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HOLISTIC HEALTH NUTRITION

how to eat the nutrient dense way

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Judy Cho, NTP

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HOW TO EAT THE NUTRIENT DENSE WAY

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Nutrient Density and Bioavailability

Judy Cho

We all know we should eat nutritious foods. But what is nutritious? In today's world, *almost* any food can be defined nutritious. It simply depends on how *you* view the health of that food. But not all foods are created equal. By the end of this guide, you will know what types of food to feed yourself and your loved ones.

In the nutrition space, we like to use the term "nutrient-dense" rather than "nutritious," as it is more specific. **Nutrient density**, in a nutshell, refers to foods with high concentrations of macro and micro nutrients. **Macronutrients** are the proteins, fats and carbohydrates of our diet. **Micronutrients** are the vitamins, minerals and other trace elements of our diet. Our bodies require a mix of both to be at our best.

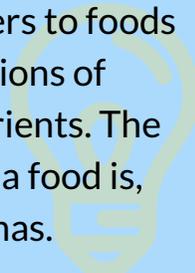
You can learn more about nutrient details and recommended foods to eat on my blog.

WHAT'S INSIDE

- *Nutrient Density*
- *Growth and Numbers*
- *All about Fats*
- *All about Carbohydrates*
- *Disease Awareness*
- *Portion Control*
- *Bringing it Home*
- *Actionable Steps*
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NUTRIENT-DENSITY

Nutrient density refers to foods with high concentrations of macro and micronutrients. The more nutrient dense a food is, the more nutrient it has.



We need approximately 35-40 different micronutrients for normal function. Maximizing nutrient density should be our primary goal when choosing foods for ourselves and our loved ones.

Why?

Because deficiencies of any essential nutrients can contribute to illness, disease and developmental issues. Our bodies require essential fats and essential proteins. They are called essential because our bodies need them but cannot make them. We **need** to get these essential fats and proteins from our foods.

By the way, **there are no essential carbohydrates.** We do require small amounts of glucose or sugar but our bodies are able to convert proteins and fats into glucose, as needed, through a process called **gluconeogenesis**. More on this later.

As we have become more heavily reliant on processed and packaged foods, food companies have added or *fortified* vitamins and minerals into their products, knowing their food is deficient in nutrients. But some of these fortified foods can be toxic to our bodies and often times, our bodies can't *absorb* the processed nutrients. This *even includes* some of the best vitamins and supplements. That's why real, wholesome food is best. Real wholesome foods are the most **bioavailable** foods.

BIOAVAILABILITY

Bioavailability is the ability for your body to break down foods and absorb its nutrients.



Growth and Numbers

90% of our brains develop before the age of 5. This is why I am a big advocate on children eating nutrient dense foods from a very young age. It sets the stage for our health for the rest of our lives.

At birth, the average baby's brain size is about a quarter of the size of the average adult brain. Incredibly, it doubles in size in the first year. The brain keeps growing to about 80% of adult size by age 3 and 90%—nearly full grown—by age 5.

And although the brain weighs in only about 3 pounds or 2% of total body weight, it has over 25% of the total cholesterol in the body. Put another way, the brain is about 60% fat.

It's worth repeating: 25% of ALL cholesterol in the body, is in the brain, making the brain 60% fat.

This is why it is so critical to consume healthy fats and fats rich in cholesterol. This is *also* the danger of consuming cholesterol - lowering medications like statins. Imagine what it does to the brain that *requires* cholesterol.

Our cells are also constantly being replaced and recycled. See the infographic section for sample graphics that show how often cells turnover.

The F Word

So let's talk about fat. For many, "fat" is the other F word. It's true. Many of us steer clear of eating fat and some of us go as far as eating only fat-free foods.

We've all been taught that fat is bad and that low-fat diets are best for heart health.

But is it? And if we eat fat, we get fat. Right?

If we dig a little deeper, our anatomy and physiology, say otherwise.

Let me explain.

The brain is the most energy-demanding organ in the body and requires fat for survival. If we recall a little bit of biology, the powerhouse of cells is the **mitochondria**. The mitochondria converts what we eat into energy. Our brains need fat-soluble vitamins and cholesterol for cognitive function, memory and proper nerve function.

