

Simple
Approach to
Good
Eating

***Staying healthy shouldn't mean
worrying about everything you eat***

TIME TO CHANGE YOUR MIND ABOUT FOOD

We keep learning more and more about nutrition and we keep getting fatter and fatter. Humans are the only species on the planet that even has a concept of nutrition and also the only species that consistently gets it wrong. More nutrition knowledge is **NOT** what you need. You already know everything you need to know for good eating. If you could just forget all the other stuff you might develop a healthy relationship with food.

In Section 1 we will explain how nutrition science has become fake news. In Section 2, we will explain how diets have misled you into believing they have found “the secret” when all they are really doing is following the basic nutrition principles. In Section 3, we will explain exactly what is going wrong with the food industry (the problem is not what you think it is).

No matter how you choose to lose weight, you must establish new habits if you want lasting results. Diets that require micromanaging nutrient intake are not very likely to help you do that for one simple reason – you have no idea what nutrients are in your food! A low carb may limit your carbohydrate intake to 10% of your total calories, but that is not something you can ever be sure you are doing. All you can really do is become obsessed with avoiding carbs. ***Modern diets fundamentally rely on food anxiety to work!***

Maybe you are so sensitive to carbs that you do actually need to treat them like a hidden demon in your food. Food sensitivities are a real thing and many people have them to some degree. But it is a mistake to assume you have to follow a high maintenance diet. First you should try an approach that does not require you to be scared of your food.

In Section 4, we will tell you about the three basic principles of nutrition you can use to make behavioral changes that are much easier to sustain. Any changes you make must affect your behavior in one of those areas.

There is no magic pill for weight loss. Appetite suppressants can be very effective tools for helping you make permanent changes but you need to understand what they can do and what they cannot do. The plan you can stick to is the best plan for you. Medications are not a long term solution but they can be a critical aid in establishing new habits.

1: THE PROBLEM WITH NUTRITION SCIENCE

A study from 2014 found that if you increase the sugar in your diet from 10% of your calories to 20% of your calories, your risk of dying from heart disease increases by 38%. The researchers came to this conclusion by comparing death rates to what people said they ate. This is called an *observational study* and it is how most nutrition research is done. But people are very bad at remembering and reporting what they ate, so you can never be sure about the conclusions of such studies. Is it any surprise that there is not a single theory in the field of nutrition that can predict outcomes for individuals? If you can't make predictions then it's not a science. It's statistics.

Statistical analysis will identify *correlations*. "*Correlation*" is when two things tend to change at the same time. For example, shark attacks are *correlated* with ice cream sales because they go up and down at the same time.

Correlation is not *causation*. It's not like ice cream is making people so sweet that the sharks just can't resist. There is a common cause – as it gets warmer people eat more ice cream and go swimming in the ocean more.

Increasing sugar intake may be correlated with increased deaths but that does not mean that sugar was the cause. If it actually is then a 38% increased risk of death is significant. Is it though? Because that is a relative change. In order to know how significant that is, you have to know what your risk was to begin with. In the study, the base risk was 0.5%. So the actual change in risk comes out to 0.19%. Does that still sound significant?

The worst part of the fake news is that it gives you a false sense of how much can be known about nutrition. Out of 10,000 people eating 10% of their calories as sugar, on average 50 of them will die this year of cardiovascular disease. If they all double their sugar intake then an extra 19 will die. *But we have absolutely no idea which 19!* So, the only way to save them is to get all 10,000 of those people to do what the 19 most sensitive of them need to do. We have never had more than 10% of the population following any public health recommendation on nutrition. We make all 10,000 people more anxious about what they are eating in order to save maybe 2 people.

It is no mystery why most people do not follow nutritional recommendations. Even if the changes required were easy, it is almost impossible to know whether you are actually doing it right. If you kept sugar under 10% of your

total calories then you would be limited to 50 grams per day. But that's only if you are eating 2000 calories per day (which is a reference value chosen because it is a round number not because it is the way people actually eat). So you have to figure out how many calories you actually eat to figure out what your limit on sugar is.

Once you know your limit you can start counting your sugar grams. Except you do not count all sugars. They specifically excluded naturally occurring sugars from the study *because they had no bearing on the results!* So the sugar you get from fruit does not count. If you have heard how bad high fructose corn syrup ("HFCS") is supposed to be you might find that puzzling. HFCS is 55% fructose, 45% sucrose. Table sugar is 50% fructose, 50% sucrose. If that extra 5% fructose makes such a difference, then why doesn't the 100% fructose you get from fruit affect your risk at all?

