Nutrient Dense Nutrition

Nutrients vs Calories
Fiber and the Glycemic Index
Plant Foods = Nutrient Dense, High Fiber
The 4-S Strategies to Bring in More Veggies
Dark Leafy Greens: Nutrient Powerhouses
Quick Points: Webinar Summary

I. Your body is hungry for nutrient and won’t feel full (or be truly nourished) without them.

II. Nutrient dense foods build strong walls of health in our body and for our metabolism.

III. The first place to begin is establishing a healthy, strong foundation of nourishment– and the best place to do that is by focusing on nutrient dense foods.

IV. Fiber is critical to healthy metabolism because high fiber diets set the stage for calm metabolism and long-term health.

V. Focus on the good is the perspective we will take as we explore the Nourish Pillar. Instead of deprivation or restriction, we are going to consistently in small steps bring good, nourishing, nutrient dense and fiber rich foods into our meals…effectively crowding out the crap.
Webinar Notes:
Nutrient Dense Nutrition: Nutrient Density vs Calorie Counting

Are your walls solid?

Nutrient Density

Nutrient density is the measure of how nutrient rich a food is given the amount of calories it contains. The most nutrient dense foods are those with the highest percentage of micronutrients per calorie. When you eat a diet rich in nutrient dense foods- you begin to build “strong walls” and establish a foundation for your whole-health well-being. From there you can experiment, tweak and refine your diet and which foods are best for you to suit your own body’s needs.

Macro and Micro Nutrients

Macronutrients are proteins, fats, carbohydrates. This is where your calories are sourced from.

Micronutrients are vitamins, trace minerals, phyto-chemicals, and organic acids. These are all present in different types and amounts in the spectrum of whole foods...but they are concentrated in much higher amounts in plant foods- specifically vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, legumes and sea vegetables.

The chart below demonstrates the difference between focusing on calories vs nutrients. For the same amount of calories, you eat much more food and consume radically more fiber and micro-nutrients when eating whole plant-based foods.
Fiber

Fiber is a plant based nutrient. Similar to how animal bodies use muscle and bones, plants use fiber to maintain their shape and structure.

There are a few different categories of fiber: soluble, insoluble, viscous, non-viscous and fermentable.

It’s hard to pin one food to one category of fiber because most fiber rich foods will have multiple types of fiber.

Fiber acts differently than other nutrients because it passes through your stomach and small intestine and proceeds into your large intestine relatively unscathed and still very much recognizable as dietary fiber.

It’s in this last place of our digestive tract, the large intestine that fiber undergoes most of it’s transformation—if it is going to undergo transformation at all.

Soluble fiber is fiber that has a strong tendency to dissolve in water. Soluble fiber tends to provide better support for regulating blood sugar (which we have learned so far is crucial in maintaining a vital, calm metabolism), cardiovascular health and satiation.

Insoluble fiber does not easily or at all dissolve in water. This kind of fiber supports constipation and transit of toxins since it moves stool through your digestive tract and out of your body faster.

Viscous soluble fiber is gel forming and more closely connected to the blood stabilizing and cardiovascular benefits vs the non-viscous forms of soluble fiber.

Finally fermentable fiber makes it way to the large intestine and then becomes “fermented” or metabolized by the bacteria that exist in the large intestine and plays a role in the uptake of nutrients and the health of the large intestines bacterial ecology as well.

When a food is naturally high in fiber, in particular soluble fiber, it directly supports a calm metabolism because it:

- Regulates blood glucose levels
- Allows food to digest more slowly
- Increases nutrient uptake
- Moves waste and toxins through system
- Increases satiation
Focus on the Good: 
Turn On Nourishment

In order for your body and metabolism to reconnect and heal itself it will need proper nutrients replenished. Our first and most important job is to build up the nutrient stores in our body and make available what our body needs to recalibrate and shift into calm, energy-producing, fat-burning metabolism.

Once your body begins to heal from the inside out, many of the strongholds you feel around eating “junk food” naturally loosen their grip and resolve themselves. It’s the backdoor approach to eating well…and just like the back door approach to calm, it works.

Focus on what you want to add into your diet, instead of worrying about what you need to take out of your diet right now.

