



Making Friends with your Microbiome

The New Nutrition: A Self-Care Guide to Health and Healing.



With Alexia Parks & Joel Rauchwerger Ph.D.

TODAY, THE MOST COMMON DISEASES OF CIVILIZATION ARE DEFINED BY WHAT ARE CALLED “MISMATCH DISEASES”: THE MODERN LIFESTYLE IS MISMATCHED WITH THE WAY OUR BODIES WERE DESIGNED TO FUNCTION.

Here are the five biggest mismatches

1. We were built for movement. However, today our lifestyle is mostly sedentary.
2. We were designed for natural food nutrition with a lot of fiber in the diet. Today it's just the opposite: most people eat highly refined food with very little fiber in the diet.
3. We were designed for spending time in Nature. Today, too much time is spent indoors and on computers, video games and social media
4. We were designed to be in community. However, pre-COVID, 80% of seniors were isolated at home. Once you factor in the coronavirus and its consequential social isolation and lockdown, the number of isolated seniors has rapidly increased.
5. Our brain is designed for social behavior. The lack of face-to-face social engagement represents an underestimated health risk factor.

No self-help book will encompass all of these. Yet, these are at the heart of many of the diseases of modern civilization. When expressed in the body this constellation of diseases is called metabolic syndrome.

Metabolic syndrome can be a serious issue for seniors. In 1980 at Stanford Medical School, Dr. Reaven, head of the endocrinology department, discovered a group of traits strongly linked: high blood pressure, obesity, cardiovascular disease, stroke, insulin resistance and diabetes, that were all linked together but he didn't know the cause. Two years later he worked out the cause, the “smoking gun” of the hormone insulin.

WHAT THESE DISEASES ALL SHARE IN COMMON IS TOO MUCH INSULIN IN THE BLOOD.

There is one, and only one food group that really spikes the insulin - highly refined carbohydrates, especially highly refined cereal grains used in most baked goods

So what is the solution? What is the best path to optimum health that is aligned with how our bodies were designed to function? Vegan, vegetarian, Paleo or ketogenic (keto)?

Looking back 40 years, public interest in nutrition started with Dr. Robert Atkins and the Atkins Diet. Given the times, it was a quantum leap for nutrition. Before that, it was carbs, carbs, carbs. Carbs were king. Atkins basically said, “Let's have more protein and fat in the diet and reduce the carbs.”

HEALTH TIPS

1. By age 60, 60% of your digestive juices are gone. For good digestion, always eat protein first.
2. Avoid drinking any liquids with your meal, including water, soup or beer. Drink liquids 30 minutes before and after a meal. This keeps your digestive juices strong, helps break down the protein and reduces the problem of acid reflux.
3. Eat more fiber. We describe the many benefits of fiber-rich foods in our books.

It was a game-changer in the world of nutrition.

The Atkins Diet was fine-tuned by Loren Cordain, Ph.D., now 70, who is a professor of exercise physiology at Colorado State University. When Cordain was a student, he asked a simple question: “What did we eat before agriculture?”

Cordain then compiled 15,000 journal articles from medical, nutritional and anthropological sources, and that synthesis has become known as the Paleo Diet.

It was another tremendous contribution because, like Atkins, Cordain showed that the bad guy was highly refined carbohydrates such as cookies, cakes, refined bread, pasta, beer and pizza

In the Paleolithic times that Cordain studied, we did not have these foods.

Now, the most recent innovation — what we call the “New Nutrition” — is an extension of the Paleo Diet called The ketogenic diet (KETO), the ketogenic diet is focused on protein and fat with refined carbs kept to a minimum.

The keto diet simply takes good fats to the limit.

In a pure ketogenic diet 80% of your calories come from good fats, with no more than 50 grams of carbs per day. For example, 50 carbs is the equivalent of two small bananas. This is very difficult to do, so our own modified keto meal plan includes up to 100 carbs.

By “good fats,” what we’re referring to includes avocado oil, olive oil, canola oil, nut butters and 65% or darker chocolate. In addition, saturated animal fats in moderation are good. These can be found in high-fat yogurt, high-fat cheeses and in a 3-ounce steak or hamburger.



ATKINS

HOW DOES HIGH BLOOD SUGAR CAUSE BRAIN FOG AND FATIGUE?

With metabolic syndrome, we are really talking about one thing: too much insulin in the blood due to a diet of highly refined carbohydrates and sugars.

The brain only needs one teaspoon of blood sugar to function properly. However, today, when our food contains too much sugar from refined carbs, sweetened beverages and concentrated juices, this can mean 20 teaspoons of sugar or more entering the blood in a single day.

When there is too much sugar in the blood, insulin spikes and pushes the high blood sugar down into the liver. When your sugar level drops the result is hypoglycemia, commonly known as low-blood sugar, which creates feelings of fatigue, tiredness and brain fog

WHY DOES OUR BODY CRAVE GOOD FAT?

Our body has two bank accounts: one is for sugar (glucose) — also called carbohydrates. The other is for fats. The bank account for sugar is the liver. It is a very small bank account. It only takes about 700 calories to become filled.

By contrast, the bank account for good fat is large. It is all over the body: under the skin, around the heart, around internal organs and in the brain. It is big for a reason, and this alone suggests that the standard fuel for the body should be fat.

