

This week I want to talk about something a little bit more hands-on so to speak and give you some tips and tools. Whenever I speak to a patient or client in the office I talk about nutrition in terms of 5 pillars. Whether the person is interested in losing weight or whether they are interested in cognitive health or metabolic health or even productivity in the workplace it turns out that these 5 pillars are important.

1. Diet

The first of those pillars of nourishment is of course diet, the food that we eat. I want to stress that the word diet has been taken out of context in our society and in American culture to be referred to as something that is restrictive, but really diet just refers to what it is that we eat. So for example a cow's diet is plant-based. Period. It does not necessarily mean anything about losing weight or a restrictive process, and I think that's really important because as I've said before that concept of restriction is really negative or affects our psychology negatively, whereas a concept of abundance has a positive impact. And why is that? When we think of things and food in terms of restriction, then invariably our minds go towards wanting more of that thing. When you tell yourself you can't do something it is part of our psychology to want more of it or to want to go towards it, so what I recommend is a diet of abundance which means eating so much of that which serves you so that there's less room, less space, less desire for that which does not.

I always talk about the macronutrients that should be a part of every meal, and I do recommend balanced eating. I don't recommend fad diets. Balanced eating does support weight loss if that is your goal, but should always consist of protein and the studies show that 20 to 30 grams of protein per meal is what is necessary to suppress hunger hormones and also to help preserve lean body mass or muscle mass when we are losing weight so that you don't lose muscle. When people lose weight, if they're doing it in the wrong way, meaning not consuming adequate amounts of protein then they will certainly lose weight - they will lose fat mass but they will also lose muscle mass. That's not wanted because if you do lose muscle mass in your body composition actually becomes higher in your percent body fat, that's not what we want. But also that kind of weight loss doesn't support your metabolism. So as you know your muscles will burn more calories or be more active in terms of metabolism than fat mass, and so if you are losing muscle then by definition you are going to lose metabolism or calories burned daily just by nature of living because your body has a less percentage of muscle.

So protein is important and the goal is 20 to 30 grams per meal, which is kind of a lot. So an egg is about 6-7 grams, an egg white is about 4 grams, peanut butter is only 2

grams per tablespoon, chicken/fish is about 25 to 27 grams per 3 ounces, beef is closer to 30 grams per 3 ounces, but plant-based like garbanzo beans is almost 20 grams per half-cup, so it takes being creative particularly during breakfast and what I recommend is that if you are vegan or vegetarian or just can't get that protein augment with a high-quality protein powder or protein bar. Be careful of the nutritional labels. Oftentimes these bars and powders can be filled with other additives, fillers, junk, essentially this not serving you so I like to look for something that's around 100 calories per scoop and gives you about 20 grams of protein, and the Dehl protein powders do that. Whey protein is what I prefer unless you have an intolerance to it because that is the best for weight loss and for muscle building. In terms of bars I recommend something that's under 200 calories and as close to 15 grams of protein or more, and again our Dehl bars are 190 calories with 16 grams of protein, so really trying to get as much protein for the calories.

But even though I advocate for protein I am not a no-carb proponent. Carbs are helpful they are helpful and also carbs come under a big umbrella. Under carbohydrates are vegetables, fruits, grains, beans, and legumes are carbohydrates and so are things like bread, pasta, cereal, you know the simple carbohydrates but complex carbohydrates like beans and legumes like I said also contain protein so that's valuable but they also contain a lot of nutrients including B vitamins and including fiber which is important for digestive health, is important for cardiovascular health, it does help with satiety or fullness so complex carbohydrates because they take more work to break down they result in a more steady rise in blood sugar whereas those simple carbohydrates are going to give you a quick rise in blood sugar and a quick drop in blood sugar that promotes cravings and hunger whereas the steady rise is more filling and is more sustaining and sustainable in terms of appetite and metabolism so I do recommend carbohydrates in the meal.

