicine.

### How to Start Eating High-Fiber Foods

- Swap out meat for beans a couple times a week. Plant-based protein from beans also provides minerals and lots of fiber.
- Don't have pre-made fruit juices — instead eat whole pieces of fruit. Same goes for vegetables in most cases. Eating the whole thing (including the skin too if it's edible) gives you the most fiber.
- Make a smoothie instead of having a juice, so you include all of the fruit and vegetable pulp, seeds and skin where the fiber is stored.
- Always skip products made with refined flour or grains. Only eat 100 percent whole grains that have their natural brans and germs intact.
- Switch up your snacks. Snack on raw vegetables, hummus, or whole pieces of fruit throughout the day instead of having processed foods fortified with fiber.
- Eat a large salad once a day, and add plenty of veggies, beans, legumes, nuts and seeds.

- Add healthy sources of fats like avocados and nuts or seeds into your diet in place of vegetable oils.

### **Step 3: Increase Potassium**

Normal body levels of potassium are important for muscle function, including relaxing the walls of the blood vessels. This lowers blood pressure and protects against muscle cramping.

Normal potassium levels also are important for the conduction of electrical signals in the nervous system and in the heart. This protects against an irregular heartbeat.

Potassium is a key mineral that the body relies on heavily to function properly. It helps to lower blood pressure by balancing out the negative effects of salt.

Your kidneys help to control your blood pressure by controlling the amount of fluid stored in your body. The more fluid, the higher your blood pressure.

Your kidneys do this by filtering your blood and sucking out any extra fluid, which it then stores in your bladder as urine.

This process uses a delicate balance of sodium and potassium to pull the water across a wall of cells from the bloodstream into a collecting channel that leads to the bladder.

Eating salt raises the amount of sodium in your bloodstream and wrecks the delicate balance, reducing the ability of your kidneys to remove the water. In addition, taking diuretics can decrease potassium levels.

By eating more fruit and vegetables, you will increase your potassium levels and help to restore the delicate balance.

This will help your kidneys to work more efficiently - and help to lower your blood pressure to a healthy level.

### How to eat more potassium

Fruit and vegetables are full of vitamins, minerals and fiber to keep your body in good condition.

They are a great source of potassium, which helps to balance out the negative effects of salt and diuretics on potassium balance.

To reap the benefit of more potassium in your life, try to eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables every day. (A portion is about the same size as your closed fist.)

Not only will this help to lower your blood pressure, it will also help you to avoid certain cancers, bowel problems and even heart attacks or strokes.

Good sources of potassium include: potatoes, sweet potatoes, bananas, tomato sauce (without added salt or sugar), oranges, tuna (fresh, frozen or tinned, but avoid tuna packed in brine), yogurt and fat-free milk.

If you have kidney disease, or are taking certain blood pressure medications, a large increase in potassium could be harmful. In this case, avoid taking

potassium supplements and check with your doctor before dramatically increasing your potassium intake.

Everyone should be aiming to eat at least 5 different portions of fruit and vegetables a day to help boost their potassium intake and lower their blood pressure. The Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) of potassium is 4.7 grams per day for both men and women ages 51 and older.

### Fruits rich in potassium

The following fruits are particularly rich in potassium and may be more helpful in controlling blood pressure:

Tomato juice and puree

Oranges

Bananas

Apricots

Currants

### Vegetables rich in potassium

All vegetables help your body, but some contain more potassium than others, see below.

The following vegetables are particularly rich in potassium and may be more helpful in controlling blood pressure:

Potatoes

Sweet Potatoes

Asparagus  
Spinach  
Cabbage  
Sprouts

To make your fruits and vegetables even more effective, don't forget to cut down on the amount of processed foods you are eating.

#### **Step 4: Increase Magnesium**

We need magnesium to help blood vessels relax, for energy production, bone development, and transporting calcium and potassium. Just like potassium, too much magnesium can be lost in urine due to diuretic use, leading to low magnesium levels.

It's best to get the mineral from food, especially dark, leafy green vegetables, unrefined grains, and legumes. The RDA of magnesium is 420 milligrams (mg) per day for men ages 50 and older; 320 mg/day for women ages 50 and older.

Too much magnesium from a supplement or from magnesium-containing drugs such as laxatives may cause diarrhea. There are no known adverse effects of magnesium intake from food.

#### **Step 5: Increase Calcium**

Calcium is important for healthy blood pressure because it helps blood vessels tighten and relax when they need to. It's also crucial for healthy bones and the release of hormones and enzymes we need for most body functions. We consume

it naturally in dairy products, fish with bones (such as canned salmon and sardines), and dark, leafy greens.

The RDA of calcium for men ages 51 and older is between 1,000 and 1,200 mg per day. For women ages 51 and older it's 1,200 mg per day.

Unfortunately, most people get about 700 mg of calcium in their daily diet. So should you take a supplement to make up the difference?

That's tricky business. Some evidence shows calcium supplements increase the risk of death from heart disease. I advise you to get their calcium from food rather than from supplement pills. If it's not possible to get enough calcium from food, you can use a low-dose calcium supplement to reach your daily RDA.

## **Step 6: Sodium Balance**

When the body is not properly hydrated, it retains sodium in order to hold onto the water that is present in the body. High amounts of sodium in the body increases blood volume and, therefore, can increase blood pressure.

Surprisingly, most salt in your diet doesn't come from the shaker. When you eat a diet that is high in processed foods, you are getting high amounts of sodium.

We're going to work on decreasing processed foods over time and this will naturally decrease the added sodium and sugar in your diet.

70 percent of our salt comes to us in processed foods and restaurant meals that tend to be bad for us for many reasons. They are high in refined carbohydrate; added sugars; saturated fats; omega-6 oils; food chemicals, as well as sodium.

By reducing intake of highly processed foods, and eating more whole, minimally processed foods, mostly plants, your sodium intake will go way down without focusing on sodium at all.

Limit sodium intake to 2300 mg per day, which equals a maximum of about 1.5 teaspoons of added salt. Blood pressure studies have found that less than 3000 mg of sodium showed benefits so start there and then go down to 2300 mg.

Use these tips to cut back on sodium:

- Buy fresh, plain frozen (my favorite), or canned “no salt added” vegetables.
- Avoid canned or processed food.
- Use herbs, spices, and salt-free seasoning in cooking and at the table (Mrs. Dash is my favorite).
- Cook rice, pasta, and hot cereal without salt.
- Cut back on instant or flavored mixes.
- Cut back on frozen dinners, pizza, canned soups or broths, and salad dressings.
- Rinse canned foods to remove some salt.
- Choose ready-to-eat breakfast cereals low in sodium.
- Taste food before reaching for the salt shaker.
- Keep in mind the amount of food that has about 1000 mg of sodium: a large fast food burger or hot dog, one large slice or two regular slices of pizza, or one can of soup.

## **Step 7: Protein, Step 8: Carbohydrates, & Step 9: Fats**

These steps will be discussed in detail in the first 4 weeks of the implementation plan.

## **Step 10: Decrease Added Sugar**

Reduce the added sugar in your diet. Sugar provides calories with no other nutrients — “empty” calories.

It also goes quickly into the blood as blood sugar, where it triggers an insulin release. We’ll learn more about balancing blood sugar (it’s not just about added sugar in Module 6). High levels of insulin decrease nitric oxide, cause vasoconstriction, and help foster weight gain, and particularly fat around the middle, where it does the most harm.

Perhaps more important, sugar and sweetness trigger appetite, so we simply tend to eat more when sugar is added to an ingredient list. The food industry knows this very well and routinely puts sugar into formulations to stimulate our appetites, and make us all eat more than we should.

So, for many reasons, limiting intake of added sugar is very important to blood pressure control.

## **Bonus Lifestyle Change: Regular Sleep**

Inadequate sleep over extended periods of time is linked with chronically elevated levels of the stress hormone cortisol. The long-term activation of the

stress-response system - and the subsequent overexposure to cortisol and other stress hormones - can disrupt almost all your body's processes.

Some of the effects of your stress system:

- increased heart rate
- elevated blood pressure
- increased glucose release in your bloodstream
- altered immune response
- suppressed digestive system
- altered regions of your brain that control mood, motivation, and fear

Making sleep a priority and scheduling 7-9 hours will help you make sure it happens. This means planning ahead and working backwards from when you need to get up so that you know exactly when you need to go to sleep.

Ex. if you need 8 hours of sleep (like me) and you have to be up by 6:00 am you need to be ready for sleep by 10:00 pm.

Some people do great on 7 hours and some need 8 or 9, so figure out what makes you feel the most rested.

### **Bonus Lifestyle Change: Increase Movement**

Exercise is so important to our health and now we are learning that sitting down all day can have huge impacts on our health.

Non-exercise activity thermogenesis (NEAT) is the energy expended walking, typing, performing yard work, undertaking agricultural tasks, and fidgeting.

Basically, all the extra movement you do in your day that does not include exercise.

Even trivial physical activities increase metabolic rate substantially and it is the cumulative impact of a multitude of exothermic actions that culminate in an individual's daily NEAT.

NEAT is a critical component in how we maintain our body weight and/or develop obesity or lose weight.

Increase your NEAT by making a point each day to go for walk or take the stairs at least three times a day.

Increase your total daily movement by 5 minutes each week (add a couple minutes to each time you go for a walk).

Or if you track your steps, increase your step count by 500 steps each week.

Homework:

Let's get organized and start slowly. Right now focus on drinking enough water.