Most of us fuel our brains with glucose from carbohydrates but the long-term effects of carbohydrates for energy, is damaging to our bodies. **The heart also prefers fat as its desired energy source.**

Yes, I know it's counter intuitive from all that we know about nutrition. If you care to know why this happened, I recommend reading Nina Teicholz's, *The Big Fat Surprise*.

All the cell walls in our bodies. are made up of fatty acids (fats are broken down in the body as

fatty acid + glycerol). And so the better the quality of good fats, the better the health of the cells walls to do their job: bring in nutrients, release energy and remove waste out of the cell. What comes out (energy and cell waste), can only be as good as what comes in (food).

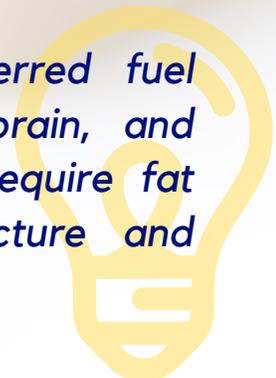
Since every cell structure is made of fatty acids, in essence, fats control everything. If you don't have proper fats, you don't have proper cells. If you don't have proper cells, you don't have proper function.

Function starts at the **cellular** level.

If we eat highly processed carby foods made of inflammatory oils and processed sugars, that is the best our body can work with. Is it any wonder why we get sick? How can our bodies properly function if we consistently eat a poor diet of processed, nutrient-poor foods? If you constantly put diesel in a car that requires super unleaded fuel, what do you think happens over time?

WHY FAT?

Fat is the preferred fuel source by the brain, and heart. All cells require fat for proper structure and functioning.



We need **calcium** from foods because of bone growth and skeletal formation. We also need vitamin D to absorb the calcium. Remember, vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin and should be consumed with fats.

Additionally, energy sources from fat do not need to be processed since fat goes directly into the mitochondria. Fat also has twice as much energy as glucose (broken down sugar). Glucose needs to be processed first in the cell before it can pass into the mitochondria.

So when we run on ketones and rely on our body's stored energy or energy from fat, it allows for more clean burning and long lasting energy.

This is why minimizing eating windows, reducing snacks and eating earlier on in the day is critical for optimal health. We need to give our digestive systems a break. By finishing our eating window earlier, we can have our body's focus on resting instead of digesting all day long. This is why many times when we eat heavy meals before bed, we have a terrible night's sleep. Minimizing snacking will also allow for more nutrient dense meals.



Photo Credit: Bryan Gee

Not all Fats are Created Equal

But there are different types of fat and not all fats are created equal.

Healthy good fats are essential for heart health, hormone production, healthy brain function, tissue development, appetite control and the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins (Vitamins A, D, E and K).

There are saturated fats (butter), polyunsaturated fats (salmon), monounsaturated fats (olive oil), vegetable oils (canola oil) and hydrogenated vegetable oils (aka trans fats). Trans fats are created by hydrogenating vegetable oils- this is how they become solid (margarine).

In the appendix section, you can see the horrifying steps of making canola oil. (Source: Weston Price foundation)

DID YOU KNOW?

We label foods as one type of fat but most fats are comprised of multiples fats. Olive oil is primarily a monounsaturated fat (73%) but also has saturated (14%) and polyunsaturated fat (11%).

The Good Fats

Saturated fats supply the body with clean energy, and provide tremendous benefits on a low carbohydrate diet. Saturated fats can be found in coconut oil, beef, whole milk and animal fats.

Polyunsaturated fats (like omega-3s) are vital to cell membranes and for the cells to communicate with each other. Omega-3s are essential for our children's eye and brain development. Basically, it helps the cells that make up our entire body work together and be healthy.

Polyunsaturated fats are typically present in micronutrient-dense foods. Some foods high in polyunsaturated fats are salmon, seeds and walnuts.

Monounsaturated fats may improve cholesterol levels and possibly lower LDL ("bad" cholesterol). Monounsaturated fats also help and maintain cells. Monounsaturated oils go rancid with heat, light and oxygen. Choose dark glass containers and store in a dark, cool space. Monounsaturated fats can be found in nuts, avocado and olive oil.

