

## Nutrition Recommendations

- you need to decrease the processed carbohydrates and sugar and increase protein and fibre in your diet to help with your health
- Eat less processed food overall, meaning more fresh vegetables and meat that you prepare yourself, less food that comes out of a box/package, a fast food place or a restaurant.
- You don't have to count calories, allow your hunger signals to guide how much you are eating, it is hard to overeat protein and fibre because they send more signals that tell you that you are full as compared to processed fast carbohydrates because they take longer to digest, as an experiment: try eating the protein component of your meal first and pay attention to how full you feel
- Avoid eating while watching TV or scrolling your phone, if you are distracted, you will pay less attention to your hunger/satiety signals and may keep eating even when you are feeling full. If you are not sure if you are full, stop eating, wait 5-10 minutes, drink some water, and then see if you feel full, if not, eat a bit more. You don't want to get to a point of fullness where you feel uncomfortable or "stuffed."
- You aren't a child anymore; you don't have to finish your plate! If you are full, save the rest for later. Use smaller plates.
- Make meals for the week ahead of time so you always have healthier options and snacks available especially for at the end of the day when your willpower will be lower
- Put healthy options directly in your field of vision in your fridge near the front and near the front of your cupboards, put it in beautiful containers and choose colorful options for the food
- Put unhealthy options in less accessible places in your kitchen such as a higher shelf, inside an opaque box, the back of the fridge or don't buy it/bring it into the house
- make it easier to choose the healthy stuff and harder to choose the unhealthy stuff and give yourself non-food related rewards when you choose healthy options such as contributing money toward a reward fund e.g a spa day, massage, going to a concert or show, buying something related to a hobby or activity you like to do or reward yourself time to do your hobby/activity

## Decrease:

- cookies, cakes, chocolate, sweets
- juices
- sugar in coffee/tea
- pop/sodas
- bread/bagels/muffins
- rice
- potatoes/fries
- oatmeal, porridge
- cereal
- fruits (berries are ok though)
- dried fruits

- starchy vegetables (e.g corn, potatoes, carrots, sweet potatoes)
- while not a carbohydrate, limit butter, heavy cream, and large amounts of processed cheeses as these are high in saturated fats which can affect your lipid/cholesterol panel
- while not a carbohydrate, avoid seed oils and margarine (highly processed and can be inflammatory)

#### Increase:

- fibre-filled non-starchy vegetables (spinach, broccoli, green beans, eggplant, cauliflower, cabbage, salad greens)
- fiber rich foods such as chia seed/chia seed pudding
- lean protein (eggs and egg whites, chicken, fish, cottage cheese, Greek yogurt (look for low sugar/no sugar added and no fruit on the bottom!))
- healthy fat sources (avocados, extra-virgin olive oil, avocado oil, nuts/seeds)
- have ½ cup of berries per day (e.g strawberries, blueberries, cherries, raspberries)
- have small handful of nuts as snack (preferred nuts: almonds, macadamia, brazil nuts, and have smaller amounts of cashews, pistachios, peanuts, if you have high blood pressure, go for reduced sodium or unsalted nuts)

#### Substitute:

- Eat white bread? Go for WHOLE-GRAIN not whole-wheat (you should see the seeds/grains in the bread itself) and remember to eat less bread overall, you can try lettuce wraps for sandwiches
- Eat rice? Go for quinoa or cauliflower rice (if it is hard to get used to the taste, for whatever portion of rice you would usually eat, do ½ rice and ½ cauliflower rice to get used to it)
- Eat potatoes? Most recipes you can substitute cauliflower for potatoes
- eat rotis/chapatis/naan/paratha? Try making them with almond flour or coconut flour
- Check out: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hodkruyoT44>
- If you can't check the link above, search "keto roti" on Youtube, there is a user named "Keto Curries" who shows how to make low carbohydrate rotis, chapatis, etc. Try it out, it may not taste like regular flour flatbreads but it's a substitute that will work better for your body, you can also try adapting the flatbread recipes you already make by substituting ½ almond flour or coconut flour for regular flour to decrease the amount of processed carbohydrates
- eat noodles? Try zucchini noodles or spaghetti squash noodles or shirataki/konjac noodles (available in Chinese/Asian grocery stores, great for Asian noodle recipes)

#### Have moderate amounts of:

- lentils, legumes, beans (these tend to have more fiber which will help you feel full but depending on the person, they can increase blood sugar)
- one way to check how a food affects blood sugar is to check your blood sugar with a glucometer 2 hours after a meal to see the effect of the food on your blood sugar (this can be helpful even for non-diabetics, metabolic dysfunction is a continuum and

progresses over time, we can usually see changes in glucose tolerance even before an A1c or fasting blood sugar becomes pre-diabetic or diabetic)

A note on artificial sweeteners and sugar substitutes:

- it is ok to use them in small amounts if it helps curb a craving, but understand that the research still is not clear about their overall safety (for example some research with erythritol suggests that in animal studies it can increase the activity of clotting factors in the body in large amounts)
- also artificial sweeteners and sugar substitutes tend to be much sweeter than the same amount of sugar (sometimes 100s-1000s times sweeter) so your tastebuds crave more sweet taste, but slowly cutting down your overall sweet/artificial sweetener consumption, your body will crave less sweet foods
- also these artificial sweeteners/sugar substitutes may adversely affect the gut microbiome (the good bacteria in your intestines that help digest food)

A note on gluten-free:

- while these may not contain grain carbohydrates, they can still have a high amount of processed carbohydrates from things like rice flour or tapioca flour which can still raise your blood sugar so always check the nutrition label!