# 8 WEEKS TO IMPLEMENT:

Click on a module to get to the online + audio version

## Modules 1 - 14

[MODULE 1: WHY DIETS DON'T WORK](#)

[MODULE 2: WHAT WE EAT MATTERS](#)

[MODULE 3: MACRONUTRIENTS: PROTEIN](#)

[MODULE 4: MACRONUTRIENTS: CARBOHYDRATES](#)

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[MODULE 14: MENU PLANNING FOR SUCCESS](#)

# WHY DIETS DON'T WORK

## Module 1

I want you to start off with understanding a little bit more about the program and my philosophy.

And that is that diets don't work in the long term for your health, to lose weight, or to provide your body with nutrients to lower your blood pressure.

Most people who are first diagnosed try to change their diet or lose weight by cutting calories & restricting food, or you might even have completely cut salt or carbohydrates, or maybe even tried some supplements and teas or weird drink concoctions?

I encourage you to think differently about nutrition and try eating more whole foods.

Because whole foods naturally lack the high amounts of unhealthy fat, processed and refined carbohydrates, sodium, and sugar and are naturally high in the good stuff like potassium, magnesium, fiber, and countless other micronutrients (we'll dive deeper into this later on).

You'll see that the focus here is on evidence-based, research-driven, and proven methods that work.

Because as a pharmacist, I just can't back those kinds of things that aren't backed by science and research.

You will learn that what you eat has such a huge impact on your overall health...how you feel, your stress level, and even your blood pressure and blood sugar... but what you eat can have negative effects too... leading to

damage to your body over time that leads to high blood pressure, high blood sugar, stress, anxiety, gaining weight and makes weight hard to lose.

### **Why Diets Don't Work:**

One diet does not work for everyone. If it did, there would only be one diet, right?

Typically, when we hear the word “diet” we conjure up images of a long list of foods we have to avoid.

That's because this is how most “diets” work. According to the dictionary, there are two definitions of diet:

- the kinds of foods a person, animal or community habitually eats (for example, vegetarian, vegan or paleo diet);
- a special course of food to which one restricts oneself, either to lose weight or for medical reasons.

When I refer to the word “diet” I mean it in the “abundance of foods enjoyed because they support an individual's health” context, not a restrictive “you can't eat that” diet or “you can only eat 1200 calories a day” diet.

Restrictive strategies set us up for failure in the long run.

As a society, we've been falling victim to the diet mentality for way too long and then blame ourselves because it doesn't work.

It's not your fault! ANY restrictive diet will have a yo-yo effect. When you deprive your body of the nutrition it needs, it keeps track.

Dieting truly doesn't work...on SO many levels!

One thing you'll notice about this program is that there isn't a huge focus on counting calories.

Some people are more comfortable tracking calories and that's fine. But watching calories alone does not equate to healthy eating and balanced nutrition.

Together, we're going to place a strong emphasis on making food choices that feed our body on a cellular level, not just counting calories.

When the focus is solely on counting calories, the focus is on a number rather than the value of nutrition.

### **Action Steps:**

Have you ever tried a new diet, detox, or cleanse? Weight Watchers, Paleo, Keto, Cabbage Soup Diet, The Zone, South Beach, etc.

Grab a journal and write about your last "dieting" experience, what parts about it worked, what parts about it didn't work, at what point in your journey did you "fall off the wagon", what challenges did you face trying to stick with the diet? Did you have any results? What was easy about it, what was hard about it?

Take a minute to write out answers to these questions. Keep your journal handy, there will be Action Steps after each module!

# WHAT WE EAT MATTERS

## Module 2

Why am I so passionate about the food we eat?

The bottom line is that the food we eat becomes our cells, our blood, our organs, our bones - every single part of us. So, why would we fuel our body with junk?

I know the answer – because it's everywhere, it's easy and we're bombarded with advertising!

When I look back at how I ate for years and years, I just cringe. But, I didn't really know any better at the time (or maybe I did but was too stressed and busy to even think about food).

It seems easy enough now to understand that we can't eat junk and expect to feel energized, perform well, thrive and avoid disease.

I wish I knew this years ago! Perhaps you feel the same way.

### **What We Eat Absolutely Matters:**

We've been told to 'lose weight' to help with blood pressure, diabetes, and high cholesterol and to eat low-fat, nutrient-deficient foods.

And then we wonder why we're always hungry and relying on medications to band aid the problem.

We think it's our fault! We've been following bad advice for too long.

What if we changed our focus to eating healthier with whole foods?

What if we changed our focus to **GETTING** healthier rather than being focused on losing weight?

What if we focused on **NOURISHING** our body and giving it what it needs to thrive?

I believe the biggest difference would be that you will lower your blood pressure (and all of your other numbers) as part of a lifestyle shift, not just because you went on yet another diet that you can't maintain indefinitely.

The end result will be better because you will have improved your health in the process (and prevented or decreased medications)! Now **THAT** is truly priceless!

### **Fueling Your Body for the Best Results:**

The foods you eat can have a **DRAMATIC** impact on how you look and feel (your mood, energy levels, skin, hair, etc.), as well as how **YOU** age.

Did you notice any of this when you completed your 3-day photo food journal? Food is also **FUEL** for your body; it's what gives us energy.

Our main focus isn't on counting calories but on the types of foods that fuel us and give us what we need for optimum health.

When this is implemented as part of a mind and lifestyle shift, the result is achieving and maintaining a healthy life with lower numbers and less medications.

My approach to lowering blood pressure (and all the other numbers) is focusing on whole foods and specifically increasing fruits and vegetables, reducing sugar, and reducing refined carbohydrates.

Here's a study on what I base my rationale and this program on. There are a ton more studies but for some reason, this part is skipped at the doctor's office.

### [A Clinical Trial of the Effects of Dietary Patterns on Blood Pressure](#)

This study compared different diets and found that:

'a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy foods and with reduced saturated and total fat can substantially lower blood pressure.

This diet offers an additional nutritional approach to preventing and treating hypertension.'

I have extrapolated and broken down the micro and macronutrients from the most successful 'diet' that was used.

That is the basis for the education and recommendations of this program We'll dive a little deeper into this later on.

I've summarized the major results of the study below.

- Reduction in blood pressure at just 2 weeks
- By 8 weeks, diet reduced blood pressure by 11.4/5.5 mmHg in patients with hypertension
- 70% of hypertensive patients exhibited normal blood pressure after 8 weeks
- Such reductions are similar to that achieved with single-drug therapy in individuals with mild hypertension ←--this is my favorite
- Occurred independent of body weight changes
- Occurred independent of sodium reduction but lower blood pressures achieved when sodium reduction was added to the dietary regimen

### **Action Step:**

Grab that journal, what do you think about these results? Is this surprising to you? Do you have renewed hope? Or do you automatically think, well that won't happen for me? What's holding you back from fully believing that this is possible for you?

# MACRONUTRIENTS: PROTEIN

## Module 3

We're going to cover some basics of nutrition.

The first concept is that everything we eat is broken down into macronutrients and micronutrients.

Remember that study I mentioned in Module 2 about how you can lower your blood pressure by just changing what you eat?

The diet with the most reduction in blood pressure included high amounts of specific nutrients:

- Potassium (4700 mg)
- Magnesium (500 mg)
- Calcium (1250 mg)
- Fiber (30 grams)
- Protein (20 % of daily calories)

This is why focusing on the quality of food and maximizing your intake of nutrients is so important and why our focus is not all about counting calories.

When you have high blood pressure or take blood pressure medications, you may have specific nutrient deficiencies.

Once these deficiencies are corrected, you will see your blood pressure come down naturally. It's important to know that these corrections should be made with food.

Your body best absorbs nutrients from real whole foods...it's more natural than supplements. I don't even want to talk about supplements into you are eating more whole foods regularly.

In addition to micronutrients (vitamins and minerals), fuel for your body comes in the form of macronutrients.

Whole food (think real food) is made up of macronutrients (protein, fat, and carbohydrates) that contain the highest levels of micronutrients (vitamins and minerals), which are critical for our health and wellbeing.

When we eat processed foods we are getting very few vitamins and minerals. Micronutrients and fiber are lacking in diets that include a lot of processed and fast foods.

Counting calories may be helpful, but it's important to remember to always choose quality over just the number of calories a food contains.

For example, chips worth 200 calories is not going to give you even close to the amount of what your body needs in nutrition as the 200 calories in fruits, vegetables or other whole foods.

**Today we're talking protein.**

Protein is an important essential nutrient because your body uses it to build new cells, maintain tissues, and build new proteins that make it possible for you to perform basic bodily functions.

Protein recommendations are 20% - 45% of total daily caloric intake.

For blood pressure, benefits are seen with at least 20% of total daily intake coming from protein.

How do you do that? Think about your plate equalling 100% and about a quarter of that should be filled with a protein source.

Or if you want to get specific, then about 20 grams of protein per meal and 10 grams for snacks is a good place to start.

### **Where do you get protein?**

Protein is found in both animal and plant foods such as meat, chicken, fish, eggs, nuts, seeds, dairy products, legumes, grains and some vegetables.

Protein helps us feel satiated (feeling full and satisfied), so be sure to incorporate it into every meal. It also helps stabilize blood sugar levels and minimize mindless munching.

Each person has different protein needs based on their weight, age, fitness level and other factors. By incorporating different types of protein into your diet, you can learn which proteins work best for your individual requirements.

**Action Steps:**

Pay attention to your food and identify the proteins. Use the [Macro Cheat Sheet](#) to help. Email me (jordann@healthfulprescriptions) with any 'A HA' moments that you have or write them in your journal.

