

In the previous article, I listed foods that were most balancing to achieve a clean burning metabolism that burns fat and gives you energy to spare. Most of my patients are too busy to cook so they rely on quick meals like breakfast bars, sandwiches, and fast foods from the drive thru. When I introduce them to this new way of eating, most of them do not know where to begin. For some people, it is a huge overhaul of their dietary habits. Breaking old habits and creating a new way of choosing food takes time but it can be done. This article will show you how easy it is to begin eating food that is both balancing and nutritious.

SMALL CHANGES IN THE BEGINNING

Before instituting major changes in your diet, it is good to have a plan. Start with one item you want to eliminate from your diet then add others as you become successful at finding healthier alternatives. Pick one meal such as breakfast or lunch to begin making changes. Once that meal becomes easy, pick the next meal. Before you know it, you will be eating a diet that energizes you while providing long term benefits to your overall health.

You will need to find a good health food store. Local to my patients is Kimberton Whole Foods in Downingtown, PA. They have the best selection of organic grains, beans, produce, and free range, grass fed meats and eggs.

BREAKFAST

Cereal and milk are popular breakfast items that are usually too high in simple carbohydrates and include cow's milk. They are also served cold. For all these reasons, they foster the creation of dampness in your body and hinder digestion.

Eat these instead:

- Hot Rice Cereal - Cream of Rice, Rice and Shine is a great organic hot rice cereal
- Cold Rice Cereal (if you must) Puffed Rice, Rice Crisp
- Rice milk and/or a small amount of raw sugar or molasses to sweeten
- If you add an item, like nuts, limit it to one additional ingredient so it digests more easily

OATMEAL AND BARLEY FLAKES RECIPE

- 1 cup of rolled oats
- 1/2 cup barley flakes
- 4 cups of water
- Soak overnight and heat the next morning – practically instant!

Limited Fruit

Fruit is a popular breakfast item. I do not recommend eating too much fruit as it is a concentrated sweet. Low sugar fruits include blueberries, blackberries, or raspberries. Summer months can include melon as it is a seasonal, local fruit in the Pennsylvania area. In the cooler months, try baked apples and cinnamon as

a snack or even for breakfast added to oatmeal. Dried fruit should be soaked as it is a very concentrated source of sugar.

Free Range Organic Eggs

Scrambled, poached, hard boiled - any way you cook them - eggs are nutritious. And delicious! Contrary to popular belief, eggs do not raise cholesterol, carbohydrates do. Egg yolks are a rich source of vitamins, minerals, and essential fatty acids.

EGG SANDWICH

Scramble the eggs, toast some gluten free bread and have a home-made egg sandwich for those days when you don't have time to sit down to eat. Just pack it and take it with you.

RICE CAKE AND RAW NUT BUTTER

Almond Butter, Cashew Butter, Sunflower Butter

Peanut butter is not recommended as it is high on the list of inflammatory foods. If you choose to use peanut butter, please use the kind made with just peanuts, no added oils or sugar – bad peanut butter includes brands like Jiffy which uses highly processed, inflammatory oils and sugar.

Apple butter can be added for sweetness (the kind with just apples, no added sugar).

PROTEIN SHAKE RECIPE

- 1 Scoop Protein Powder – Rice Protein is best. (Health Force Warrior Food is a great product but plain rice protein is fine.)
- 1 cup Rice Milk or Coconut Milk
- 1 Tablespoon Greens Powder - (Health Force Nutritional Vitamineral Greens or Fruits of the Earth are highly nutritious.
- 3 Lettuce Leafs or handful of Pea Sprouts (available at Kimberton Whole Foods)
- (Do not use clover or alfalfa as they usually contain mold)
- Blend in a high powered blender. (blendtec.com)

SNACKS

- 10-20 Raw Nuts (except peanuts)
- Rice Crackers (Organic Brown Rice Snaps Vegetable Flavor are my favorite)
- Rice Cakes with Hummus (try Bobbi's Brand Hummus if you love garlic)
- Earnest Eats Bars (delicious packaged pocket food, oatmeal, almond butter, so good you'll think it's dessert!)

LUNCH

Leftover dinners can be re-created to make great lunches. Cook extra dinner, set some aside for tomorrow's lunch. Heat it in the morning and carry it in a good thermos. It will stay hot until lunch and you will have a healthy balanced meal

GLUTEN FREE BURRITO WRAPS

Start with a small amount of ground beef or black beans (do not combine beans and meat as they are difficult to digest, especially combined!). Add veggies. The wrap is your starch. You can cook the beef or beans, veggies, and rice in an organic Mexican seasoning mix for flavor. Add some sauteed green pepper and onion for a delicious meal. Cook three days worth and you will have an easy Mexican wrap for lunch that you only had to prepare once. Eggs, chicken, fish, and beans are other ideas to fill wraps. Don't forget the veggies!

