

Eat real food. Avoid processed food. Cook more.

Dieting...where do I even begin?

- First of all, anyone who has ever tried to diet has likely experienced frustration, hunger, desperation, bingeing and the yo-yo effect where they end a diet in a fit of ravenous hunger, and ultimately gain back the weight they lost...and then some. You have probably heard “diets don’t work.” So then what is somebody supposed to do to lose weight? Doctors say, “exercise and watch what you eat.” But, what does “watch what you eat” even mean? If you’re bold enough to ask for clarification, they may fumble a response like: “you know...um...eat more fruits and vegetables,” or perhaps “cut down on fat,” or the most enlightened among them will say, “cut down on processed foods.” So you try that, and still, no lasting weight loss. What gives?

Who can you turn to?

- Doctors receive very little education on nutrition.
- While there are some excellent registered dietitians, in some cases their institutions have industry ties, so their views may be shaped by the food industry agenda.
- So who can you turn to for trusted advice? I suggest health coaches.
- Seek out a health coach with a background free of financial ties to the food industry, and one whose education spanned many different food philosophies. Here are 2 great options:
 - o Graduates from the Institute for Integrative Nutrition: www.integrativenutrition.com
 - o www.rise.us (a digital health coaching platform)

When someone (including me) tells you what to eat, be very skeptical

- The debate on what’s the correct way to eat (vegan, paleo, low fat, low carb, ketogenic, Mediterranean) has reached fever pitch.
- Choosing what to eat has various considerations: ethics, environment, taste, allergies and intolerances, religion, cost, convenience, family considerations, and general health.
- There are also ancestral factors that have been largely ignored: are you of Mediterranean descent? Or perhaps Indian, Asian, Native American, Northern European or African descent? This likely matters in determining what diet is optimal for you. There’s no one-size-fits-all diet.
- The Mediterranean diet has the most evidence backing it, but I don’t think it’s necessarily the best diet for everyone. And it is possible to eat poorly while technically adhering to the Mediterranean diet. Some diets, such as the paleo diet, are just beginning to be researched.
- However, I would argue that the research is not that helpful in guiding our choices.
- To drown out the conflicting research papers and media headlines, here’s what I use as my **compass**:
 - o Listen to your body – how do you feel when you eat this food?
 - o Is it real food?
 - o Did we (more or less) evolve eating this?

Eat Real Food:

- My overall eating philosophy:
 - o **Eat. Real. Food.**
- And conversely, don’t eat fake food.
- Simple, but not easy.

What’s Real Food?

- Ask yourself: did it grow in the ground or was it a healthy animal?
- Real food includes:
 - o All vegetables

- Starchy tubers (sweet potatoes, taro, yucca, plantain)
- Pastured meats and organ meats (eat every part of the animal)
- Free-range eggs and poultry (eat the yolk!)
- Wild fish (small fish (e.g., sardines, anchovies, salmon) are better than large fish (e.g., tuna, swordfish))
- Fermented foods (sauerkraut, beet kvass, kimchi, miso)
- Plenty of natural fats (grass-fed butter and ghee, coconut oil, MCT oil, olive oil, avocados)
- Bone broth, chicken broth, fish stock
- Nuts and seeds
- Chocolate
- All fruit (but if you're rehabilitating your diet, better to aim for less sweet fruits like berries and grapefruit)
- Sprouted rice and legumes (if you choose to eat grains and legumes)
- Full-fat dairy (if you choose to eat dairy, the "realist" form of it is full-fat, unpasteurized dairy)

What's Not Real Food?