# MACRONUTRIENTS: CARBOHYDRATES

## Module 4

Carbohydrates are important for our bodies for many reasons including giving ENERGY to all our cells and aiding in the recovery from physical activity.

Carbohydrates can also be a good source of fiber, which is very important.

Although the number of carbohydrates needed varies from person to person, to maintain weight the average active person needs approximately 45% - 65% of the total number of calories from carbohydrate.

For blood pressure, the range was 55% of total daily intake.

If you want to get specific, a good place to start is to shoot for about 30-45 grams of carbs per meal and about 0-20 grams of carbs for snacks.

### **Where do we get carbohydrates?**

Carbohydrates are mainly found in starchy foods like grains and starchy vegetables (root vegetables and corn), fruits, and dairy.

Other foods like non-starchy vegetables, beans/legumes, nuts, and seeds also contain carbs, but in lesser amounts.

Carbohydrates can be categorized as refined or unrefined; they are also called processed or unprocessed, simple or complex.

Unrefined carbohydrates are full of nutrients, fiber, vitamins and minerals, which are necessary for the production of energy in the human body.

Examples of unrefined carbohydrates include vegetables, fruits, beans, nuts, seeds and whole grains.

BONUS! By adding fresh, whole foods into your diet, a big benefit you may notice right away is improved digestion and elimination. Yay!

Refined Carbs are stripped of nutrients and other additives and chemicals have been added to take the place of what was taken out.

Many of the additives are addictive and harmful to our health.

These are some of the foods that cause us to have energy crashes and put us on the blood sugar roller coaster ride.

Refined carbohydrates include foods such as: packaged cereals, white bread, white rice, white flour, chips, most pasta, cakes and candy.

These foods, obviously, are best to limit in your diet.

That doesn't mean you can't enjoy a 'treat' now and then, but just be conscious of how much you consume each day.

Awareness is the first important step and this is where tracking your food can be very helpful.

One thing we are NOT going to focus on in this program is feeling guilty about food!

Food is meant to be enjoyed and the more healthier choices you make each day, the better you will feel and the less frequently you'll even WANT the processed, refined and less nutritious options.

Your body will start to CRAVE the healthy foods!

**Action Steps:**

Pay attention to your food and identify the carbohydrates. Use the [Macro Cheat Sheet](#) to help. This might be a big realization that they ARE EVERYWHERE!!! One of the biggest challenges is to switch our thought process about carbs. Carbs aren't bad. Were you told they were? We need to eat the right carbs... think how can I add fiber to my meal and that will be your carb.

# MACRONUTRIENTS: FAT

## Module 5

There are only three macronutrients and the last one to cover is fat.

Consuming sufficient amounts of fat in the right forms and proper proportions have been shown to offer significant health benefits.

Health benefits include:

- strengthen the immune system
- enhance brain and nervous system functions such as mood, intelligence and behavior
- greatly reduce cardiovascular disease
- increase energy and performance
- give you healthy skin, hair, and nails
- regulate body weight
- improve organ and gland function

Fat is essential for survival. We need 15% - 35% of our total calories to come from fat.

For blood pressure reduction, 25% of total daily intake was found to be best. If you want specifics, start with about 10 grams per meal and snacks.

Fat is also critical for the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins like A, D, E and K, as well as optimal hormone function.

“But, wait, I thought fat was bad for me!”

This train of thought is due mostly to the debacle called the “Low-Fat Diet Craze” that caused most Americans to run scared from all dietary sources of fat.

The fat was replaced with sugar and other chemicals to make foods taste good.

This did not bode well for our health or our waistlines.

The time period of the low-fat diet craze is when the rate of obesity in this country really started to skyrocket.

In fact, some medical sources now refer to the low-fat diet fad as “the great American experiment in obesity.”

*‘Consuming dietary fats does not mean that you will get fat; in fact, fats and oils are essential to optimal health. Your body needs fats to build cells and manufacture key hormones.*

*Just as with all foods, however, you must consume high-quality fats and oils for your body to effectively use them—remember, You are what you eat.’* Paul Chek, Eat Move and Be Healthy

### **Where do fats come from?**

Healthy fats are found in foods such as meat, eggs, nuts, seeds, and oily fish, like salmon. Purchase the highest quality you can if your budget allows.

Other good fat sources include olive oil, coconut oil and avocado (i.e. olive oil as part of salad dressing; coconut oil for cooking, baking and more; and avocado in smoothies or on your sandwich or salad).

Remember you only need to eat a little of these to get all the benefits from fat. When you add healthy fats/oils to your diet, you may also notice an improvement in your skin texture, including a reduction or elimination of dry skin patches.

Unhealthy fats abound in fast foods, processed foods, chips, crackers, cookies and many snack foods.

Most processed foods contain hydrogenated oils, which are highly processed oils that we want to avoid.

These cause inflammation in the body and inflammation is the leading cause of chronic diseases- high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and high cholesterol to name a few.

Just like adding protein to your meal will help keep you full longer, adding some healthy fat will do the same.

Carbohydrates in the form of unrefined carbs and unlimited non-starchy vegetables will keep you full and blood sugar balanced too.

Ideally, you want to have some protein, unrefined carbs, vegetables, and a little healthy fat at each meal to have a healthy, balanced diet.

Now, the goal here is to not eliminate everything at once and start a whole brand new diet.

Making small changes over time will make a huge difference and it makes the changes easier to stick to.

**Take Action:**

Think about your last couple of meals and try to identify the fat sources. Usually, they are a little harder to find but SO important! Don't skip the fat! Have you been skipping fat? Or told to buy and eat 'low-fat'?

# BALANCING BLOOD SUGAR

## Module 6

Eating foods that release energy quickly can cause feelings of fatigue, hunger and irritation.

Processed foods and those full of refined sugar cause a spike in your blood sugars — they release their glucose in a sudden rush.

Blood sugar spikes rapidly, but it quickly crashes back to earth!

We have a lovely hormone that comes to the rescue: insulin. Insulin helps the body absorb and process sugar effectively, but the excess is stored as fat!

When this cycle happens over and over again, our cells become tired and stop listening to insulin, which leads to insulin resistance, an early warning sign of diabetes and high insulin can increase your blood pressure.

### **High insulin increases blood pressure by 4 ways:**

**Hyperinsulinemia**- insulin causes excess sodium and water to be held by your body and directly vasoconstricts your blood vessels (like squeezing a water hose).

**Insulin resistance**- prevents magnesium from entering the cell which is important for relaxing your blood vessels, without it we get vasoconstriction.

**Nitric Oxide-** Fructose sugar, specifically, elevates uric acid, which drives up blood pressure by inhibiting the nitric oxide (NO) in blood vessels. NO is regarded as the most important vasodilator and helps blood vessels maintain their elasticity. NO suppression leads to increases in blood pressure.

**Advanced Glycation-** Advanced glycation end products (AGEs) are the direct result of exposure to sugars. They cause vascular stiffening and narrowing of blood vessels aka more pressure out of the hose.

So if you're moody, irritable, hungry, have cravings, experience poor concentration or gain weight? You need to balance your blood sugar!

Below are a few natural, diet-based methods to do just that:

**1. Eat foods low on the glycemic index.**

These foods release energy SLOWLY into the bloodstream. You can probably guess what they may be: vegetables, legumes, some fruits (berries and stone fruits are best), whole grains, nuts and seeds.

**2. Include a snack in between main meals.**

This will allow you to stay nice and stable throughout the day. I always encourage a protein-rich snack.

**3. Eat protein with each meal.**

This is especially important to do when you eat carbohydrates, in order to slow down the release of energy. Protein is the most satiating macronutrient, meaning it releases energy slowly, which helps signal to the brain that you are full!

#### **4. Eat breakfast.**

Make sure it includes a protein and a healthy fat. These satiating macronutrients are sure to keep your blood sugars stable.

#### **5. Avoid sugar and refined carbohydrates.**

They're the main culprits of blood sugar spikes.

#### **6. Avoid sodas and sweet drinks.**

They're filled with sugars, artificial sweeteners and preservatives that will inevitably lead to hormonal imbalance and a blood sugar spike.

#### **7. Avoid artificial sweeteners.**

Even though artificial sweeteners contain no glucose, they can have the same effect on the blood sugar that sugar does.

#### **8. Reduce stimulants.**

Caffeine, nicotine, and even alcohol (though it's not a stimulant) all cause our blood sugar to rise due to a spike in adrenaline aka spiked BP.

**Take Action:**

What can you get started with today to help balance your blood sugar and keep you off the hangry roller coaster? Email me [jordann@healthfulprescriptions](mailto:jordann@healthfulprescriptions) with any 'a ha' moments or include them in your journal.

# ADDING IN: VEGGIES

## Module 7

Most of our diets include plentyyyy of carbs yet we skip out on protein and more healthy fiber rich carbs like vegetables.

The first step starts with “ADDING IN.”

Sounds good, doesn't it? Instead of making a long list of what we CAN'T have, let's start with foods that are good for us and add in more of those.

By ADDING IN lots of super healthy, nutrient-dense foods that give your body what it NEEDS, you will reduce cravings for empty calories, which make you feel hungry again within a short period of time, thereby making you consume even more calories.

For example: you have a delicious salad for lunch with lean protein, lots of fresh veggies and some healthy oil, you will feel good, comfortably full, and have energy, right?