The Bad Fats

Vegetable oils, like canola, soybean, and corn, release toxic chemicals that are linked to cancer and disease. Vegetable oils are highly processed and cause inflammation and ***all modern disease has inflammation at its core***. These oils wreak havoc in your body, and can damage and alter healthy cells. Vegetable oils are found in processed foods, which are typically *also* high in carbohydrates—a deadly combination.

Hydrogenated vegetable oils aka Trans Fats, not only raise LDL cholesterol ("bad" cholesterol), they also lower HDL ("good" cholesterol), thereby doubling the risk of heart disease. Trans fats also increase another heart disease marker called Lp(a) and can increase blood clotting and inflammation, which can increase risk of heart attack or stroke.

Trans fats are common in processed foods, fast food and margarines.

Clive Champion/Getty Images

The Role of Saturated Fats

- **Cell membranes** – Saturated fatty acids make up 50%
- **Bones** – Help the body put calcium in the bones
- **Heart Disease** – Lower Lp(a), a marker for heart disease
- **Heart Function** – Preferred food for the heart
- **Liver** – Protect the liver from alcohol and other toxins
- **Lungs** – Cannot function without saturated fats
- **Kidneys** – Cannot function without saturated fats
- **Immune System** – Enhance immune system
- **Essential Fatty Acids** – Work together with saturated fats
- **Detoxification** – Supports body's detox mechanisms

No Essential Carbohydrates

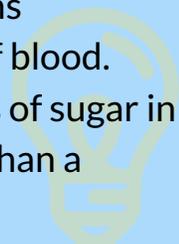
There is no dietary requirement for carbohydrates since there are no essential carbohydrates. **Essential nutrients** are defined as nutrients that must be obtained from external sources as our bodies cannot create them. As stated, there are no essential carbohydrates. **Yes, none.**

Our bodies do need a limited amount of glucose but the body can manufacture its own sugar (via a process called **gluconeogenesis**) from fat and protein. Body fat, for example, is stored as triglyceride. If the body needs glucose (sugar), it will make the glucose from the stored body fat (glycogen).

Table sugar (sucrose) is made of two molecules, glucose and fructose. Glucose can be used by our entire body. Excess glucose is stored in the liver, muscle and then any excess, stored as fat. But fructose bypasses all of this and penetrates the liver alone. Thus fructose is only absorbed by the liver. But our liver is only about 5 pounds. And when most of our processed foods has fructose from High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS), we are

DID YOU KNOW?

The human body contains approximately 5 liters of blood. This amounts to 4 grams of sugar in the blood, which is less than a teaspoon of sugar.



DID YOU KNOW?

90% of packaged, processed foods contains fructose or high fructose corn syrup.



overloading our liver. The excess fructose becomes fat in the liver, stays there and damages the liver. This is how we get non-alcoholic fatty liver.

Glucose can be used by the entire body and is detected by bloodwork. Fructose is not as easily detected.

And did you know majority of packaged, processed foods contains fructose or HFCS? It's in about 90% of



Two slices of whole wheat bread will raise your blood sugar higher and quicker, than 6 teaspoons of sugar.

processed foods. Fructose is also the main carbohydrate in fruits. Yes. Fruits. That is why it is dangerous to consume a lot of fruit **IF** you are also eating foods with high amounts of fructose. You can eventually develop fatty liver disease.

Even with the high carbohydrate recommendations from the Standard American Diet, they recommend limiting sugars to 6 tps (25 g) of sugar a day. Yet the average American consumes about 17 tps (71.14 g) of sugar daily.

A carb-heavy breakfast may give your body an initial boost but it is short-lived and likely followed by a depressed period. Instead, choosing proteins and fats, will provide more sustained energy and nutrients for energy throughout the day.

Digestion of refined carbohydrates requires the body's own store of vitamins, minerals and enzymes for proper metabolization.

Thus, when consuming foods that have minimal nutrients, our bodies require us to take up nutrients from our own bodies to break down these carbohydrates—even lessening our net nutrient reserve.

Sugar consumption is also the cause of bone loss and dental decay. Sugar consumption causes phosphorus levels to drop and calcium to rise. Calcium rises because they are pulled from the teeth and bones. The drop in phosphorous hinders the absorption of the calcium, making it unusable and toxic.

This is why reason just taking calcium supplements isn't the solution. Find the root cause and in this case it's too much sugar consumption that is causing low calcium levels.