- All processed foods
- Conventional meat, dairy and poultry (often fed hormones and antibiotics)
- Artificial fats
 - Trans fats
 - Industrial seed oils (e.g., canola oil, corn oil, soybean oil, safflower oil)
- High fructose corn syrup
- Artificial sweeteners
- Processed soy
- Conventional flour (which contains a problematic compound called glyphosate)
- Skim milk
- Anything with preservatives, food coloring or "natural flavor"

Drop the Fat-Phobia

- It's time to drop fat-phobia. We were wrong. Saturated fat and cholesterol are not the cause of heart disease (with some rare exceptions, such as familial hypercholesterolemia).
- Heart disease is more consistently tied to sugar and artificial fat consumption.
- Low-fat diets have defaulted us to high sugar and carbohydrate consumption, with a concomitant increase in diabetes and heart disease.
- Fat contains vitamins and regulates appetite. Stop fearing fat.
- Cholesterol (not technically fat, but related in our collective unconscious) is essential for cell membranes, proper neuron function and hormone production.

Count Chemicals, Not Calories

- Counting calories is based on bad science.
- We used to think all calories were created equal, and we thought weight loss had to do with a simple equation: calories in – calories out = total calories (and if you run a deficit, you lose weight)
- *As if!* It is *much* more complex than that. Various factors, including the foods we eat, how much we eat, and even the bacteria in our guts, determine our appetite, satiety, metabolism and fat distribution.
- If you want to be healthy and lose weight, as Chris Kresser says: "count chemicals, not calories."
- In practice, this means that eating calorie dense real foods such as grass-fed ghee or macadamia nuts will promote health better than zero calorie sodas made with artificial sweeteners, or 100-calorie snack packs.

Think About Nutrient-Density

- We have a national eating disorder—we think about food as calories. We think if something is delicious, it must be "fattening." We've lost touch with food as nutrition—not just calories, but also vitamins, minerals and macronutrients (fat, carbohydrate and protein).
- Shift away from thinking of food as calories and toward food as your opportunity for nutrition.

- In the best of circumstances, it's actually difficult to get all the nutrition we need from a day's worth of food. If we then eat "empty calories" and processed food (a nutritional wasteland), you have the American conundrum: ***we're overfed and under nourished.***
- Think of processed food as nutritional opportunity cost. Instead, aim for maximal nutrition per bite:
 - o Eat the most nutrient-dense foods (organ meats, spices, veggies, pastured meats, healthy fats)
 - o Eat a balance of nutrients:
 - Your plate should be about half vegetables, a quarter protein and a quarter starch
 - Eat a rainbow of different colored foods
 - Catch the more elusive nutrients:
 - Eat dulse for iodine
 - Eat pumpkin seeds and cacao for magnesium
 - Eat wild cold-water fatty fish for omega-3 fats and vitamin D
 - Eat egg yolks for B vitamins and choline
 - Eat organ meats—they're a veritable multivitamin

Avoid the Drug-Like Foods

This is the missing ingredient for many people who continuously overeat and get stuck in a restriction-binge cycle.

- **Abstinence**
 - o Avoid the drug-like foods, which are sugar, gluten, dairy and flavor additives (e.g., MSG).
 - o Sugar hits the reward circuitry of the brain, while gluten and dairy break down into opiate-like substances called gluteomorphin and casomorphine. If you suspect you are "addicted to food," this might be the explanation.
- **Eat Regular Meals**
 - o Aim for 3 meals and 2 snacks per day. This helps keep blood sugar stable.
 - o You want to send a signal to your brain that you're in a state of abundance, not starvation (which can trigger overeating).
 - o Eat when you're hungry, stop when you're full.
- **Avoid All Forms of Restriction***
 - o Restriction --> binge --> restriction --> binge --> ...
 - o You can only truly stop the restriction-binge cycle by stopping restriction.
 - o Avoiding restriction means eating regular meals and consuming plenty of protein, healthy fat and carbohydrate. Be sure to eat delicious, satisfying food at every meal.