When you do this, the less tempting sugary or salty processed is going to seem. Our first goal is going to be to eat as many nutrient-rich foods as we can so that we crave less of the unhealthy, processed foods.

This can also help with our energy levels, mood, and of course blood pressure especially since processed foods are full of extra salt and sugar.

Try adding one or two new vegetables to your salad this week and see what you think.

If you normally like romaine lettuce, have that and add some spinach, kale, swiss chard or another new green that sounds good or interesting to you.

Vegetables can be enjoyed in a variety of ways: steamed, sautéed, eaten raw in a salad or as snacks. Vegetables make great stir fry dishes.

Many make a great “green smoothie” (one of my personal favorites). Remember, the goal is to add more “real food” that your body recognizes and can absorb and utilize nutrients from.

Adding vegetables to your diet may seem like a simplistic thing to start with, but it’s an important first step and you will most likely soon notice a difference in how you feel.

If you don’t typically eat vegetables most days, you can start with a goal of 2 servings per day (a serving is between 1/2 and 1 cup) starting today.

Work your way up to 3 or 4 servings over the next few weeks once you figure out which ones you like and can add easily.

If you already typically have 2 servings a day, kick it up to 4 servings per day, then work up to 6 which is a great goal.

Remember: these are general recommendations.

You may find that you feel better eating certain vegetables, so be aware of how you feel after you eat.

## **The Super Six Ways to Eat Your Veggies**

I remember struggling with adding vegetables into my diet. I just didn't love them!

I came up with 6 different ways I could start enjoying them, so I'm sharing them with you. Coincidentally, they all start with the letter 'S'.

Soups - homemade – super simple, quick and easy

Salads - dark leafy greens and 2-4 other veggies with protein & healthy fat

Smoothies - add veggies to your smoothie – super quick and easy

Sides - with lunch and dinner (steamed, sautéed, roasted, raw)

Snacks - veggies and hummus for example

Sandwiches - add some greens and other veggies to make your sandwiches more nutrient-dense; choose lettuce wraps for grain free/gluten free option.

For me, the easiest ways are soups and smoothies, but see what you like. Taste and texture is the name of the game. Don't think boring and bland; there are so many ways to add great flavors.

## **Choose Your Carbs Wisely**

Carbs are not the enemy. Say it with me: "It's the type and amount of carb you eat that makes it good or bad."

What does that mean?

Enter the Glycemic Index (GI).

The GI of a food can be thought of as the impact it makes on the amount of sugar in our blood, circulating to all our organs, altering the level of inflammation in our system. “White stuff” - white sugar, white bread, pasta, potatoes – have a high GI. Sugar's GI is 100.

Here's a list of other high GI foods (the “bad” carbs) and their GI values:

Baked Russet Potato 111

French Baguette, white 95

Corn flakes 93

White Rice 89

Instant oatmeal 83

Pretzels 83

Puffed wheat cereal 80

Rice Cakes 82

Waffles, made from a mix 76

High GI foods often lead to emotional and physiological roller coasters, often associated with mood swings, skin flare-ups, and sleep disturbances.

Foods with a moderate to low GI have lots of fiber, or they are fat and protein-rich foods.

Fiber, fat and protein all promote even-keel blood sugar levels via different mechanisms.

Fiber expands in the digestive tract, slowing the entry of sugar from a carbohydrate source into the bloodstream.

Here's a short list of foods with a moderate to low GI (the “good” carbs):

Quinoa 53

Parsnips 52

Green Peas 51

Brown Rice 50

Macaroni 47

Spaghetti 42

Dates 42

Apple 39

Carrots 35

Fettucini 32

Black beans 30

Pearled Barley 28

Chickpeas 10

Peanuts 7

Choose foods that have a lower GI more often and limit and/or avoid foods that have a high GI.

This will help balance blood sugar, stabilize energy levels and mood, reduce inflammation and will help maintain blood pressure.

**Take Action:**

Make a list of 4-6 new veggies you would like to try. Start adding in to your meals to reach a goal of about 4- 6 servings of veggies a day.

# ADDING IN: PROTEIN & FAT

## Module 8

Protein has been shown to help keep you fuller longer, speed up your metabolism, and even help build muscle more efficiently.

Each meal should be based on protein, whereby you consume at least 20 to 30 grams of protein.

Use the [Food Swap Guide](#) to help you pick out different proteins and how much to eat, generally 4 oz is a good place to start.

Add some protein and a healthy fat like avocado or an oil-based dressing (olive oil, coconut oil, avocado oil, flaxseed oil) to a salad.

Adding protein, either animal based or plant based, will keep you full longer than just a salad with veggies.

Your body will absorb more nutrients from the vegetables when you add a little bit of fat rather than using a fat-free dressing, which also may be stripped of other nutrients

If you prep lunches for the workweek, add one small step into your routine to rack up even more grams of protein.

You can prepare and cook extra portions of a lean protein like chicken or fish and keep it stored in the refrigerator to add to meals throughout the week.

But we know that it can feel like a challenge to incorporate protein seamlessly into your diet; there are only so many turkey sandwiches one can eat!

The following ideas will show you how to increase the amount of daily protein you're eating without totally disrupting your routine:

### **Swap Regular Yogurt for Greek Yogurt**

Regular yogurt often has tons of additives and hidden sugar—especially the flavored ones—but plain Greek yogurt can have up to almost 20 grams of protein per serving.

Look for varieties with little to no sugar for an afternoon snack or a great way to jumpstart your morning.

### **Choose Eggs Over Cereal**

Cereal servings are often much smaller than a traditional bowl's size, leading to overeating with very little protein.

Swap your cereal for eggs—hard-boiled, soft scrambled, or however you like them—for a fat-burning and delicious meal.

If you're craving something earthy and sweet, add sweet peppers and root vegetables and double down on toppings like herbs and hot sauce that will only cost you a few calories.

### **Choose Low-fat Cheese Instead of Junk Food**

If you're looking for something creamy and satisfying that feels indulgent, grab a cheese stick instead of cheesy chips or other junk.

Low-fat string cheese comes in at under 200 calories per serving with all the protein you'd get from a glass of milk. (A cup of low-fat milk has about eight grams of protein.) Plus, it's fun to eat!

### **Add Lentils to Your Soup**

If you're looking for a way to increase the protein in your broth-based soups, try adding lentils.

A longtime staple for vegetarians looking for alternative sources of protein, lentils can completely fill you up with very little effort.

A handful of lentils can be subbed in for noodles, rice, or anything else starchy.

### **Add Beans to Anything**

Your vegan friends are onto something when they rave about how much they love creating culinary concoctions out of good 'ole simple beans.

Add garbanzo beans, white beans, lentils, kidney beans, or black beans to meals like salads, soups, or pastas.

Beans are full of fiber and average around 15 grams of protein per cup.

As a bonus, eating beans blasts fat and curbs cravings so you can lose weight.

## **Choose Quinoa Over Rice or Pasta**

Quinoa is considered a complete protein because it contains all the essential amino acids we need.

The seed (most people think it's a grain) is packed with about 8 grams of protein per cup.

Swap quinoa for rice or pasta, or, add it to soups, salads, or even muffins and pancakes for extra nutritional value.

Considering how many meals are better with a base, swapping your usual brown-rice habit for protein-packed quinoa will add a good chunk of protein to your diet.

## **Make DIY Trail Mix**

Instead of purchasing a packaged snack pack that likely has tons of additives (looking at you sneaky sugar!), make it a DIY project!

Get your own favorite mix of nuts, seeds, and all the fun fixings.

I like walnuts, almonds, dark chocolate chips and unsweetened coconut flakes.

Nuts provide your daily dose of healthy fats, in addition to protein, and are filling and delicious to boot. (Just watch portions, as the calories add up quickly.)

## **Double Up on Fish**

Especially if you're strapped for time or tend to only cook once in a blue moon, making larger portions is the way to go.

Preparing healthy fish in bulk makes it easy to make high-protein choices for several days.

Four ounces of salmon has 23 grams of protein, according to the USDA.

## **Sprinkle on Nutritional Yeast**

Nutritional yeast is like the best kept secret of the vegetarian and vegan community.

One ounce of this flaky seasoning contains 14 grams of protein! Nutritional yeast has a cheesy flavor and can be used to season anything from scrambled eggs to salad to pesto.

It's also an amazing source of B vitamins, doubling as a perfect vegan alternative for cheese.

Add nutritional yeast to just about anything to take your nutrition to the next level.

## **How You Feel**

I find it highly beneficial to pay close attention to how you FEEL after you eat.

Notice which foods make you feel good and energized and which ones make you feel sluggish, bloated, gassy, tired, light-headed, give you brain fog after a short time, or leave you still feeling hungry.

Really try to tune in to which foods give you energy and which ones cause symptoms of any kind.

Everybody is different. What works for some, may not work for you.

Many people are sensitive to something that can cause unnecessary side effects or reactions (bloating, gas, headaches, brain fog, etc.), so paying close attention to how you feel is key.

Foods that don't agree with us can also cause inflammation, which can lead to a whole host of problems including weight gain.

Often people are eating very healthy but aren't aware that something they're eating may be the cause of their "feeling off."

Just because a food is supposed to be healthy doesn't mean it's healthy for YOU, and your unique body.

By understanding this and realizing that each of us is one of a kind, it can be a huge eye-opener when you discover the foods that work for you...and those that don't!

## **Take Action**

Add in protein and healthy fat to EACH meal. Make note of how you feel after you eat food. Check in with yourself and notice which foods make you feel good and energized and which ones make you feel sluggish, bloated, gassy, tired, light-headed, give you brain fog after a short time, or leave you still feeling hungry.