*Oatmeal is typically considered a healthy breakfast food. But It has **almost 30 grams of carbohydrates** per 1/2 cup. Taking fiber into consideration, it still has 24 net carbs. That's 75% of the amount of sugar in a can of soda. Eating oatmeal in the morning, starts the body on a sugary glucose rollercoaster.*

Sugar consumption causes tooth decay, not only because it promotes bacterial growth in the mouth, but because it alters the internal body chemistry.

In the next section, we will take a deeper look into the dangers of excess carbohydrate consumption.

DID YOU KNOW?

Fructose is the main carbohydrate in fruits. It can be harmful to feed a lot of fruit to our children, **IF** they are eating a lot of foods that contain fructose. They can develop fatty liver disease.

Disease Awareness and Prevention

No one likes to talk about disease, let alone our loved ones possibly developing disease. But disease can be prevented.

Genetics may program you for disease but your genes **do not** define the outcome. Diet and lifestyle can change the programming of those genes (**epigenetics**).

Choosing to eat less refined carbohydrates and sugar, isn't about putting ourselves on a diet—it's about eating real food that is natural, delicious and rich in nutrients for our bodies to have optimal health.

Disease awareness can facilitate prevention:

Carbohydrate intolerance can take 20 years to develop. This intolerance can have negative effects on their metabolism and their health. Diseases such as Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, cancer, Alzheimer's, heart disease and hormonal issues such as infertility, are all chronic diseases.

These diseases do not happen overnight, they start developing decades before. It is critical for our future health to start good nutrition and educating ourselves about nutrition, now.

Fructose, for example naturally occurs in fruit, honey and certain vegetables. But fructose is used too often in pre-packaged, processed



foods and drinks.

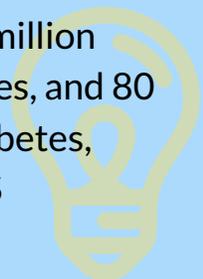
Many times, the fructose is even further processed to be in the form of high fructose corn syrup.

Excess fructose (of any kinds) is associated with the following health problems: High triglycerides, liver damage, metabolic syndrome & cardiovascular disease, links to cancer, insulin resistance, high uric acid levels, gastrointestinal issues & leaky gut and mercury poisoning.

Diabetes rates have effectively tripled in the past 30 years. There are approximately 26 million people with diabetes, and 80 million with prediabetes in the US, which accounts for over one-third of the population.

DID YOU KNOW?

Diabetes rates have tripled in the past 30 years. There are approximately 26 million people with diabetes, and 80 million with prediabetes, one-third of the US population.



Diabetes is a disease of high blood sugar. It makes intuitive sense that the less sugar we put in our bodies – keeping in mind that starch, and other complex carbohydrates, are nothing more than chains of sugar molecules that get broken down in the body– the less likely we will develop prediabetes, and ultimately diabetes.

Leaky gut and damaged gut biomes can affect optimal health, while also attributing to more serious disorders and disease. Eating nutrient dense whole, real foods can help heal and strengthen the gut. One culprit of leaky gut is eating carbohydrates and inflammatory seed oils. Reputable spore probiotics can support heal the gut initially but diet should be the first offense, overtime.

Do not buy probiotics from the shelves. If they require refrigeration, how will these same probiotics make it through your very acidic stomach acid and reach the gut? *Something to think about.*

Mitochondrial (energy from cells) dysfunction is linked to disorders and neurodegenerative disease, including

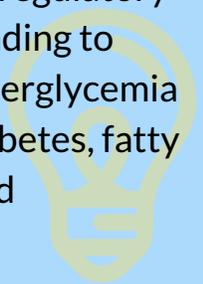
Alzheimer's. Behavioral issues like aggression, ADHD and even autism can be attributed to nutrient deficiencies.