If you permit your sugar/glucose bank account in the liver to drain, which takes about three hours, then the body has no choice but to burn fats. This method for on-going fat burning and easy weight loss is called intermittent fasting. Medically speaking, the term is autophagy.

In the New Nutrition, a ketogenic diet will accelerate the burning of stored fats. Fat burning also produces “ketone bodies.” This is good. Your brain and your heart run 25% better on ketone bodies. In addition, the 640 muscles in your body have a 10 times greater affinity for ketone bodies rather than sugar (glucose).

Ketone bodies are a high-octane fuel for the body that is long lasting. It will keep your blood sugar nice and constant so that you avoid the experience of brain fog or fatigue. You avoid the “sugar blues,” the ups and downs of a carb-fueled diet.

THE LONGEVITY BENEFITS OF INTERMITTENT FASTING

1. Intermittent fasting is based on eating only two meals a day within an 8 hour period. For example: lunch at 12 noon and

dinner between 7–8 p.m. When you practice intermittent fasting, you accelerate the body’s fat burning and internal “house cleaning.” It becomes easy to burn off excess body fat. This simple lifestyle change can help prevent metabolic-syndrome-linked diseases.

2. With intermittent fasting, you keep your insulin levels low. When your insulin levels are at their lowest point, they turn on the longevity genes known as Sirtuin genes. These are genes which we all have that are basically on lock-down over a lifetime due to poor eating habits. Expression of these genes is good for health and healing!

WHY YOU SHOULD MAKE FRIENDS WITH YOUR MICROBIOME

The microbiome is a newly discovered organ in the body. Though medicine is 3,000 years old, this new organ was only discovered a few years ago.

Your microbiome weighs three pounds, the same as your three pound brain. In fact, it’s called “the second brain.” However, the microbiome contains 50 trillion bacteria, viruses and fungi and is located in your colon.

These 50 trillion microbes are our employees. Even Amazon doesn’t have that many! So the whole name of the game is to maximize and unleash the potential of your employees. For example, these microbes will produce 90% of your feel-good neurotransmitter serotonin, all within your gut.

What maximizes and unleashes the maximum potential of your microbiome is the food that you cannot digest: fiber.

By contrast, the food that humans can easily digest is protein and fat. These foods are digested in your stomach, pancreas and liver. Fiber, the food which we humans cannot digest, becomes the food for the bacteria in the gut.

Soft, soluble fiber — found in vegetables like spinach, kale, onions, garlic and tomatoes, as well as all fruits — dissolves in water. The fiber in these fruits and vegetables is what feeds your 50 trillion employees.

When you feed your microbiome the food it loves, it will produce another big benefit: short-chain fatty acids. And the rock star is the 4-carbon butyric acid. Butyric acid is known to heal leaky gut syndrome. Leaky gut syndrome can lead to auto-immune diseases. In short, a ketogenic lifestyle can help heal a leaky gut and prevent auto-immune diseases.

What causes a leaky gut? When we are young, the cells in our gut “hold hands” very tightly. That is, they are very close together. These close networks are called tight junctions.

Tight junctions provide a really good barrier for preventing bacteria from leaking into your body.

Over time, if the primary fuel for the body is highly refined carbohydrates, the tight junctions, like cement in bricks, start to dissipate. They become inflamed. This creates tiny openings for very small gut bacteria to pass through and enter the blood.

When these small bacteria leak into the bloodstream, the body goes into attack mode to fight these “foreign bacteria.” Medically speaking, this battle is called chronic inflammation. Chronic inflammation is a new model for understanding autoimmune diseases.

When the body sends out antibodies from the immune system to attack the bacteria that have entered the bloodstream through the leaky gut, it always sends out more than what is needed.

The extra antibodies will not only kill the bacteria but, like “friendly fire,” they will start to hit your own tissues. The result is what we now call autoimmune disease.

The fix? Dialing up the amount of soft, soluble fiber in your diet toward 60–70%. It is the consensus of experts that leaky gut can be healed by this kind of fiber.

Today’s New Nutrition is based on pulling the best from vegan, vegetarian, Paleo and ketogenic meals and creating a lifestyle that has a “ketogenic tilt.”

For us this means: 70% fiber, 15% good fats such as olive oil, avocado oil, omega 3s, coconut oil, butter, nut butters, high-fat yogurt, high-fat cheeses and 15% protein (about 3 ounces of protein a day).

When your health and healing path includes this lifestyle and high-fat meal planning, pretty soon you will automatically reduce or eliminate any desire for refined carbohydrates.

The benefits of the New Nutrition can be measured daily and include high energy levels, a continuous feeling of well-being and happiness, and mental sharpness.

Hello happiness. Good-bye brain fog. |

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is co-author of “23 INGREDIENTS” with Dr. Joel Raubwenger, and is CEO of ZIPHomeChef.com, an internet platform that networks licensed home cooks who are able to respond to emergency food service needs. Dr. Joel is an expert in whole-body health and nutrition. With a lifelong interest in how to strengthen the immune system, his focus is on how to prevent, reduce, or reverse most disease. Dr. Joel worked with the well-known cardiologist and heart surgeon Dr. Michael DeBakey and was on faculty at Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, Texas.



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