# HOW TO DETERMINE PROPER PORTIONS

## Module 9

While the concept of portion control can be helpful for some, for others it is daunting and confusing.

You'll be happy to know that it really doesn't have to be complicated.

When we focus more on the quality of the food we eat, the portion control part usually takes care of itself.

We don't usually overdo it on the broccoli and kale, right? Many times, the issue is that our body isn't getting the nutrients it needs, so when we eat a meal (or snack) that doesn't fulfill our needs on a cellular level, our body stays hungry, a signal that it needs more nutrition.

Unfortunately, we usually grab more "fillers," the foods higher in carbs and calories. Portion control doesn't mean we have to measure and weigh our food, although for some people this could be helpful.

Rather, being conscious and more aware of our environment, how we feel, what we're doing and what we're eating can be helpful.

### **Handling Portion Control**

We are constantly bombarded with options for processed, packaged, low-nutrient foods everywhere we go. They're quick, easy and convenient.

Unfortunately, they leave us wanting and craving more while leaving our bodies undernourished regardless of how much of it we eat. Have you ever had the feeling of being full while at the same time you're still feeling hungry?

It's usually because your stomach is full, but the food you consumed isn't providing your body the nutrients it needs to function optimally.

Portion control is also more of an issue when we skip meals or we aren't eating enough at each meal. This causes us to be ravenous later, reaching for anything and everything in sight!

And this is when we are most vulnerable to making poor food choices.

When the "I'm starving" mode kicks in, it's hard to put the brakes on! Plus, we easily fall into false thinking that it's easy to cut calories by skipping a meal.

Our body is smart – it keeps track of what it needs, sends the white flag of hunger up and we then try to make up for it, usually with over indulgence. In our "Super Size Me" world of fast food, portions have gotten completely out of control.

This isn't just a problem in fast food restaurants though, it's happening everywhere! Even before the super size meals became available, larger and larger beverage choices were available.

In a Big Gulp® size of regular soda, you get a whopping 310 calories in a 32 oz. drink!

A Super Big Gulp® packs over 500 calories, which can be approximately 1/4 of your daily calories.

And that doesn't count the meal or snacks you're having with your drink. It's easy to chug down a huge beverage like this without even being aware of the calories.

Do you notice the portion sizes at most restaurants?

They're typically at least double what most people would eat at a meal at home. Even when you go to the movies, they try to get you to 'buy up' and purchase the largest size tub of popcorn.

The problem is, the more food we have in front of us, the more we'll eat. An article published in the August 2012 issue of the Journal of Consumer Research indicates that we need to pay attention to both the size and the color of the dinnerware we use as it impacts how much we even serve ourselves.

Even the color of a napkin can affect how we eat.

What's interesting is that in 1900 a dinner plate was a mere 9 inches. In 1950, plates were 10 inches and by 2010 had grown to a diameter of 12 inches.

A multitude of studies show that when larger portions are put in front of us, we'll consume up to 50% more than what we normally would.

All those calories sure add up!

Can you believe that just an extra 200 calories a day over the course of a year adds up to an extra 73,000 calories? This equals approximately 20 pounds!

Being aware and better prepared is the key.

## **8 Ways To Get a Better Handle On Portion Control**

**1. Focus on eating whole foods** (avoiding pre-packaged, food-like substances as much as possible), including plenty of protein and vegetables, until you are satiated (that feeling where you are about 80% full).

Don't deprive yourself. This always backfires, causing you to eat more food later in the day. Most processed foods have chemical additives that make it difficult for us to limit consumption.

**2. Eat a healthy snack**, like veggies, before dinner (especially if you'll be eating out). You can tell the waiter not to bring the rolls or chips to your table. Plan on taking part of your meal home for leftovers since most restaurants give you huge portions.

You can even ask for an extra plate and put 1/2 the meal on that plate and pack the rest up to take home for leftovers – before you start your meal.

**3. Include healthy fats in your diet.** This will help you feel satiated longer and allow your body to absorb the fat-soluble vitamins your body needs. Ideas include: avocado, nuts, seeds, olive oil, coconut oil, grass fed butter and ghee (clarified butter).

**4. Using smaller plates can be helpful.** When you put food on a large plate, you almost automatically want to try to fill it up and then feel like you need to finish it all. By using smaller plates (and bowls), you may find that you eat less but still feel comfortably full.

**5. Don't skip meals.** This is one of the biggest mistakes people make. Start your day with breakfast (preferably including some protein which will help you feel full longer) and plan ahead for lunch.

It's also a good idea to bring a healthy snack with you to get you through the afternoon before dinner. Portion control is very difficult when you're starving!

**6. Don't eat out of the container.** When snacking, place the snack in a small bowl or on a small plate rather than eating right out of the bag or container.

This is a huge help so you're more aware of how much you are eating and you can better manage your portions.

**7. Plan ahead** when ordering your meal to account for dessert. Order a smaller size dinner or share your entree. Often there are healthy appetizers that can actually be a full meal.

Skip the alcohol and then enjoy a little dessert. Healthy eating is all about moderation. Don't feel like you 'can't have it', just decide what you would enjoy more and make the choice.

**8. Slow down** when you eat and chew your food more.

By slowing down and enjoying our food more, we end up eating less. Instead of feeling like you have to ration your food, change your focus to eating the most nutrient dense foods you can find.

Nutrient dense foods will have you feeling better, looking better and being more in control of your food choices and portions.

Ask yourself “What is the best choice I can make that will give my body what it needs in order to thrive?” Quality counts.

### **How To Determine Proper Portions**

Proper portions means proper balance of macronutrients and control of caloric intake.

A portion – as opposed to a serving size, which is stated on a Nutrition Facts Panel or in the [Food Guide](#) – is the amount of food you actually eat in one sitting.

Most people are used to eating more than an allotted serving size of foods like bread, pasta, rice and meat. Fats and oils are also often eaten in quantities that exceed a serving just because few people bother to measure.

If you want to lower blood pressure, minding your portion sizes is a simple way to cut calories, fat and carbohydrate intake.

Check out the [Food Swap & Portion Guide](#) to have a handy guide to refer to about portion sizes.

## **Take Action**

Pick one tip from the 8 Ways To Get a Better Handle On Portion Control to start implementing now. Which one is the most challenge for you? Why is that?

# HOW TO READ NUTRITION LABELS

## Module 10

### **How to Decipher Food Labels**

Learning to decipher food labels is important so you can be more aware of what you're really eating and you can make the most informed decisions.

Unfortunately, the food labeling laws in this country make it difficult to determine if a food is healthy for us or not at first glance.

We have to dig deeper and do a little detective work, but it's worth the effort. The front of the package is designed to SELL you the product.

It's an advertising billboard and can be VERY deceiving. To know what's in the food you're buying, you want to read the ingredient list, NOT the claims on the front of the package.

Words like 'natural', 'whole grains', 'fresh', 'fat free' and 'low fat', are most often actually what you want to avoid. Crazy, I know!

Be suspicious and dig deeper for the facts. Food companies are allowed to promote benefits on the front of the package that are not necessarily true.

For example, a food can contain MSG disguised under other names (there are more than 40!), but the packaging can claim "No MSG."

Before we put any packaged items in our shopping cart, we need to ask ourselves if it's real food (example: are there only 1-5 ingredients that you recognize) or is it food-like substance (not real food, but more like a chemistry experiment).

It matters very much what we put into our bodies, especially if optimal health is our goal. It's also important to look at the sugar and sodium content.

Fat can be replaced with sugar and the sodium content can be very high in processed foods since salt is used as a way to preserve food and keep it from spoiling.

Learning how to read and understand food labels can help you make healthier choices.

Remember we learned the macronutrient ratios carb, protein, and fats that we are looking for each day that will help you reach your health goals.

### **Here are some tips for reading food labels.**

#### **1 - Start with the serving information at the top of the label.**

This will tell you the size of a single serving and the total number of servings per container (package).

The most accurate way to measure out a serving is to use a food scale and weigh out your food to the exact amount of grams.

#### **2 - Next, check total calories per serving.**

Pay attention to the calories per serving and how many servings you're really consuming if you eat the whole package.

If you double the servings you eat, you double the calories and nutrients. The next section of information on a nutrition label is about the amounts of specific nutrients in the product.

### **3 - Limit these nutrients.**

Limit the amounts of saturated fat and sodium you eat, and avoid trans fat. Choose foods with less of these nutrients when possible. Your total daily sodium should be less than 3000mg.

Using an app like Myfitnesspal can help you keep track of your sodium. Sugar should be limited to about 25 grams for women and 35 grams for men each day.

### **4 - Get enough of these nutrients.**

Make sure you get enough of beneficial nutrients such as: dietary fiber, protein, calcium, iron, vitamins and other nutrients you need every day.

Aim for 30 grams of fiber each day, and about 20-30 grams of protein per meal or 10 grams for snacks.

Try to consume a maximum of 30 grams of carbohydrates per meal or snack.

### **5 - Quick guide to % Daily Value.**

The % Daily Value (DV) tells you the percentage of each nutrient in a single serving, in terms of the daily recommended amount.

As a guide, if you want to consume less of a nutrient (such as saturated fat or sodium), choose foods with a lower % DV — 5 percent or less.

If you want to consume more of a nutrient (such as fiber), seek foods with a higher % DV — 20 percent or more.