But **disease can be prevented.** Gene expression can be altered by lifestyle and dietary changes. There is always hope. **Always.**

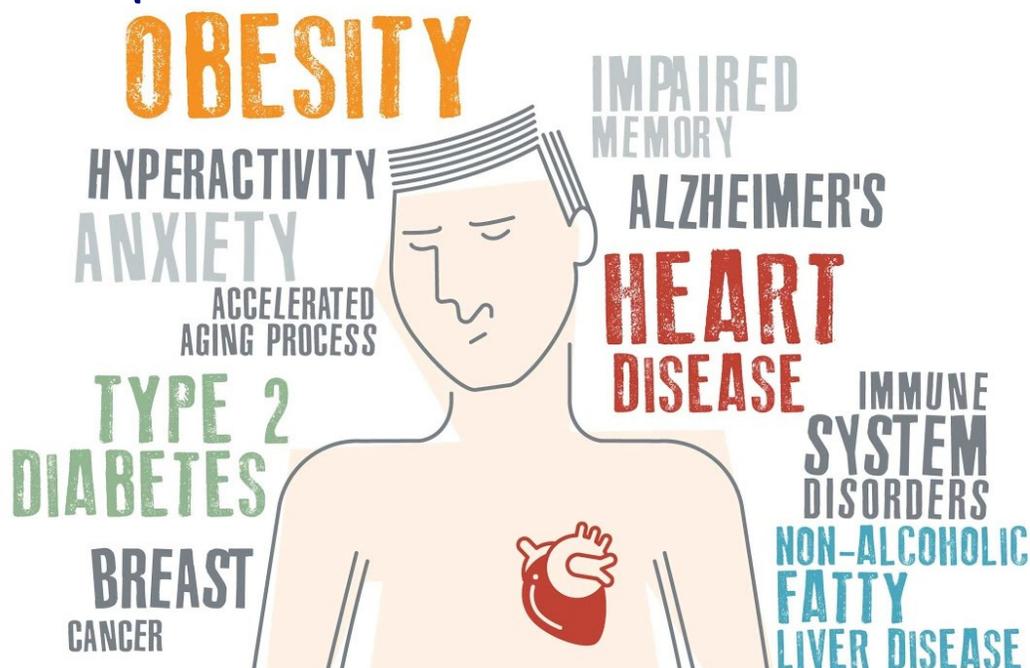
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So now that we know what to eat, and what to eat less of, let's talk about how much.

Long-term over-consumption of sugar weakens all the regulatory mechanisms, often leading to insulin resistance, hyperglycemia and greater risk of diabetes, fatty liver, heart disease and neurodegeneration.



The cost of sugar's burden on the body



Portion Control

Now that we've discussed nutrient density and bioavailability, we have the tools to make nutrient dense meals.

There are some camps that say to eat 1:1 grams of fat to protein ratio for weight loss. Others say to eat 2:1 grams of fat to protein for therapeutic benefits and weight loss.

Some say to consume 1-2 lbs of meat a day. Some say eat a minimum of 1600 calories.

Client after client, everyone has been different. You need to trust your body and eat what feels right for your body to thrive. If you eat 1:1 and you feel ravenous after a couple hours, you probably need to increase the fat grams. If you eat too much fat and feel tired or unsatiated, you may have to increase protein.

Low carb tends to increase satiety and cause people to never really feel hungry. I highly recommend eating sufficient calories as overtime

your body will start shutting down parts of your body to keep the lights on to keep the body running.

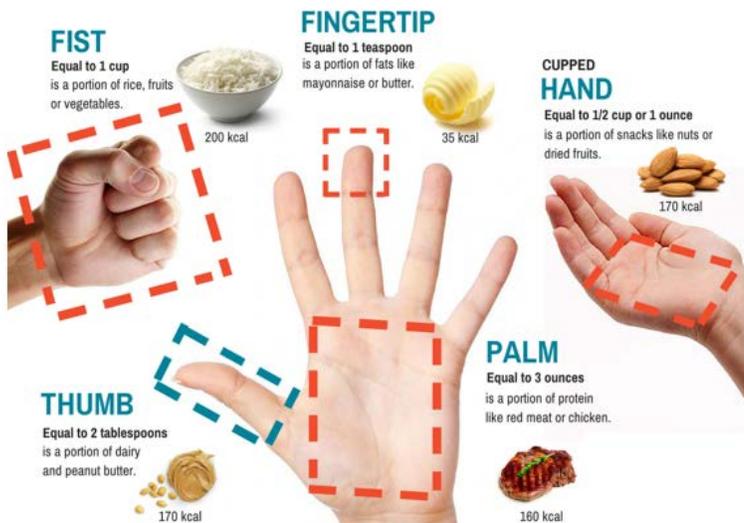
This is where adrenal fatigue can happen and you start to lose hair, skin tone, and have brittle nails and always feel cold. You can always feel cold and still survive another day.