**You may have noticed an inherent contradiction between step 1 (abstain from sugar/gluten/dairy/MSG) and step 3 (avoid restriction). We have to navigate this delicate balance carefully. Restriction is an unhealthy mental and physical state that begets bingeing. However, I still encourage you to abstain from the drug-like foods. We are trying to re-establish healthy hunger and satiety signals. The drug-like foods operate as addictive substances in the reward circuitry of the brain, overriding hunger and satiety signals, and thereby undermining our efforts to re-establish proper hunger and satiety signals.*

- **Sleep**
 - o Get enough sleep every night. This is around 8 hours for most people.
 - o Sleep regulates the hormones involved in appetite, satiety and metabolism.
 - o I cannot emphasize this one enough. Adequate sleep is a *significant* factor in establishing healthy hunger and satiety signals, and it is often overlooked. Make it a priority. Make it *the* priority.
- **Stabilize Blood Sugar**
 - o Blood sugar fluctuations can precipitate overeating.
 - o Take a spoonful of coconut oil 3 times a day (upon waking, in the afternoon, before bed).
 - o Consider starting your day with coffee or tea blended with butter and MCT oil.
 - o Always have a snack handy (e.g., nuts, hard-boiled egg, wild salmon jerky, grass-fed beef jerky, dark chocolate, almond butter), so you stay on top of blood sugar while you're on the go. Don't wait for the blood sugar crash—*prevent it* with a well-timed snack.
- **Relax**
 - o Practice relaxation and stress management (yoga, meditation, breathing exercises).

- Consider getting energy work (acupuncture, craniosacral therapy, Reiki).
- Eat mindfully: chew thoroughly and avoid distractions while you eat (TV, computer).
- Look away from the phone and wake up to you and your surroundings: listen to your body, your emotions and your loved ones.
- In general, *slow down and listen*.
- Shift your relationship to food away from self-punishment or self-sabotage and toward eating as an act of self-care and self-love; stop battling with yourself.
- Imbue your relationship to yourself, your body and your food with love and radical acceptance.
- **Optimize Nutritional Status**
 - Subtle micronutrient deficiencies can increase appetite (your body is trying to get what it's missing).
 - Eat a nutrient-dense diet of real food to ensure excellent nutrient status.

Make Eating an Act of Radical Self-Love and Go Easy on Yourself

- You are not in a battle with your body or your appetite
- Honor your body's appetites, but help it discern between intuitive appetite and drug-craving
- Try to adhere to this approach 80% of the time, and don't lose sight of what makes life fulfilling (social connection, community, enjoyment). As Chris Kresser says, sometimes it's better to eat the wrong food with the right attitude than the other way around.

Heal the Gut

- Our gut health has a direct impact on our appetite and metabolism
- Here's how to heal the gut:
 - Avoid what irritates the gut
 - Gluten, sugar, industrially processed vegetable oils, artificial sweeteners, +/- dairy
 - Add in what soothes the gut
 - Take a probiotic daily – I recommend *Prescript Assist* for most people
 - Consume fermented foods – I recommend *Hawthorne Valley Farms sauerkraut*
 - Eat starchy tubers, such as sweet potatoes, plantain, taro, yucca
 - Consume bone broth or collagen powder
 - Create the conditions for the gut to heal
 - Stress management
 - Squatty potty – www.squattypotty.com
 - Acupuncture, yoga, meditation, breathe, journal, spend time in nature, unplug

Troubleshooting

What to Eat for Breakfast

- Breakfast is notoriously challenging. My typical patient's breakfast ranges from "nothing" to "coffee with skim milk and splenda."
- Many of our modern day ills (stress, anxiety, difficulty with attention and focus, insomnia, fatigue) are intimately related to blood sugar instability. Eating a breakfast rich in protein and fat and low in sugar and refined carbs can set you up with stable blood sugar for the rest of the day.
- Breakfast recommendations:
 - Eggs – if you have time, cook them fresh. If you don't, make a batch of hard-boiled eggs over the weekend, leave them in the shell, and put 1-2 eggs in a baggie to take with you to work
 - Organic pre-cooked sausages – widely available, and it takes less than a minute to heat it up in the microwave
 - Oatmeal – if you tolerate grains, oatmeal is a great choice. You can make it more blood sugar stabilizing by adding fat and protein in the form of nuts, ground flax seed, coconut oil, shelled hemp seeds or cream (if you tolerate dairy)
 - Nuts – if you really don't have time to sit down and eat food, at the very least, carry a baggie of nuts that you can snack on early in the day