Here are more tips for getting as much health information as possible from the Nutrition Facts label:

Remember that the information shown in these panels is based on 2,000 calories a day. You may need to consume less or more than 2,000 calories depending upon your age, gender, activity level, and whether you're trying to lose, gain or maintain your weight.

When the Nutrition Facts label says a food contains “0 g” of trans fat, but includes “partially hydrogenated oil” in the ingredient list, it means the food contains trans fat, but less than 0.5 grams of trans fat per serving.

So, if you eat more than one serving, you could quickly reach your daily limit of trans fat

### **Take Action**

Review the nutrition labels when you go grocery shopping next. Pro tip. Shop on the outer perimeter of the grocery store, it usually has less food items with nutrition labels aka more whole foods.

# PROCESSED FOODS

## Module 11

*“Modern food manufacturers have overwhelmed store shelves with foods that are nutrient poor, rotten, spoiled, dead, old, and contaminated with antibiotics, chemicals, and growth hormones.*

*Refining has also brought us spectacularly cheap, pervasive, and fattening ingredients: namely white flour, white sugar, high fructose corn syrup, and industrial seed oils.*

*These fake foods distort your appetite and cause you to consume more calories than you require. This perpetuates a vicious cycle of stuffing your face but never feeling totally satisfied or nourished.”*

Abel James – Author “The Wild Diet”

### **What Are Processed Foods?**

Have you ever looked at the list of ingredients on a food package and realized you had no idea what they were? Food labels usually read more like a list from a science experiment than a list of ingredients we actually recognize.

You’ll reap the benefits of eating healthy, whole foods even more when you also reduce processed foods. After all, you want your body to benefit as much as possible from the food you eat, right?

## **So, Why Not Processed Food?**

Processed foods have been altered from their natural state.

There are varying degrees of processed foods, from minimally processed to highly processed.

Generally, the less processing a food has undergone and the fewer the ingredients in packaged products, the more nutritious it will be.

The more processing a food has gone through, the fewer nutrients it retains. This means more empty calories that provide little to no nutritional benefit.

## **Processed Foods**

Processed foods tend to be **LOW** in nutrients and **HIGH** in calories. They tend to **not** keep us full for very long, so we're hungry again a short time later (this increases cravings for more processed foods).

Most are designed with convenience in mind. They can be eaten quickly, anywhere (while driving, working at the office, watching TV, etc.), and require little or no preparation.

Highly processed foods include snack foods and desserts, such as candy, chips, ice cream, cakes, etc. This category also includes frozen entrees, sodas, breads, pasta, and cereals.

Highly processed animal products include most deli meats, chicken nuggets, hot dogs and some sausages and burgers. Many vegetarian alternatives to meat are also highly processed.

## **Minimally Processed Foods**

Fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, seeds, whole grains, meat and fish are often sold in minimally processed or non-processed forms (although each of these also have processed versions).

These foods are often not substantially changed from their raw, unprocessed form and retain most of their nutritional value.

## **The Effects of Food Additives**

Studies show that food additives affect the following (which all have an impact on your overall blood pressure and how your body handles sugar):

- Digestion
- Appetite control (or lack of – food additives increase your appetite!)
- Brain function – can cause “brain fog”
- Memory
- Weight gain
- Quality of sleep
- Concentration (as well as ADD/ADHD)
- Energy levels
- Gut flora, depleting the “good” bacteria necessary for assimilation of nutrients
- Deficiencies of micronutrients

That's really quite a list, isn't it?

## **Nutrient Quality in Processed Foods**

Processed foods can cause micronutrient deficiencies. Not consuming enough vitamins, minerals and essential fatty acids prevents us from getting the minimum daily requirement (MDR) of what our bodies need.

This can lead to disease and chronic health problems. And, processed foods are lacking in the nutrients our bodies need to function properly, especially if our goal is improved overall health and/or weight loss.

It's not realistic for most of us to never eat processed foods, but it's very realistic to dramatically reduce the amount of these poor quality foods. Once healthier choices become automatic, you won't miss the processed choices because you'll be feeling so much better.

## **Important Initial Step: Become More Aware of What You're Eating**

Did you know that the food industry allows more than 3,000 food additives to be used in the processing of our food? These additives are used to help improve the taste, texture, consistency and visual appeal of food as well as extend the shelf life.

*'These processes can cause allergic reactions and stress on the liver to process such chemicals, many of which are cancer forming. Children exposed to such processes can become hyperactive and display learning difficulties.'*

Dr. Gillian McKeith, author, 'You Are What You Eat'

The best advice is to avoid foods with health claims on their labels.  
Better yet, avoid foods with labels in the first place.

### **Take Action**

Download the [Guide to Artificial Ingredients here](#) and go through the food labels in your kitchen cabinets and refrigerator. Using the nutrition facts only, determine whether that food should belong in your diet or not based on the information above. If it checks out, leave it. If not, donate it or throw it out.

# 10 TIPS FOR EATING ON THE GO

## Module 12

The reality is that we are busy people and eating out is convenient, fun, and delicious. Some of us have to eat out every day for several meals...and that's ok.

We know the easiest way to avoid excess sugar, sodium, and calories is to prepare food at home, but there is a lot we can do to make smarter and healthier choices when we are eating out or on the go. Being prepared and having a strategic plan will allow you to eat out at almost any restaurant and still stay on track.

**TIP 1 - Plan ahead:** GPS some healthy pit stops along your route.

A grocery store is a great place to pick up fruit and cut veggies to munch on. If dining out, most restaurants have their menus online and some even have the nutritional info posted (chains mostly). Go online, search for the nutrition information of the restaurant you want to go to, and plan out your choices.

**Tip 2 – Pack snacks.** There's no need to stop for food. Keep a few healthy snacks in the car for long rides or bad traffic. A trail mix of seeds, nuts and dried fruit is an easy, non-perishable option. Granola bars with protein and less than 6 grams (or even better 0 grams) of sugar also work.

**TIP 3- Drink please!** Keep a filled water bottle in the car too. We often think we're hungry when we are just thirsty. If at a restaurant, try ordering a warm drink first thing such as hot water with some fresh lemon slices.

You'll be surprised how this warm calming drink can fill you up and soothe the craving/hunger beast. Herbal tea is also a great option while coffee tends to throw off blood sugar levels and may lead to cravings and bad decisions later on.

**TIP 4 - Be an assertive orderer:** Don't be afraid to modify the menu. Trust me, in this age of "nutritionism", waiters are used to it. Ask questions and know the terminology.

Grilled, steamed, broiled, boiled and baked are fine but beware of terms such as creamy, smothered, lightly breaded, deep fried.

Ask for sauces on the side and leave out the fries/rice/pasta/potatoes that usually come with the main and ask for extra veggies instead (most restaurants are happy to do this).

**TIP 5 - Start with soup or salad:** both can be filling and satisfying. Order the dressing on the side and dip your fork lightly in the dressing before every forkful.

Stay with non-creamy soups. Ask the server if dairy is added. That will let you know if they add cream or cheese or even butter (you can even tell your server that you are lactose intolerant to make sure they don't add cream, butter or cheese)

**TIP 6 - Appetizers as the main course:** Try ordering from the appetizer menu if you don't find anything you want on the main menu such as grilled

calamari, Caprese salad, or shrimp cocktail. Ordering from the appetizer menu saves calories with smaller portions and is less expensive.

**TIP 7 - Liquor Control:** Alcohol can stimulate hunger so never drink on an empty stomach (really throws off blood sugar) and try to follow the 1:1 rule; follow a glass of wine with a full glass of water. Even try to cut the wine with ½ club soda or Perrier in a wine Spritzer or mix vodka with soda water.

**TIP 8 - Portion Control/Leftovers for the next day:** Most restaurants provide huge portions-take a look at the size of the plate or bowl! Eyeball your serving size (palm of your hand) and divide your portion accordingly. Make a mental note to have the rest packed-up for home, or better yet, ask the waiter for a to-go container and box it up right away. Bonus: less for you to cook the next day.

**TIP 9 – Eat protein before a long trip.** Protein helps to stabilize blood sugar which, in turn curbs hunger. Eat a meal with protein before embarking on a long journey.

**TIP 10 – Keep to regular meal intervals.** Eat a meal every 4-5 hours regardless of time zone changes. If the journey doesn't allow for a real meal, be prepared with a substantial snack like seeds, nuts, dried fruit or cheese.

### **Take Action**

Make a list of your favorite places you like to eat on the go and look up their menu online. Go ahead and select what you would order from them so there is no guesswork and no persuasion from enticing photos. This includes fast food places like McDonald's and Chick Fil A (my favorite).

# HOW TO CURB CRAVINGS

## Module 13

Cravings are something all of us struggle with at times, so you're not alone if this is something you're dealing with too.

Cravings can be triggered by many things including; sights, sounds, aromas, environment, stress and more.

A perfect example of this is a typical trip to your local mall when you walk by the pretzel stand or cinnamon roll shop – sights, sounds, aromas, AND environment – oh my!

Another example common for a lot of people is stress – stress of a deadline, stress when faced with something you dislike (taxes or balancing the checkbook. Sound familiar?).

Another is boredom.

Since our appetite and our eating habits do not exist in a bubble, things that are part of our daily lives can trigger cravings.

The better we understand our cravings though, the more equipped we are to deal with them constructively.

It's not realistic to think you will NEVER have sugar, but the reality is that most people are consuming WAY too much added sugar.

Sugar is in SO many of the foods we eat and we usually aren't even aware of it

(bread, crackers, sauces, chips - you name it) and it can be quite addictive.

