

+WHOLE FOODS FOR WHOLE PEOPLE

A SCIENCE-BASED, WHOLE-FOODS APPROACH TO EATING—FOOD AS MEDICINE

By Dr. Mark Hyman

The most powerful tool you have to transform your health is your fork! Use it well and you will thrive. Choose poorly and you will suffer.

The varied components of a whole-foods diet not only taste better, make you feel better, and prevent disease, but they are literally medicine. Mounts of scientific evidence point to the power of food as medicine. These “medicinal” foods are simply what our bodies are used to eating—fresh, unadulterated, slow-burning, high-fiber, vitamin- and mineral-rich, omega-3-plentiful, and phytonutrient-dense plant foods.

That is why we can treat and prevent most chronic illnesses (including diabetes) with a whole, organic, real, unprocessed diet of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, beans, nuts and seeds, small omega-3 containing fish like sardines and herring, and lean animal protein. It is a one-stop shopping method for dealing with everything.

In fact, all nutritional science is converging on a few basic concepts, on which everyone agrees. These are same principles on which my programs UltraMetabolism and The Diabetes Prescription are based:

1. Eat whole, real, fresh, organic, unprocessed food
2. Eat a lot of fruit and vegetables full of colorful phytonutrients
3. Eat foods with plenty of fiber
4. Eat foods containing omega-3 fats

If you follow these four principles, then you are doing 90 percent of what you need to do to stay healthy and reverse diabetes. The rest are small refinements and details.

You will automatically be eating this way as long as you follow the eating plan in The Daniel Plan and my books. I will discuss more about what kinds of foods to include in this article.

But keep in mind that what is omitted is just as important as what's included.

If you want to realize the full potential of The Daniel Plan to transform your health, then the first step is to temporarily stop all factors that have been shown to cause damage your metabolism.

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STOPPING THE DAMAGE: FOODS TO AVOID WHILE ON *THE DIABESITY PRESCRIPTION*

Give your body a break for six weeks from known harmful substances. If you read this list and think there will be nothing left to eat, then you have been eating in exactly the way that will make you sick and will keep you that way. The good news is that if your diet is all sugar, flour, and processed foods, you will have the biggest gains to achieve in making a change.

There are two different categories of foods to eliminate: foods to avoid forever and foods you need to avoid during the first six weeks of the program. Go into your kitchen, look through your cabinets, and throw away anything that contains what is described below. When you go to the grocery store, make sure to read the labels of any foods you purchase so you don't reintroduce these substances into your diet.

FOODS TO AVOID FOREVER

There are certain foods that should be avoided forever. They are not real food. They are not meant for human consumption, and they lead to weight gain, heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. There are many whole or real food alternatives. If you want something easy or a treat, then search out real food substitutes for these "Frankenfoods," created by food scientists, that benefit the food industry but harm your health.

1. High-fructose corn syrup. This is a manufactured by-product of corn and is a marker of poor-quality food, and may have more harmful effects on your health than regular sugar. Some high-fructose corn syrup contains mercury as a by-product of the manufacturing process.
2. Trans Fats. These are vegetable oils converted through a chemical process into margarine or shortening. They are good for keeping cookies on the shelf for long periods of time without going stale, but these fats have been proven to cause heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. New York City has banned trans fats, and you should too.
3. Processed food, food additives, preservatives, and artificial sweeteners: The average person consumes pounds of these compounds every year. Aside from being harmful themselves, they bring with them many other poor-quality ingredients. Stay away from the following:
 - › Artificial sweeteners
 - › Aspartame (NutraSweet, Equal), saccharin (Sweet'N Low), sucralose (Splenda), acesulfame-K (Sunette, Sweet-n-Safe, Sweet One).
 - › Sugar alcohols
 - › Poly-ols such as mannitol, sorbitol, lactitol, malitol, etc. These can cause significant gas and bloating.
 - › Fat substitutes (Olean and Salatrim/Benefat)
 - › Any food in a box, can, or package—in other words, if it has a label don't eat it. (There are a few exceptions, such as whole beans and sardines.)
 - › Artificial colorings
 - › Any food additives
 - › Potassium bromate, propyl gallate, sodium nitrite, sodium nitrate, monosodium glutamate, etc.

Check out the Center for Science in the Public Interest's website for further information and updates on toxic processed foods: www.cspinet.org (click on Chemical Cuisine).

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FOODS TO AVOID DURING THE FIRST SIX WEEKS OF THE PROGRAM

Sugars in Any Form

- Sugar-laden foods
 - Candy, cookies, cereals, pastries, pies, etc., including honey, maple syrup, or molasses
- All types of flour products
 - Bagels, breads, rolls, wraps, pastas, etc.
- Liquid sugar
 - Processed fruit juices, which are often loaded with sugars; try juicing your own carrots, celery, and beets or other fruit and vegetable combinations instead
 - Sodas or any type of canned or bottled drinks with any type of sugar or sweetener
- Stevia—a natural plant-based sweetener, yes, but it still tricks your body into craving more sugar and eating more

Toxic Fats

- Processed oils such as corn, safflower, sunflower, peanut, and canola
- Fried foods

Toxin-Rich Foods

- Red meats (unless organic or grass- fed) and organ meats
- Large predatory fish and river fish, which contain mercury and other contaminants in unacceptable amounts; these include swordfish, tuna, tilefish, and shark.
- Avoid conventionally grown fruits and vegetables with the highest toxin load. Here are the ten worst offenders: peaches, apples, sweet bell peppers, celery, nectarines, strawberries, cherries, lettuce, grapes, and pears. (See www.ewg.org and its affiliate site www.foodnews.org for a list of low- and high-pesticide-containing foods.) Choose only organic versions of these high-pesticide-residue fruits and vegetables.