- “Bulletproof Coffee” – if you drink tea or coffee in the morning, consider stirring or blending some grass-fed butter or ghee and something called MCT oil (medium chain triglyceride oil, a form of refined coconut oil) into the beverage. This will provide you with a good bolus of healthy fats first thing in the morning.

Ordering Take-Out

- In a perfect world, we’d be cooking all our own food. But realistically, we are often ordering take-out and delivery.
- There are better and worse restaurants, and better and worse options on any given menu.
- On the last page is a list of some NYC restaurants that offer real food. No guarantees that everything on the menu is real food, but at least it’s a start.
- Menu tricks and tips:
 - Order simple foods, such as a piece of fish or meat with veggies and potatoes
 - If nothing on the main menu appeals to you, consider ordering a variety of sides
 - If nothing on the menu seems like real food, ask if the kitchen can make a piece of meat or fish with veggies, or if you’re vegetarian, ask if they’re willing to make you rice and beans
 - Assume that everything at a restaurant is cooked in industrially-processed vegetable oil (which is inflammatory)
 - Assume that many things at a restaurant have the following flavor-enhancing ingredients added:
 - Sugar, Dairy, MSG, Soy sauce, Gluten
- Explore the world of meal delivery services:
 - www.petespaleo.com

Snacking

- Snacking is another common challenge. Try:
 - Nuts
 - Look for organic, without GMO soy lecithin, without dairy, made with real cacao beans, with high cacao content and low in sugar.
 - Fruit
 - Kefir or yogurt
 - Veggies & Hummus
 - Wild Salmon Jerky (Vital Choice)
 - Grass-fed jerky (Epic, Tanka)
 - Coconut milk from a juice bar
 - Spoonful of coconut oil

Travel

- The key to eating well while you travel is planning ahead
- Pack plane snacks
- Pack grass-fed jerky (Epic, Tanka)
- Wild Salmon Jerky (Vital Choice)
- Baggies of nuts

Cooking

- Make cooking realistic: cook a large volume of food once a week, put in tupperware, eat at lunch/dinner
- Try to adhere to this 80% of the time, and don’t lose sight of what makes life fulfilling (social connection, community, enjoyment). “Sometimes it’s better to eat the wrong food with the right attitude than the other way around” – Chris Kresser (author of *The Paleo Cure*) quoting an ancient Chinese saying

Real Food Resources

- **Seafood:** Vital Choice www.vitalchoice.com
- **Pastured Meats & Organ Meats:** US Wellness www.grasslandbeef.com
- **Grass-Fed Beef:** TX Bar Organics www.txbarorganics.com
- **Fermented Foods, Bone Broth, Soup, Dairy:** www.wisechoicemarket.com
- **Oils, Butter, Cooking Fats:** Fatworks www.fatworksfood.com
- **Coconut Oil:** Tropical Traditions www.tropicaltraditions.com
- **Coconut Milk & Canned Vegetables:** Native Forest
- **Sprouted Rice & Legumes:** TruRoots Organic Germinated Rice & Sprouted Lentils (Amazon)
- **Pre-Made Bone Broth:** Brodo, Hudson & Charles, Nourishing New York www.nourishingnewyork.com, www.thesimplebroth.com
- **Soup:** Nona Lim www.nonalim.com
- **Bulletproof Coffee, MCT Oil:** www.bulletproofexec.com/bulletproof-mind
- **Ingredients/Produce:** Go to your farmers market, join a CSA that delivers, or try Quinciple – Farm-fresh produce delivery service in NYC, \$50/week - www.quinciple.com
- **Meal Delivery Services:** www.petespaleo.com, www.eattribal.com, www.premadepaleo.com
- **Grocery:** www.thrivemarket.com
- **Book recommendation:** *The Paleo Cure* by Chris Kresser
- **Chocolate:** look for organic, without GMO soy lecithin, without dairy, made with real cacao beans, with high cacao content and low in sugar.
 - o **Chocolate Recommendations:** Granada, Eating Evolved, AntiDote, Alter Eco, Theo, Artisana, Vital Choice