Fasting is an option to heal your body but when you eat, you must eat sufficient calories to have the body thrive.

As some clients still request the dietary standards for portion control, you can find general guidelines below.

Don't get hung up on calories and fitting all your macros and nutrient guidelines. We don't know what nutrients we need on a low carb diet, meat-based diet. listen to you body for the best cues for optimal health.

VISUAL GUIDE TO ESTIMATE PORTION SIZE USING YOUR HANDS



HAND SIZES VARY. SO THE COMPARISON IS JUST AN ESTIMATION & ROUGH GUIDELINE.

PORTION GUIDELINES

The Standard American Diet portion are provided below. Rather than focus on standards, I recommend eating in a parasympathetic state and trusting your body. The meat portion is wrong, in my opinion.

- 1 fingertip is 1 tsp (1 serving of butter)
- 1 thumb is 2 tbsp (1 serving of nut butters)
- 1 handful is 1 oz (1 serving of nuts)
- 1 fist is 1 cup (1 serving of fruits/veggies)
- 1 palm or a deck of cards is about 3-4 oz (1 serving of meat)

Bringing it Home

"Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world" – Nelson Mandela

We all know change is hard and it won't happen overnight. But every small change counts and you can implement small changes immediately.

Instead of drinking juice or soda, swap it for a piece of fruit. It takes 6-8 oranges to make a cup of juice. You can gulp down a cup of juice with your meal but you are not going to eat 6-8 oranges in one sitting.

Instead of consuming low fat foods, (because remember, low fat usually means, more added sugars), swap for full fat versions like whole milk and full fat cheese (raw is preferred).

We have a **small window of opportunity** to feed ourselves and our loved ones the most nutrient dense foods for optimal health and growth. We now know to challenge low fat diets and to feed ourselves foods with good fats for our brains—a brain that is **60% fat**.

The great news is that our bodies are resilient. We can make changes now and see the benefits in our bodies almost immediately.

Picture a day. Just imagine, you come home from work or a long day of running errands and instead of plopping on the couch from exhaustion, you have the energy to make get things done around the house and make nutrient dense meals for yourself and your loved ones.

You *can* have energy after a long day. It's possible when you are running on ketones.

And if you crave carby, processed foods, it's it's likely because of habit.

But habits can change.

Figure out your triggers and decide why you want to change. Figure out your why. Choose one day at a time. it is absolutely possible.

Key Takeaways

- **Eat nutrient dense foods** that are the most bioavailable, in terms of nutrients.
- **Fat is the body's preferred source of energy.** Brain is comprised primarily of fat, especially cholesterol.
- **There are no essential carbohydrates.** Over time, running on sugar, will cause damage to our body and can cause adrenal fatigue.
- **Eat more protein and good fats. Minimize processed carbohydrates and inflammatory seed oils.**
- Trust your body and eat mindfully.
- **Minimize snacking and eating times.** Let your digestive system rest. Allow your body to use your energy reserves. Allow your digestive system to take a break. Let your body focus on other bodily functions for optimal health.
- Intermittent fasting is a great tool to start leveraging.
- Remember that even with high quality nutritional supplementation, **nothing replaces a real whole foods diet.**

Actionable Steps to Take Now

The following is a list of clients' favorite actionable steps you can take now. Some may take some time to stick but overtime, most clients have found success with these measures.

- Keep it simple. **Progress not perfection.**
- **Continue to learn** about a real, whole-foods approach, healthy fats and good quality proteins.
- Eat only when hungry. **Minimize snacking.** Even our grandparents did not snack all day. Let insulin take a rest.
- **Drink more water or bone broth and less diuretics, like juices and sodas.** Add apple cider vinegar for even better digestion.
- **Trust the intuitive eating process:** Sit down and get in a parasympathetic state and mindfully eat. Don't worry too much about portions.
- **Compartment lunches** are best to have low carb, high fat foods. Reference the sample lunch plan guide for more examples.
- Use **cupcake holders** to make compartments in containers.
- **Shop the perimeter of the grocery store.** Buy more real, nutrient dense foods.
- **Check nutrition labels** for carbohydrates, hydrogenated oils and high fructose corn syrup (HFCS). Shy away from these ingredients.
- **Minimize sugary sweets and sweeteners.** Try not to have them in the house.
- **Eat high quality fats and proteins.** Increase omega-3s from fatty fish, grass fed meats and eggs. In terms of nuts, macadamia nuts have the highest fat content and lowest in oxalates than other nuts.
- **Avoid trans fats and seed/vegetable oils.** They are highly inflammatory.
- **Eggs are a super food**, especially the yolk. They are also rich in choline, which is important for brain health.
- **Best foods for mitochondrial health** (brain's energy powerhouse): Eggs, organ meat, avocado, grass fed meats, grass fed butters, fatty fish (like sardines and salmon), and extra virgin olive oil.