Addictions

- Caffeine (sodas, coffee, tea, waters)
- Alcohol

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NUTRITIONAL PRINCIPLES OF THE DANIEL PLAN: WHAT SHOULD I EAT AND HOW SHOULD I EAT?

Now you know what NOT to eat and what foods you are going to avoid for the first six weeks of the program. The next step is to understand what you ARE going to eat.

The following will give you some basic guidelines on how to compose the perfect meal. For more information on finding high-quality foods, the importance of meal timing, and more nutritional information I encourage you to see my programs *UltraMetabolism* and *The Diabetes Prescription*.

GET AN OIL CHANGE

Omega-3 fats are the most important building blocks for healthy cells. It can take a year to rebuild and remake all your cells and tissues with the right fats, so start right away with the following foods:

- ▶ **Cold-water fish** such as wild salmon, sardines, herring, small halibut, and sable (black cod) contain an abundance of these beneficial omega-3 essential fatty acids. A great source of smaller, wild Alaskan salmon, sable, and halibut (all high in omega-3 fats and low in toxins) is from www.vitalchoice.com.
- ▶ **Canned wild salmon, sardines, or herring** (kippers) are great emergency foods full of safe omega-3 fats.
- ▶ **Omega-3 eggs**, which contain a safe form of DHA. You can enjoy up to eight eggs a week.
- ▶ **Extra virgin olive oil**, which contains anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant phytochemicals. It should be your main oil except in high-temperature cooking.
- ▶ **Unrefined or expeller-pressed sesame oil** is good for high-temperature cooking.

PROTEIN FOR BLOOD SUGAR, INSULIN BALANCE, AND HUNGER CONTROL

Many studies, including T. Colin Campbell's China Study, point to the risks of too much animal protein. Each person is different and thrives on different types of food. Some do fantastic as vegans while others wither. Some thrive on animal protein; some are sluggish and sick on the same diet. Find the right balance for you by experimenting.

Whatever you do, it is essential that you choose protein at each meal. Remember the TEF factor. Turn up your metabolic fire and ability to burn calories while reducing your appetite. Choose from these high-quality, safe sources of protein.

- ▶ **Beans or legumes** including **whole traditional soy products** such as soymilk, soybeans, and tofu are rich in antioxidants that can reduce cancer risk, lower cholesterol, and improve insulin and blood sugar metabolism. Don't use processed soy products, such as those found in deli-meat replacements or typical meal-replacement bars. They are harmful.
- ▶ **Nuts** (almonds, walnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans). Nuts have been proven to help with weight loss and reduce the risk of diabetes.
- ▶ **Seeds** (pumpkin, sunflower, flax, chia, etc.)

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- **Omega-3 eggs**
- **Safe, mercury-free fish**, as above
- **Organic, grass-fed, and hormone-, antibiotic-, and pesticide-free poultry**
- **Small amounts of lean, organic, grass-fed, and hormone- and antibiotic-free lamb or beef** (or try buffalo, venison, or ostrich, which are leaner), no more than once or twice a week and no more than four to six ounces per serving. Increased meat consumption is associated with diabetes.. There are good sources at Whole Foods and other local health food stores.

THE RIGHT CARBS: THE MOST IMPORTANT FOODS FOR REVERSING DIABESITY

Carbohydrates are the most essential part of your diet for long-term health. But not the donuts, bagels, and sweets we typically think of as carbs. These are highly processed foods, stripped of their nutrients and fiber.

When I say carbohydrates I mean real, whole plant foods containing all the vitamins, minerals, fiber, and phytonutrients that create health. Here is what to eat when it comes to carbs:

- Create meals **high in low-glycemic legumes** such as lentils, chickpeas, and soybeans. (Try edamame, the Japanese soybeans in a pod, quickly steamed with a little salt as a snack.) These foods slow the release of sugars into the bloodstream, and help prevent the excess insulin release that leads to insulin resistance and its related health concerns, including diabetes, dementia, depression, poor heart health, obesity, high blood pressure, high LDL cholesterol, and low HDL cholesterol.
- Eat a cornucopia of **fresh fruits and vegetables** teeming with phytonutrients—carotenoids, flavonoids, and polyphenols—associated with a lower incidence of nearly all health problems, including dementia, obesity and aging.
- Use more **slow-burning, low-glycemic vegetables** such as asparagus, broccoli, kale, spinach, cabbage, and Brussels sprouts.
- Berries, cherries, peaches, plums, rhubarb, pears, and apples are **optimal fruits**; melons, grapes, and kiwifruit are suitable but contain more sugar. Organic frozen berries (from Cascadian Farms) can be used if you make protein shakes. (This is a good way to get your protein in the morning.)
- **A diet high in fiber** further helps to stabilize blood sugar by slowing the absorption of carbohydrates, and supports a healthy digestive tract. Try to gradually increase fiber to 30-50 grams a day and use predominantly soluble or viscous fiber (legumes, nuts, seeds, whole grains, vegetables, and fruit), which slows sugar absorption from the gut.
- **Minimize starchy, high-glycemic cooked vegetables**, such as potatoes, corn, and root vegetables such as rutabagas, parsnips, and turnips.

To learn more about basic nutrition principles please see my programs **UltraMetabolism** and **The Diabetes Prescription**.