That is how you make a massive shift using small steps and little trickles. You don’t tackle both movements at once- you focus exclusively on the FORWARD movement, what you want MORE of in your diet and trust that what you want less of will naturally lessen over time.

We are going to turn on nourishing instead of focusing on depriving.

Each week we are going to focus on one area of nutrient dense nutrition to bring more into our diet. That’s where we put our energy.

Over time, day after day, week after week you will keep adding and focusing on the good foods you want more of in your diet and your body will be nourished in ways it hasn’t been for a while…which means the vice grip you have on some old cravings and foods begin to loosen naturally on their own.

“It’s not what you eat some of the time, it’s what you eat most of the time that makes a difference.”

~ Joshua Rosenthal
Vegetables:
The Nutrient Dense, High Fiber, Crowding It Out Food

Increasing the amount of vegetables you consume will radically change how you feel, regardless of whether you struggle with nutrient-caused cravings or not. This week our primary goal is to increase the amount of vegetables you consume daily. For those of us who struggle with sugar cravings, our goal is to focus first on bringing in sweet vegetables.

The 4-S Strategy to Bring More Veggies

When we consider increasing our veggie consumption, there are four ways I encourage you to focus on at first. Sometimes trying to completely reinvent your normal meals to accommodate more vegetables can feel like too much at once.

I’d recommend working with the following 4 S’s first. Then, week by week, explore one new recipe that highlights vegetables in order to slowly bolster your tried-and-true recipes and increase your veggie intake.

1. **Snack**
Consider ways to bring in fresh vegetables as snacks throughout the day. A favorite way for me is to make a crudite plate the night before or first thing in the morning. I cut up some raw veggies and arrange on a plate and keep it on the counter or in the refrigerator and snack throughout the day. You could put these in a ziploc bag or tupperware dish to have on the go. Some good options are baby carrots, cut cauliflower, broccoli, cucumber, celery, cherry tomatoes, zucchini strips or snap peas.

2. **Salad**
Incorporating fresh green salads into your day is an excellent way to boost your veggie count. You may consider making a large salad for lunch, or starting your dinner with a green salad.

3. **Soup**
Vegetable soups are another fantastic way to have ready-made, quick meal options or sides that add a lot of nutrient density. Make a large pot of a veggie based soup once a week and have a bowl or two of soup each day.

4. **Step-Up**
Instead of trying to replace the recipes and meals you are used to all at once, try to simply “step up” the meal by adding more vegetables. Add shredded red pepper and carrots to your meatloaf; broccoli or spinach to your pasta sauce; mushrooms and asparagus to the chicken bake.
Food Focus: **Powerhouse Greens**

Leafy greens are some of the easiest and most beneficial vegetables to incorporate into your daily routine. Densely packed with energy and nutrients, they grow upward to the sky absorbing the sun's light while producing oxygen. Members of this royal green family include kale, collard greens, swiss chard, mustard greens, arugula, dandelion greens, broccoli rabe, watercress, beet greens, bok choy, napa cabbage, green cabbage, spinach and broccoli.

How do greens benefit our bodies? They are very high in calcium, magnesium, iron, potassium, phosphorous and zinc, and are a powerhouse for vitamins A, C, E and K. They are crammed full of fiber, folic acid, chlorophyll and many other micronutrients and phytochemicals. Their color is associated with spring which is a time of renewal and refreshing, vital energy. In traditional Asian medicine, the color green is related to the liver, emotional stability and creativity. Greens aid in purifying the blood; strengthening the immune system; improving liver, gall bladder and kidney function; fighting depression; clearing congestion; improving circulation and keeping your skin clear and blemish free.
Dig Deeper

resources

**Why Focusses on Calories Misses the Bigger Picture for Your Weight and Health** ~ from Dr. Hyman

**Fiber Rich, Nutrient Dense Foods** from World’s Healthiest Foods website

**Greens Glorious Greens: More than 140 Ways to Prepare All Those Great-Tasting, Super-Health, Beautiful Leafy Greens** by Johnna Albi.

recipes from healthy mom, happy family cookbook

**Green Smoothie** and **Green Leafy Sauté**