And then I don't limit how much people consume of those things, particularly the protein. Nobody gained weight from eating too much protein. I never recommend the palm of the hand because that makes absolutely no sense to me. Eat as much protein as you want but what I do recommend is for whatever amount you eat that you double up on the veggies. Veggies are free nutrients, super low in calories, super high in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. So that is my recommendation in terms of diet, I recommend more whole, less processed. Processed foods will not suppress hunger hormones in the same way as whole foods. Other tips in terms of food include hydration. I don't recommend a certain amount of water per day, everybody is different and so as long as you are going to the bathroom regularly, you know the urine is clear-ish that's an indication that you're adequately hydrated. Adequate hydration is also good for your skin and is also good for your cellular health and metabolism.

2. Movement

The second pillar of nourishment or nutrition is movement. I often say I wish exercise and weight loss could get a divorce because really weight loss is predominantly what you consume in terms of food and much less how much you move. That being said, exercise is important to preserve your muscle, so again the 2 things you can do to preserve muscle mass while you are losing weight is adequate protein and exercise so it's very important in terms of weight maintenance, but the benefits of exercise and movement are so much more important than the numbers on the scale. Regular exercise has been shown to reduce essentially every disease process known to man. Regular exercise will reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and heart attacks and strokes. It will also reduce the risk of all these cardiovascular risk factors such as diabetes, hypertension, metabolic syndrome and that happens independent of weight loss. Regular movement is going to help with cardiovascular risk factors but is also associated with reduced risk of several cancers including breast cancer, colon cancer, and it's associated with reduction in cognitive decline including Alzheimer's disease. It also of course helps with mood, reduces the risk of depression, anxiety, we all know about the endorphins that come about when we exercise regularly but you may be surprised to know that vigorous exercise the kind that gets your heart rate up that kind of discomfort that physiologic discomfort or stress makes you more able to tolerate psychological stress. Hence, there is this benefit in addition to the endorphins that when you exercise vigorously, you're better able to manage psychological stress and anxiety.

So there are so many benefits of regular movement. I think the word exercise is intimidating but it really is just moving your body however you see fit. maybe that's dancing around your house maybe that's going for a walk or hike with a friend. The last point I'll make is that you don't have to wait until you have an hour in your day or expect that you exercise every single day. Meet yourself where you're at. If you can only handle 10-15 minutes then fine, but I also recommend that you set up a routine. At the beginning it is hard I guarantee you this so if you make it a ritual and you get out there there will rarely be a time where you will come home and regret that you did it.

3. Sleep

The third pillar is sleep. Sleep has many benefits not only cognitive benefits or mood benefits which you may already know about, but sleep has significant metabolic benefits as well. Sleep amount or recommendation depends on the individual and depends on the age, so younger children of course need 14 to 16 hours of sleep, young children adolescents 10:00 hours of sleep, by the time you're an adult the recommendation is 8

plus hours and the studies show that when you dip below that particularly if you dip below 7:00 hours of sleep then you start to get into trouble in terms of consequences in your mental and physical health.

It's not only sleep duration that is important but sleep architecture is also important. The quality of the sleep is also important. Try to get restful uninterrupted sleep. There are certain medical conditions that interrupt sleep, like restless leg syndrome or obstructive sleep apnea. If you are someone who suffers from one of those things then seek help. There are treatments for these things. Sleep quality is affected by certain medical conditions, it can also be affected by lifestyle and diet. Caffeine can affect sleep even if you don't realize it. Some people say oh you know I can drink coffee and go to bed no problem but it does interfere with sleep architecture and finally alcohol alcohol does affect sleep. Even if you think of the sedative effects, you may not realize that it is affecting your sleep cycles for several days after your drink.

Why is sleep so important? There is kind of a physiology to that as well so studies have shown that when people are sleep deprived as little as 2 nights of sleep deprivation will increase hunger hormones increase our propensity for palatable foods so not only are the hunger hormones increased but our desire for more palatable like high sugar high fat foods are increased from that sleep deprivation. We also know that sleep deprivation will affect insulin and will cause insulin resistance.

We're gonna stop here for this week's podcast. We talked about 3 out of 5 pillars to nourishment make sure you tune in next week we will get to the other 2. Thank you for listening, and I look forward to seeing you again next week.