You have no real chance of determining exactly how many grams of added sugar you consume day after day. Even though sugar has a specific taste, you still cannot determine how much sugar is in food based on your own experience. If a food label says there are 10g of added sugars per serving, can you verify that is accurate? You have no idea what the nutritional content of your food is, no good way to tell for yourself and no good way to verify what someone else tells you.

The newest Nutrition Facts label includes a line for "Added Sugars" so it seems like you could just get the information from there. Well, it depends on how accurate you need to be. By law, the label only has to be within 20% of the actual value. If 50 grams is your daily limit then you should probably only eat 42 grams per day to allow for food manufacturers fudging their numbers. So now all you have to do is keep track of how much added sugar you get from everything you eat and drink all day every day and never let it go above 42 grams in one day. Easy peasy, right?

This is not a practical course of action and you are unlikely to do something like that. But that begs the question – what benefit does the average person get from hearing about studies like this? For sure there is no practical benefit because it is too hard to know if you are properly following the advice, much less whether following it is doing you any good (99.81% chance it is NOT doing you any good according to that study!).

What's really going to happen if you take the conclusions of this study to heart is that you will become more anxious about your food choices, more likely to make bad food choices (because it is human nature to want what you can't have) and more guilty and ashamed of your apparent lack of self control. This is exactly the type of thinking that leads to disordered eating and, ultimately, eating disorders.

You are never going to understand nutrition and it is a mistake to try. Nutrition is mind-numbingly complex, probably beyond human comprehension. The number of variables is in the billions. We have barely scratched the surface of what there is to know.

On any subject, there is what ***you know***, what ***you don't know*** and what ***you don't know you don't know***. Most of nutrition falls into that last category. We know some of the "what". We know very, very little of the "why". There are trillions and trillions of creatures in nature that are getting nutrition right every day without knowing a thing about it. You do not need to understand nutrition in order to understand good eating.

2: THE PROBLEM WITH DIETS

Every diet you have ever heard of works. That's why you have heard of it, right? So many diets with so many different approaches to nutrition and they all work. The specific nutrition must not matter all that much.

Low fat diets are high in carbohydrates. Low carb diets are high in fat. They are completely incompatible with each other and yet both types of diets work. If either theory were actually correct then the other type of diet would not work. There are some general nutrition principles that perfectly explain why these and all other diets work. But before we get there you first need to understand why it might be a really bad idea to follow *any* type of diet.

Dieters tend to be heavier than non-dieters and the more you diet over the course of your life, the heavier you are likely to be. Heavier people are much more likely to diet, so it probably is not fair to say that dieting makes people gain weight. But it is definitely fair to say that dieting *does not help them effectively lose weight*.

Nobody gets excited about going on a weight loss diet. You might get excited about losing weight, but weight loss diets are not fun and that's a problem. Because if you do not like what you are doing you are not going to keep doing it. Weight loss diets are easier in the beginning, but diet fatigue and frustration with your results will make you give up well before you have accomplished what you want to accomplish.

The dirtiest little secret in the diet industry is that people never blame the diet when they fail. Low fat diets are brutally hard to follow, but you will lose weight if you follow one. When you reach the end of your tolerance for such a miserable diet it is natural to assume that the problem was your willpower. After all, the diet worked while you were following it. But the one factor that best predicts how successful you will be on a diet is how long you can stay on it. You are not the problem. The miserable diet is the problem.

Failing on these types of diets is not just an "Aw shucks" type of situation. It has real consequences. You cannot actually know what the nutritional content of food is, so the diets fundamentally rely on you developing anxiety about what you are eating. Making that anxiety a fundamental part of your decision making will have a lasting effect on you. You will view fat as a hidden danger

long after you have given up on following a low fat diet. People that follow certain low carb diets end up with the attitude that fruit is bad for you. Fruit! It would be very hard to overstate how misguided that attitude is. If you try and fail at enough diets you end up thinking there is no safe food.

Most of the diets you have heard of are these types of restrictive diets. They assume that a single aspect of your food is causing all your problems – most commonly fat, carbs or calories. Pizza is high in fat, carbs and calories. No restrictive diet allows pizza. Knowing you are not allowed to eat pizza, how much do you want to eat pizza? It is human nature to want what you can't have. Restrictive diets can be absolute torture.