CONSIDER THIS

Sandwiches are a staple in our society. But let's leave out the bread and focus on what's on the inside. 2 slices of whole wheat bread will raise blood sugar higher and quicker, than 6 teaspoons of sugar. And remember, **our bodies can only handle one tsp of sugar in our blood, at any given time.** So think about the sugar high and then crash we feel after eating *just bread.*

Remember, it's progress not perfection.

Appendix: How Canola Oil is Made

This chart portrays the production canola oil. Yes, it is bleached, deodorized, plasticized, and much more. Think twice before reaching for vegetable oils. Opt for avocado oil, coconut oil and animal fats instead.

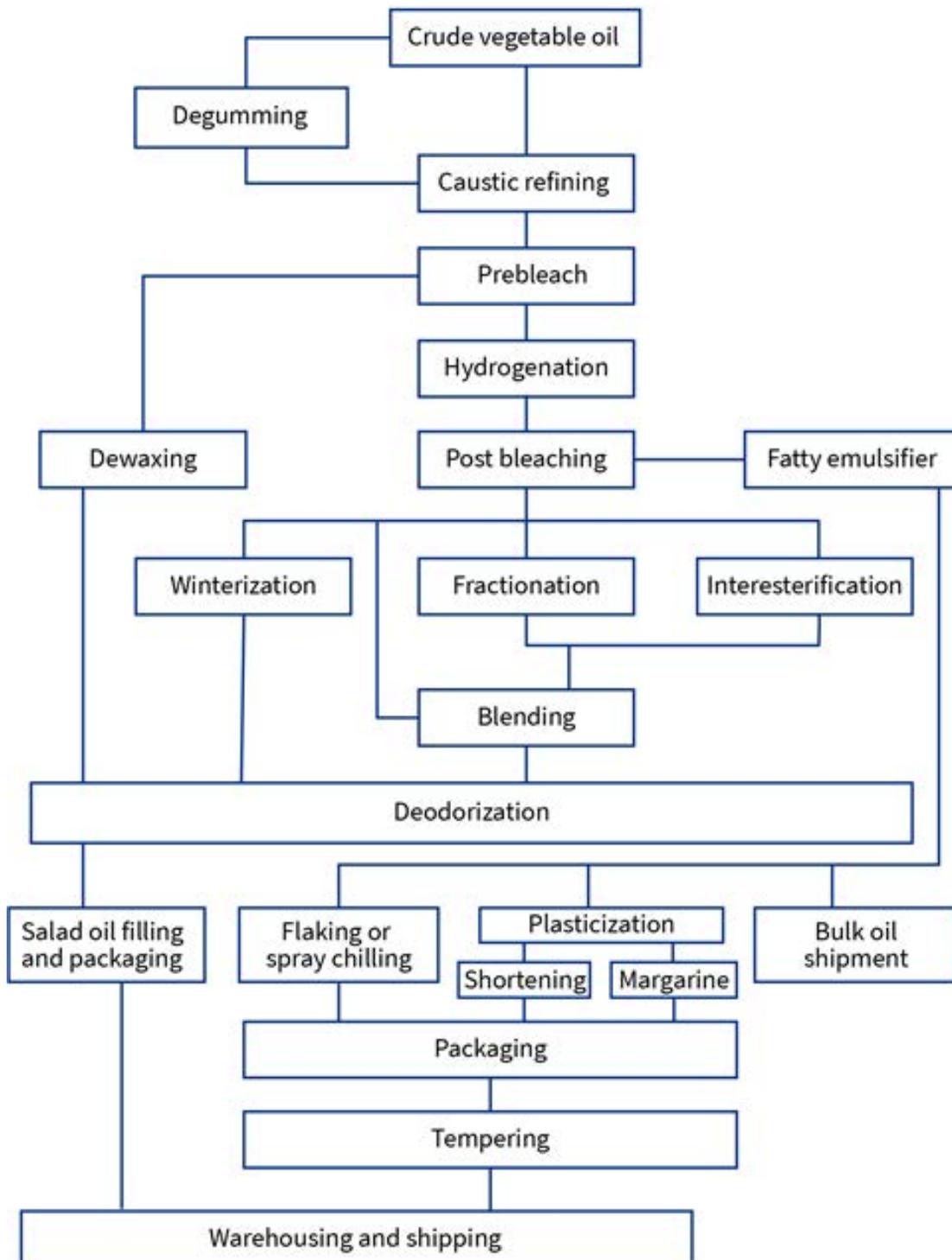


Photo Credit: Weston A. Price Foundation

NUTRITION WITH JUDY INFOGRAPHICS

HEALTH BENEFITS OF RED MEAT

Why is meat vital for optimal health?



Red meat is the **MOST** bioavailable source of iron and zinc. Red meat is also a good source of potassium, niacin, vitamin B6 and B12.



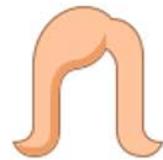
Heart Health



Growth and Maintenance



Strong Bones and Teeth



Healthy Skin, Hairs and Nails



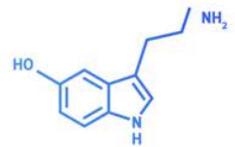
Healthy Vision



**Mental Function
Anti-Fatigue**



**Immune Function
Natural Antioxidants**



Hormone Regulation

www.nutritionwithjudy.com



RESOURCES

The following is a list of resources. You can find a comprehensive list of resources at www.nutritionwithjudy.com

GUT HEALING KIT

- Provides optimal support when **starting a low carb, high fat diet**
- Provides stomach acid and **digestive support** to digest and absorb foods and nutrients
- **Supports nausea** after high-fat meals and healthy bile flow. Supports **proper break down of fats** for digestion and absorption
- **Support digestion** with numerous digestive enzymes to **break down fats, proteins and carbohydrates**. Supports **loose or inconsistent stools**, helping stools to be better formed
- Supports **healthy gut barrier** and immune function. Feeds good bacteria and targets bad bacteria