I like Food for Life sprouted rice tortillas. Available in the frozen food section at Kimberton Whole Foods in Downingtown, PA.

SOUP

There are several organic soups in cans and boxes. Good brands are Imagine Foods Cream of Broccoli, Butternut Squash, Potato Leek, and French Onion or Amy's Organics.

Make them healthier by adding your own steamed veggies, rice, meats, whatever you like. You can use dinner leftovers to enhance any soup. It's a great way to sneak in more veggies.

BUSY PEOPLE SOUP

- Start with a boxed or canned soup.
- Add any compatible cooked veggies, meats, beans, or rice from last night's dinner.

SAMPLE SOUPS

Split Pea - Add rice and carrots

Black Bean - Add celery, onion, and leafy greens

Vegetable - Add rice, beef, carrots, peas, leafy greens celery, onion

Sauteing the celery and onion in some butter before adding the soup and cooked items will make this taste even better.

EASY LEAFY GREENS FOR SOUP

Boxed spring greens or spinach from the salad section of the grocery store actually work well in soups. You don't need to wash or chop them. Use about 2 handfuls per serving of soup. They cook down to almost nothing so this isn't as much as it seems. Add the greens last as they cook in about 2 minutes.

HINT: *If you plan ahead, you can cook extra veggies, meat, and grains at dinner then add these to the soups.*

PUREED SOUP

Imagine Brand Creamed Soups + Extra Veggies: Can be made ahead for three days worth or freeze some for next week!

Soup + Cooked Vegetables ◊ Blend in a high powered blender (blendtec.com)

- 1 Box of Cream of Broccoli + 2 cups steamed broccoli or cauliflower
- 1 Box of Butternut Squash + 1 cup squash or yam and 3 cups of chopped leafy greens (use the mild ones like bok choy or spinach).

IMPORTANT: To avoid soup explosions – cook the veggies and allow them to cool. Then blend with the un-heated soup. Re-heat after blending

SWEET DRINK FOR SUGAR CRAVINGS

This recipe provides sweetness to reduce your cravings for sugar while you are transitioning to a sugar free diet. It may seem like an odd beverage but actually tastes good.

- ¼ head of red or green cabbage
- ¼ red onion
- 2 carrots

Boil in 1 cup of water and strain. Drink the broth late in the day, sipping it over 2-3 hours. You can eat the veggies for dinner.

DINNER

Remember to cook extra helpings for adding to soups or for tomorrow's lunch.

PROPORTIONS

Cooked veggies should fill half your plate. Choose colorful veggies that are not too starchy as this increases your sugar intake and your waistline. Half a plate of cooked greens and carrots is a better choice than half a plate of peas, for instance. (Corn and potatoes are not vegetables!)

The other half of your plate should be divided between a protein and a starch. Easily digested grains are best, like rice, millet, and quinoa. Sweet potatoes are good in moderation. White potatoes should be minimized as they are a nightshade vegetable and add to inflammation.

HOW TO COOK DINNER

This is for people who are accustomed to microwaving frozen dinners.

Starch:

Start with a grain. White rice, millet, and quinoa cook in about 20 minutes. Brown rice about 45 minutes. You can make three days worth and keep it in the refrigerator so it's ready when you are.

Protein:

Animal Protein – electric grills are great for quick meals.

Vegetable Protein – beans or legumes, fresh or canned.

If fresh, you will need to prepare them ahead by soaking overnight and begin cooking them first as they take the longest. Cooking time varies. Add a strip of seaweed for easier digestion.

Vegetables:

Wash and chop some fresh veggies. Put them in a saucepan and add about two inches of water depending on quantity. Steaming takes 3-5 minutes depending on the vegetable. Save the cooking water to add to soups. Most vegetables are suited for this except cruciferous types including broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage.

LEAFY GREENS

Greens are the very best foods for your liver. They quell inflammation and drain dampness. Greens go well with pork, can be mixed into soups, and complement beans. They are a concentrated powerhouse of vitamins and minerals, including calcium in a combination that is hard to find in any other foods. Find a way to include them in as many meals as you can.

TASTY LEAFY GREENS RECIPE

Sample greens are: Bok Choy (mild taste), Swiss Chard (moderate taste) or Kale (strong taste). If new to greens, start with Bok Choy.

Chop the stalks and put them in about two inches of water with greens on top. Sauté grated garlic in a small amount of olive oil and toss with the strained greens. Season with Herbamare (available in the natural food section of the supermarket).

Bon Appetit!

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