In this session, we're going to look at EIGHT ways to deal with your SUGAR CRAVINGS (or other junk food habits)!

You'll also begin to understand why your cravings are not always your fault.

We are inundated every day with foods that are high in calories and low in nutrients.

Fast food, packaged food and junk food are quick and easy, but we're paying the price with our health and our waistlines.

When we consume these processed, nutrient-void foods, our body knows it's not getting what it needs, so it craves more....more nutrients...but many times, we are just giving our body more food...empty calories, lacking in nutrients.

Did You Know This About...

## **SUGAR**

The average American consumes about 150 lbs. of sugar per year. That's 12.5 lbs. a month or almost 3 lbs. a week. Yikes! It's hard to image it's that much!

And, you may be thinking, you're not average because you really don't eat that many sweets. The majority of sugar we consume is hidden in processed and fast foods, cereals, snacks, white flour products - it's even in salad dressings, sauces, and beverages.

Even products labeled “healthy” are often loaded with sugars. Sugar makes us feel happy, energetic and it can even make us feel calm sometimes.

Here’s WHY:

Sugar releases brain chemicals that make us feel good emotionally – temporarily.

Following the initial rush of flavor, excitement and comfort, comes the crash!

And, just when you were feeling “up,” you are likely to feel worse than you did before you had that sugar so you want and need even more.

It can be a hard cycle to break. Here’s why your cravings are partially not your fault.

Did you know that food companies hire food scientists to create foods with tastes and textures that are hard to resist. It’s their job to find that perfect ‘pleasure point’ of the food being “manufactured.”

They know there are certain substances that people will want more of. Yes, there’s a science to it!

## **MSG**

Like sugar, MSG is highly addictive and this is why some of our food cravings are not our fault. This isn’t to say that we don’t have control over what we eat, because we do.

We make our own choices.

But it helps to understand why some of our choices may not be so healthy.

When food or food-like substances are PURPOSELY DESIGNED to create addiction, we need to remember that it's in the food industries best interest to create food that would have us over eat...right?

The more we eat, the more money they make.

Of course, there are many possible causes for cravings including, but not limited to, stress, nutrient deficiencies, hormone imbalance and fluctuations in blood sugar levels.

This is another reason why it's good to keep a food journal so you can become more in tune with what you're craving, what you're eating and what you may be missing in your diet.

You may also learn more about the triggers, which are often signals that change may also need to happen somewhere off your plate.

Note: If you have cravings that persist, please consult with your doctor to determine if nutrient deficiencies and/or hormones could be the cause.

Many people are deficient in some nutrients (even when they have a healthy diet) and it's common to have hormone fluctuations and/or imbalances at different stages of our lives.

Look for a doctor that specializes in this area.

## Ways To Reduce Cravings

So what can we do to reduce cravings?

By adopting the following eight practices, you can reduce your cravings for sugar or other unhealthy foods and drinks.

### **1. Don't skip meals.**

We've covered this a bit before and it's super important when it comes to eliminating cravings.

When we skip meals, we may think we're reducing our calories for the day.

The problem with this is that by mid-afternoon, hunger hits with a vengeance, we give in to the temptation and then we get mad at ourselves for failing.

This often leads to eating even MORE empty calories, more sugar, more processed food, because now we again feel we are starving and we're stressed from failing.

It's easy to just start to shovel in the closest food you can find when you're "starving."

When you can spread out your meals as evenly as possible throughout the day, ensure that your meals are based on whole foods, and add a healthy snack when needed, your blood sugar is likely to be more stable.

This mean no more energy crashes which result in a craving for sugar to get your

energy level back up.

Often, sugar cravings are our body's response to needing energy.

By eating balanced meals throughout the day, our energy levels stay up, thereby reducing cravings.

## **2. Don't bring temptation home**

This sounds simple, but it's oh so true.

If you want to make good choices, only keep good choices in the house.

I like to keep the veggies and fruit at eye level and up front for myself and my husband.

When he sees healthier choices first, he goes for what's within easy reach.

Keeping washed, pre-cut veggies with a pre-made yummy dip means healthy snacks are all ready to eat.

Plus, if the junk food, sugary cereals, cookies, cakes, ice cream, chips, etc., are not there, you can't eat any, right?

Stock your kitchen with whole foods that fill you up, satisfy your hunger and give your body the nutrients it needs.

This greatly aids in the reduction of cravings, because you don't feel so hungry.

### **3. Eat enough protein and healthy fat**

The low fat diet craze caused people to fear all sources of dietary fat, including the healthy fats that our bodies desperately need to function properly.

Healthy fat is crucial to providing essential fatty acids, the absorption of vital nutrients, vitamins and minerals and are a source of energizing fuel.

To make up for the lack of fat and taste in their products, the food companies added more SUGAR!

Low fat foods are not very satiating, which leaves us hungry again a short time later.

This leads to consuming more calories, which is not good if your goal is weight loss.

By eating more whole foods that are packed with the nutrients our bodies need, the less junk food we crave.

Our bodies need real food – whole food in its natural state - to thrive.

Providing our body with what it needs can reduce addictive cravings.

If eliminating junk food from your pantry shelves is a challenge for you because your children or spouse have snacks they “have to have,” try replacing one type of snack at a time.

For example: Maybe instead of Doritos, which are full of artificial ingredients and

MSG, transition to something like organic tortilla chips.

Be sure you have a great fresh salsa or guacamole for the dip and serve with a plate of fresh cut veggies too!

Starting with small changes and transitioning little by little can avoid a major mutiny.

You don't have to do a major overhaul all at once.

This can take some time. It's good to introduce new foods and see what everyone likes.

You never know what may become a new favorite.

#### **4. Get a good night's sleep**

Are you sure you're getting enough sleep each night? And do you get quality sleep?

What does sleep have to do with healthy eating and achieving your ideal weight range? A lot!

Think about the difference of how your entire day goes when you wake up tired vs. how you feel and how your day goes after you get a full night's rest.

It's typical that we make different food and activity choices throughout the day when we are rested and feel energetic compared to days when we are dragging.

Tiredness, stress and exhaustion all trigger food binges. When we're tired, we get stressed more easily.

Research, published in the American Journal of Human Biology, shows that short or poor quality sleep is linked to obesity by de-regulating appetite and increased energy consumption.

Our appetites can increase when we're tired, which makes sense.

Studies show how signals from the brain, which control appetite regulation, are impacted by sleep restriction.

Our body craves more energy and we get more energy from food, so we end up eating more, and usually end up making less healthy choices.

## **5. Be a food label detective**

We've been taught to look at the calories and fat content on labels, but not the actual INGREDIENTS.

It's shocking what our food is made up of these days.

When we consume sugar, we CRAVE more sugar, so it's important to know where it's lurking.

To eat healthy food, you need to know what's in it!

That means you have to read the label!

Sugar is often disguised under different names as well as being listed more than once under the different names.

Here are just a few of the names sugar goes by: high fructose corn syrup, brown sugar, raw sugar, beet sugar, cane sugar, sucrose, dextrose, maltose.

Before you put something in your grocery cart, know what it is that are buying to eat.

The front of the package is designed to be an advertising billboard to “sell” you the product and the food manufacturers know how to trick us!

They know the buzz words that fool us, don’t they? Words like “healthy,” “natural,” “baked,” “whole grain”, etc. You might think baked would be healthier than fried, right. Maybe.

Did you know, for example that Baked Lays Potato Chips contains more sugar than Regular Lays Potato Chips? You wouldn’t even think there would BE sugar in potato chips, right?

Even most loaves of BREAD contain high amounts of sugar.

IGNORE what the front of the package says and look at the list of ingredients.

If it sounds like a science experiment full of names you can’t identify, put it back on the shelf. I find it’s easier to find better food choices at stores like Sprouts and Whole Foods, and sometimes Trader Joe’s, rather than at conventional grocery stores.

Not that stores typically known as a health food store don't stock junk food. But there is a much larger selection of healthy, whole foods to choose from and I find they have a bigger selection of produce and organic foods.

## **6. First eat something healthy**

Don't tell yourself you can't have something you feel you're craving!

Instead, tell yourself, "I can have it, but first I'm going to give my body something nutritious, such as a banana and a few nuts or a fresh salad with some protein."

This way, by the time you're done with the healthier choice, you are way less likely be craving the sugar anymore and will skip it.

Try it and see what happens.

Some of my clients that try this are skeptical at first, but are pleasantly surprised to see how well it works.

## **7. Satisfy your sugar cravings with healthy sweets**

Sometimes we reach for a sugary snack out of habit.

Approximately 40% of what we do each day is purely the result of habit.

If we had to think about every single thing we did, it would be completely overwhelming, wouldn't it?

Some of our eating patterns are purely habit and we do it without much thought.

Look at what some of your habits are and the food choices that go along with them. Do you pour yourself a cup of coffee and automatically reach for that donut or bagel?

Do you nibble on a cookie before dinner to “hold you over” and then not feel so hungry when you sit down with your family? Does dessert automatically mean ice cream or cake?

Healthy sweets are packed with fiber, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants that actually HELP us become healthier and feel better.

Find the fruits that you and your family like and keep them on hand.

## **8. Are you hungry for food or are you really craving something else?**

What do you crave that’s not food?

Sometimes cravings are caused by things we feel are missing from our lives and food fills the void for us. We may be conscious of the void, or not.

Stress, feeling bored or being lonely can do this as well.