- Supports gut after **antibiotic use**
- Supports **toxin removal with immunoglobulins**, supporting healthy digestion, neutralizing environmental toxin and improving gut barrier function
- Supports the preparation of nutrient dense homemade **collagen-rich bone broth**

- Use "**GUT10**" at checkout **\$10 off** (*clickable*)



RESOURCES

The following is a list of resources. You can find a comprehensive list of resources at www.nutritionwithjudy.com

Recommended Reading

- Weston A. Price Foundation
- Environmental Working Group
- Obesity Code - Jason Fung
- Nourishing Traditions - Sally Fallon
- The Big Fat Surprise - Nina Teicholz

"Genetics may load the gun but it is Lifestyle that pulls the trigger."

Scott Kahan, MD, George Washington University Weight Management Program

Contact

Judy Cho

Nutritional Therapy Practitioner

judy@nutritionwithjudy.com

www.nutritionwithjudy.com

About Me

Judy Cho is a certified Nutritional Therapy Practitioner. She also holds a degree in Psychology and Communications from the University of California, Berkeley. Judy works with clients by focusing on the root cause for an array of health struggles and disease. Together, they work to create individualized solutions that are sustainable for the long term.

Empowering clients with the knowledge and individualized tools to change their diet, while being there as a beacon of support and encouragement, has been a rewarding experience.

Prior to becoming a nutritional therapist. Judy Cho was a management consultant and she now leverages her psychology degree and nutritional therapy education to help serve the community in the most effective ways. Judy is a nutritional advocate for the Carnivore diet and on most days her kids follow a low carb diet. Judy focuses on debunking nutritional misinformation and promoting self-knowledge and self-advocacy. She shares bite-sized holistic nutrition information with her infographics on social media platforms. She is passionate about helping people to be their best selves and live their best lives.