Only 3% of people actually manage to lose weight and keep it off. Almost none of them do it by following one of these restrictive diets. When a diet creates rapid weight loss, which all restrictive diets are designed to do, your body will eventually start fighting against you. This is because the only way to create rapid weight loss is to drastically undereat. When you expend more energy than you consume, the extra has to come from your fat stores. Undereating seems like a good way to lose weight. It's not.

The gold standard of nutrition research is something called a *controlled feeding study* (CFS), which is exactly what it sounds like. It controls everything that is being fed to the study participants. Unlike the typical observational studies, like the sugar study mentioned in the previous section, a CFS controls all the variables so you get much clearer picture of what is happening and why. This type of research is very expensive to conduct so it is rarely done, but in 1944 a 36 week CFS on the effects of undereating was conducted. The results of that study should be alarming to anyone who is considering a weight loss diet that relies on undereating.

As you lose weight, your metabolism changes. In particular, your Resting Metabolic Rate (RMR) will decrease. In the 1944 study, the decrease was almost 40%. RMR is the energy that your body is using at all times just to keep you alive and healthy. It represents about half of your total energy output. You can cut your calories by 20% and make absolutely no progress.

You will also become very lazy. You will be much less motivated to exercise and overall you will simply move less. This includes fidgeting – small movements you are hardly aware of but which account for hundreds of

calories of energy expenditure every day. If you exercise, your body will compensate by reducing these unconscious movements even more.

Your brain will start using less energy, making it hard to think clearly and almost impossible to maintain your motivation to stay on the diet. You will begin obsessing about food all the time. It will become harder and harder to think about anything else. You will become irritable, lethargic and discontent and the only thing that will make you feel better is eating, which will make you even more obsessed about food. It is a vicious cycle that will make you more and more miserable.

If you have any choice in the matter, you will not follow such a diet for very long. You are going to war with your body. You will not win that war. Dieting is a mistake. Your plan should not include severely restricting calorie intake or eliminating whole categories of food.

What you are really looking for is lifestyle hacks – subtle changes in your behavior that lead to meaningful changes in the way you eat. This is a matter of following a few simple rules that are easy to understand, do not require you to be an expert in biochemistry and also do not require you to be scared of food. You should be able to eat the foods you love even if they are processed foods. You just have figure out a strategy for managing them so that you aren't always overeating. You are looking for lifelong changes. Eliminating foods you love is probably not something you are going to do for the rest of your life.

3: THE REAL PROBLEM WITH THE FOOD INDUSTRY

From the way the processed food industry is criticized, you would think they were selling nothing but poison. If it was that deadly, shouldn't we all be dead? Processed food makes up the vast majority of the modern diet. We all eat some, and most of us eat a lot. Life expectancy in the United States is about 80. How could we live that long if we are eating poison for our entire lives?

There are certain deadly diseases associated with an unhealthy diet – heart disease, cancer, diabetes, hypertension and even Alzheimer's and dementia. They are called *lifestyle diseases* even though the biggest risk factor does not have anything to do with lifestyle. It's age. A 75 year old living a healthy lifestyle is much, much more likely to die of heart disease this year than a 25 year old living an unhealthy lifestyle. ***These are diseases of aging, NOT diseases of lifestyle.***

100 years ago life expectancy in the United States was about 58 and most people died of infectious diseases. As those causes of death have declined, life expectancy has gone up. There are no immortal people. Everybody is going to eventually die of something. If you reach old age, you will probably end up dying of a "lifestyle" disease. Processed food is not improving your health. But the idea that it is making you sick is an enormous exaggeration. ***What it is actually doing is making you old.***

The problem with processed food is not that the food has been poisoned by toxic substances. Humans are omnivores. Your body is prepared to ingest all sorts of non-nutritious substances along with the nutrients you actually need. Those things are not poisoning you, but the way food is manufactured can make them a tremendous burden on your body.

Let's say your body has a nutritional need, which you satisfy by eating some strawberries. Strawberries have a distinctive taste. The next time you have that particular need, you will get a craving for the taste of strawberries. This is called *Nutritional Wisdom* and it is one of the processes your body uses to manage nutrition for you. It works really well on whole foods.

Processing food, particularly heavy processing, destroys nutrients. Some of this is a consequence of processing, like oxidation, but a lot is done on purpose. Another one of the processes that your body uses to regulate

nutrition is *Taste Specific Satiety*. When you eat whole foods, like strawberries, you get tired of the taste well before you have overeaten. However, if you degrade the nutrition you can also reduce or remove the distinctive tastes that would naturally keep you from overeating.