When you feel cravings coming on be real with yourself about whether it’s the food or something else.

Get in touch with what you’re craving that’s not food and learn ways to nourish yourself without food. Ask yourself if you’re REALLY hungry...or is it something else?

If you just ate a meal an hour ago and felt satiated, maybe you aren't really hungry. See if doing something else takes your mind off of mindless munching as a distraction.

Boredom can be a big trigger for cravings. What are some things you can do instead of focusing on food?

Create your own list:

- Take a walk
- Enjoy a hot shower or relaxing bath
- Get a manicure, pedicure, or massage
- Spend time with friends
- Practice yoga
- Learn something new
- Read a book
- Go for a bike ride!
- Garden
- Paint
- Put together a puzzle
- Spend time doing something you love that has meaning for you

These are just a few ideas.

Try different things to see what works for you and focus on doing something you enjoy. Remember, sometimes we crave food when we're bored because eating gives us something to do.

So, check in with yourself to determine if you're actually hungry.

## **Bonus & Recap**

And here's a Bonus Tip: Stay hydrated!

Most people don't consume enough water and dehydration leads to cravings.

So, the next time you have a craving, drink a glass of water, wait 10 minutes and see if you still have the craving.

To recap, here is a list of 9 total ways to conquer cravings:

Don't skip meals – when you are super hungry, it's easy to make poor choices

Don't keep it in the house – if it's not in the house, you'll find something else to eat

Eat enough protein and healthy fats – these keep you satiated longer and you'll consume fewer calories without being hungry

Get enough sleep – we eat more when we're tired

Know what you're eating (hidden sugars and chemicals) and read the food labels

Eat something healthy first – then you might not even want the sweets or junk food

Use healthy sweets – eat fruit instead of a treat with processed sugar

Ask yourself if you're craving something besides food.

Stay hydrated – drink plenty of water

### **Remember**

When you understand the connection between WHAT you eat, WHY you eat, and HOW you feel, you will feel more in control and be able to make better choices.

Try to determine if some of your cravings are based more on habit or what you may be keeping in the house and look at how to best address that to make changes.

We don't need to feel guilty about food. We just need to understand our cravings better so we figure out what we really need and do our best to make choices that support our health and our goals

### **Take Action**

Tune in to your cravings. When do they happen? What are you craving and why? (are you tired, bored, or really hungry?) Decide what you will try this week. For example, try eating more whole foods during the day and not skipping meals and see how that helps. Create your list of things you can do instead of focusing on food when you realize you aren't really hungry.

# MENU PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

## Module 14

You're busy, busy, busy and the thought of having to plan out meals may feel like just one more chore to add to your already long list of things to do.

I know!

To be honest, it has not always been my all-time favorite thing to do either. What I found, though, is that taking time to plan for meals each week – and writing out a grocery list – means that I ultimately save **TIME**.

**It saves MONEY.**

**It means fewer less-desirable CALORIES.**

**And, it means less STRESS.**

Menu planning saves time because first you know “what’s for dinner” and you won’t have to run to the grocery store as frequently.

It saves money because eating out is so much more expensive than preparing meals at home. It also means less food waste because you’ve only bought the items you need to prepare your meals.

You can definitely save in calories too, because many times, we impulse buy, and end up with choosing convenience or processed foods. Or, if you go out to eat, you order items that look healthy, like a salad, only to discover that your meal contains 1,000 or more calories.

Finally, planning meals reduces stress because you have a solid plan for your week and you won't have to rack your brain at the last minute to figure out the age old question "what's for dinner?"

## **Quality Control**

Choosing ingredients from the grocery store gives you more control over the quality. More and more supermarkets are offering more organic options and a wide variety of foods and brands from which to choose.

When we eat out, the food usually contains higher sodium levels than what we make at home. And restaurant prepared food typically uses lower quality oils like soybean, GMOs foods are used as the norm and MSG is often added or hidden, along with other controversial ingredients.

This doesn't mean you shouldn't enjoy eating out, but when you select and prepare your own food knowing exactly what is included in the dishes you make, you're able to better control the quality and nutritional value of your meals.

This is a huge help with weight loss, weight maintenance, lower blood pressure, and lower blood sugar since **YOU are in control** of the food and you actually know what's in it.

And, you're likely to have more nutrient rich food.

## **Get Organized**

Pick a day to be your menu-planning day. For me, that means Saturday or Sunday, but choose the day that works best for you.

Consider which day of the week you can best make time to sit down and figure out what to have for dinner during the week.

Will this be the same day you do the grocery shopping? Or will you plan the night before and shop the next morning?

Sometimes I like to plan the menu on Saturday and then do the shopping on Sunday. Before I start, I like to ask for input from my family to see what they want for dinner during the upcoming week.

### **How do you like to plan your meals?**

What works for you? Do you prefer to look through cookbooks, existing recipe cards, or find recipes online or maybe a combination of all three?

Does your family have a favorite meal that they like to have each week? Start with what you know so you don't feel overwhelmed.

If you already have a recipe box with a lot of recipes, start there. Find 5 or 6 (or fewer!) you want to make for the week and go with that. You can add to the repertoire little by little.

If you typically eat out most nights, maybe start with planning just three dinners this week and increase your menu planning from there. Consider the nights that may be typically hectic with kids' activities, meetings or any other obligations you may have.

Then think about what would be the easiest meals to make on those nights.

For me, that means something in the handy dandy slow cooker once or twice a week. Or, you may want to double a recipe and have it ready to reheat on a second night.

Another option is to double up your chicken for one dish and set half aside to add to a salad as your main meal on another night.

Choose quick and easy meals when you know you won't have much time to cook or maybe plan on those being your crock-pot nights.

After you've figured out your meals for the week, it's time to create your grocery list. Be sure to check your fridge and pantry first to see what you already have and then make the list of what you need.

Another great option that's super quick and easy is to use a service like a dinner studio where you go and prep everything for a week or more and bring the ingredients home to freeze and use as needed.

Places like “**Dream Dinners**” and “**Super Suppers**” are becoming quite popular.

Do a Google search and see if there are any in your area.

**Tip:** If you have a smartphone, your shopping list can be made much easier. My favorite grocery shopping smartphone app is called “Our Groceries.” I love it! I add my grocery items to the list in categories, like produce, meats, dairy, etc.

You can create your own categories, too.

Plus, other family members can add items to it from their smartphone so we share the list. Super cool!

I don't know how I ever used a pen and paper list now! Okay, so you've figured out which nights are busy, you have your menus for the week and you have your grocery shopping list all set.

You'll want to be sure to write down your menu plan for the week so you and your family remember what you're having each night. Post it on the fridge or somewhere else you can see it easily.

How do you like to store your recipes - on your computer? Print them out and keep them in a recipe box or folder?

I started keeping a pocketed folder in the kitchen with the recipes I plan to make that week, so I know right where they are and can find them easily. I save them on the computer, then print them out and put them in the folder so I have them handy when I'm ready to start cooking.

If you type into this [weekly menu plan](#) and save it as a document on your computer, you can refer to it later. Perhaps you label the one you create this week "Week 1 Meals."; then next label next week's "Week 2 Meals" and so on.

This way, after a few weeks, you'll have quite a few menu plans to pick from and it gets easier. Then you can add to the list by trying 1 new recipe every week or every 2 weeks.

Place these menu plans in a folder on your desktop labeled "menu plans" so you can find them easily.

Before you know it, you'll have a lot of recipe options and meal planning becomes even easier.

## **BONUS TIPS**

**Cook once, eat twice.** Plan to make double what you would normally make for dinner so you have leftovers for lunches (for adults as well as kids) and/or another dinner.

You also have the option to freeze some of the leftovers to use the following week if you prefer.

**Cook grains, like rice, ahead of time** for the week, then refrigerate and use them later in the week (add a little water when reheating).

Most grains will keep for 3-5 days in the fridge.

**Be sure to have food defrosted** if you're using any frozen items like meat, chicken, fish, etc.

Check what you need for the next day, the night before.

**Chop your veggies** on the weekend or the night before to prep ahead of time and place in storage containers in the fridge.

Also, decide which frozen veggies you can use instead of fresh (especially for stews, soups and some crock pot meals).

**Make any marinades, dressings, spice mixes or sauces** in advance to save time on those busier nights.

If you typically eat dinner out twice a week, and you have 20 recipes to prepare at home, that's about four weeks worth of meals without repeating a meal – not bad!

You can add more to the list as you go to expand your base of options. Even if you start out just planning THREE of your meals each week, it will make a difference.

I feel so much less stressed when I know I'm ready for the week and I have what I need to make healthy meals. Taking 30 minutes to plan your meals will save you much more time and energy than that in the long run.

I'll be honest – I fought it for a long time because it just seemed too time consuming, but now that I do it on a regular basis, it's so much faster and easier. Once you start implementing a weekly meal plan, you'll notice you feel less stressed over the dinnertime rush and you may just have a better answer to the question “What's for dinner?”

You and your family get to enjoy more nutritious, home-cooked meals and stress less!

### **Take Action**

For this coming week, take a look at the calendar and see which nights you'll be cooking. Decide which nights you'll need a quick, easy meal and which nights you'll have more time to prepare dinner. Then start your menu planning. What new recipes have you been meaning to try?

Write out the menu for each day's meals. Use this [handy dandy interactive meal planner](#) and save it to your computer once you've typed in your meals for the week.

Make a list of the ingredients you need to purchase, double-checking your pantry to ensure you have the spices or staples needed. Decide which day you'll go grocery shopping.