Eating at restaurants?

- skip appetizers that tend to be fried and breaded (carbohydrate rich), for main dishes, aim for vegetables or salad with a protein (tofu, chicken, fish)
- avoid sweet sounding dressings/sauces (if not sure ask for the sauce on the side so you can taste how sweet it is)
- for most burgers/sandwiches you can ask for it without a bun, ask for a lettuce wrap or to place on a bed of lettuce and ask for salad instead of fries

For those with fatty liver disease due to metabolic causes:

- Increase intake of black coffee (aim for before noon so it does not affect your sleep)
- Making the above dietary changes of decreasing processed carbohydrates should also help improve the fat accumulation in the liver
- Alcohol directly contributes to fatty liver disease, so if you drink alcohol (even in small amounts or sporadically), slowly decrease your intake and stop altogether
- Stop drinking juice/pop or any fructose-containing drinks, only about 30g of fructose can be metabolized to useful components, the rest, biochemically, essentially goes into fat storage in the liver

Stress:

- Ever find that you are making healthy choices, but the scale does not seem to move? Stress through cortisol can directly contribute to insulin resistance and thus contribute to difficulty with losing weight, so find ways to manage your stress and prioritize your mental health, look up mindfulness, meditation practices and breathing exercises on

YouTube, consider doing a CBT workbook to understand how your emotions/thoughts/behaviors are connected

- Speak to your doctor to see if medication to help manage your stress would be beneficial, medication can help turn down the noise related to anxious or depressed thoughts much like the dial of a radio, they can still be there, but you are less bothered by them and it can allow you to see a more balanced perspective
- You deserve to prioritize your health and happiness and recognize that the mind and body are connected, improving your mental health will help your physical health
- Trying to implement new changes to nutrition or activity level can also feel overwhelming, so focus on small, consistent changes, 1% improvements done consistently are more beneficial than making a 50% improvement all at once that you can't sustain because it has not become a habit yet
- Know also that when you are stressed, you will crave more processed carbohydrates and foods high in saturated fat, having healthy options that are ready to go and accessible will make it easier to choose these foods to eat when stressed

Sleep:

- The goal is for at least 7 hours of restful sleep each night to improve your metabolic health
- Look up sleep hygiene techniques to improve your sleep
- Avoid caffeine in the afternoon so that you get proper signals indicating it is time to sleep at night time
- If you work night shifts, try to move to a day schedule or limit how many night shifts you do each month, it will contribute to worsened metabolic health
- If you have symptoms concerning for sleep apnea, get tested as treating sleep apnea can improve your sleep, energy levels. Untreated sleep apnea can also upregulate hormones that contribute to weight gain so it is important to treat if present to help with weight loss.

Exercise:

- Start small with a 2 minute walk every day inside your house (that way no matter the weather, no matter how busy you are, you are doing it), increase that slowly to eventually walking 20-30 minutes every day, then slowly increase the intensity level so that it is moderately vigorous, meaning an activity level that you can still have a conversation with someone while doing it, but you are a little bit breathless
- Before any change in overall activity level, if you experience chest pain, dizziness, or significant shortness of breath with exerting yourself, talk to your doctor! You may need some cardiac testing/evaluation before you are safe to increase your exercise level
- Try walking after meals even for 5 minutes as this will allow glucose to enter the muscles even without insulin release.

Fasting/Time Restricted Eating:

- During periods of fasting, it allows your insulin levels to come down which helps with weight loss
- Fasting 12-18 hours can help with weight loss, fasting includes the time you are sleeping
- For some people they find doing a time-restricted eating where their meals are during a shorter period of time is easier than fasting a few days a week, this can be as simple as skipping breakfast or dinner to shorten your eating window (if you prefer to eat later, skip breakfast; if you prefer to eat earlier, skip dinner)
- it is important to not overeat during the eating window so you don't negate the health benefits of the fast, but you can have the meals you would have had for the day during the eating window, again let your hunger/fullness signals guide how much you are having
- You can drink water, carbonated water, plain tea or plain coffee during the time of fasting
- It is ok to have brief hunger signals during the time of fasting, and this will usually pass, however if you feel a significant hunger signal, stop the fast at that point and understand you should increase your protein and fibre intake in the meal prior to the fast

#### Final Point:

- This is a lot of information...take a breath! Take this as a framework to make 1% improvements every single day to improve your health, those 1% improvements will add up and will allow for lasting change in your life. Every day that you are doing these small positive changes is a win to feel good about even if the scale takes longer to improve! You got this!