Good Food on a Tight Budget

<http://www.ewg.org/goodfood/>

Real Food Free Cookbook

<http://freejerfcookbook.com/>

Restaurants and Take-Out Options for Real Food in NYC:

- **Hu Kitchen** (paleo, near union square; try chicken with sides or bowl with Hu Joe and veggie mash)
- **Foragers** (Chelsea, Dumbo, grocery store, wine store and restaurant)
- **Peacefood Café** (vegan, near union square)
- **Ellery's Greens** (greenwich village)
- **Westville** (American, west village, Chelsea, east village, Tribeca; try market sides plate – choose 4 market sides, e.g, kale, broccoli, artichoke hearts no cheese, polenta; or get the trout)
- **Nourish Kitchen** (west village)
- **Taim** (West Village, Soho; gluten-free falafel – get the mixed falafel platter, but substitute beets and carrots for tabouleh and Israeli salad, and don't eat the pita)
- **Souen** (Union Square, East Village, Soho; miso soup, chef salad, planet platter)
- **Mas Farmhouse** (West Village)
- **Market Table** (West Village)
- **Blue Hill Stone Barns** (West Village, Westchester)
- **Estiatorio Milos** (Midtown, Mediterranean)
- **Thalassa** (Tribeca)
- **St Anselms** (steakhouse in Brooklyn)
- **Candle Café** (UWS)
- **Wild Restaurant** (West Village)
- **Kombu Ramen** (gluten free soup with rice noodles; east village/union square)
- **Wei West** (Tribeca; gluten free Chinese food)
- **Dig Inn** (Paleo fast casual food; midtown, union square, Tribeca, world financial center)
- **Sushi** (avoid soy sauce, avoid ginger dressing, avoid sauces – eat uni, yellowtail, salmon, ikura, rice, miso soup (not always gluten-free))
- **Juice bars** (Juice Press, Organic Ave, Liquiteria, Melvin's Juice Bar, One Lucky Duck, Tiny Empire, etc)
- **SweetPea** (Flatiron)

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- **Angelica Kitchen** (East Village)
- **Fette Sau** (BBQ in Williamsburg, same owners as St Anselms)
- **Mighty Quinn's** (BBQ in lower east side)
- **Momofuku** (East Village; try pork belly and beef tendons)
- **Takashi** (West Village; try organ meats)
- **Great Northern Spy Company** (East Village)
- **Mermaid Oyster Bar** (Soho)
- **Klee Brasserie** (Midtown)
- **Hundred Acres** (Soho)
- **Kafana** (East Village)
- **Kristophe** (Brooklyn; try Venison burger)
- **Juventino** (Park Slope)
- **Sauce** (LES)
- **Hearth** (East Village)
- **Brodo** (East Village; bone broth shop)
- **Palma** (West Village; Italian)
- **Landmarc** (Tribeca; try bone marrow without the bread, Brussels sprouts)
- **Macelleria** (Meatpacking; try bone marrow without the bread, rosemary potatoes, greens)
- **Palo Santo** (Park Slope)
- **Chelsea Market** (Chelsea)
 - o **Friedman's Lunch** (gluten-free chicken soup)
 - o **The Lobster Place** (uni maki, yellowtail scallion, avocado roll)
 - o **Beyond Sushi** (vegan sushi)
 - o **The Green Table**