This is as good a point as any to mention that the processed food industry is not your friend. They degrade their products on purpose to make you overeat them. They are not looking out for you. But they aren't out to get you either. They don't care about you at all. You are just a source of revenue. The quicker they can get you to consume their product the sooner you will be ready to buy more. It's just good business to engineer products to be overeaten.

If your body is trying to regulate nutrition for you, then why don't you naturally turn away from foods that are not nourishing? The answer is **taste**. Food manufacturers can add a strawberry taste to anything without making it so distinctive that it keeps you from overeating. But that food product will not have the same nutrition as a strawberry. ***Even though processed food is not completely nutritious, it tastes like it is!***

On top of that, processed food is generally more appealing than whole food because it is so much more efficient. You have pooped out a whole kernel of corn, but you have never pooped out a whole corn chip. Processing food makes more of the nutrition available to your body for less effort. This is not a good thing when one of our main problems is overeating.

Being energy efficient is a basic biological drive. When you put energy into food outside of your body you decrease the amount of energy that your body has to expend to get at the nutrition. Consider two bowls of salad. One has a head of lettuce, a pepper, an onion, a carrot and a cucumber, all covered in your favorite dressing. The other bowl has exactly the same stuff but it has all been chopped up for you. Which one is more appealing? The chopped one, of course and chopping doesn't even take a lot of energy.

Industrially processed food is extremely efficient, way more so than what you can produce in your own kitchen. And when you compare the energy required to cook a meal for your family to the energy required to order out, it is a wonder we ever have the motivation to cook at all. ***The Modern American Diet leaves us undernourished and overfed.*** Those are the problems you need to address by changing your diet.

4: THE TRUTH ABOUT NUTRITION

There are three general principles of nutrition.

Principle #1: The one thing you can do right is nourish yourself.

For human beings, that means eating whole plants because that is where human nutrition comes from. So, eat your vegetables. Surely this does not surprise you. But consider just how important it is. This is the only way to get completely nourished. If you are not eating enough plants you are undernourished. Undernourished bodies do not function well and tend to hold onto extra weight. This is half of the problem that you get from eating the Modern American Diet and the only way to fix it is to eat more whole plants.

Keep in mind that you cannot get well-nourished or malnourished in one day – no matter what you eat. It is your pattern of eating over time that will determine how well-nourished you are. The average person is fully nourished when they eat five servings of plants per day. You may not be average, but you don't need to get it exactly right. If you are already close to the average then you probably do not have much room for improvement. But most Americans eat no more than one or two servings per day, so chances are you can do better. That is good news if you are looking for ways to improve.

One last word about principle #1 before we move on. Human nutrition comes from whole foods, not just whole plants. So things like eggs, chicken, turkey, fish and beef are also natural sources of human nutrition. However, whole plants are simply more nutritious. More importantly, you are much less likely to accidentally overeat whole plants. You do not need to be a vegan, but when you are evaluating how well-nourished you are, only consider the whole plants you eat.

Principle #2: The one thing you can do wrong is overeat.

It is not the food that is the problem. It is the overeating that is the problem. There are no evil foods. ***Nothing is bad for you until you overeat it. Everything is bad for you once you overeat it.***

Sugar is not evil, but it is the food industry's number one tool to get you to overeat. Nutrition might not be a science, but food engineering is. You had better believe that the food industry knows all the tricks to make food

appetizing. Sugar adds a depth of flavor to food long before it actually makes it taste sweet, so it is in a lot more packaged foods than you would probably guess. The percentage of calories in your diet that are coming from added sugar is a very good indication of how much of this engineered food you are eating and therefore how much you are overeating. This perfectly explains why the sugar that came from fruit had no bearing on the results of that sugar study – because eating fruit never leads to overeating!

Overeating is what makes it so difficult to study nutrition. Other than expensive controlled feeding studies, all nutritional studies are done on people living in the modern food environment who are constantly exposed to appetizing food that's been engineered to be overeaten. When they overeat they also eat a lot of the substances that are supposedly toxic. At best, a study might be able to explain why overeating on that particular diet is bad. Perhaps overeating a diet high in fat is bad for you in a different way than overeating a diet high in carbs. But overeating is the common problem.

The content of your food is irrelevant. If you are eating enough whole plants to be fully nourished then you do not need to think any more about nutrition. There are no food choices that you need to be ashamed of or feel guilty about. BUT you have to beware of encountering foods you are likely to overeat in a situation that would allow you to overeat them. Do not get the Party Size bag of potato chips planning on only eating a small handful every day. That is not how that is going to go down. When you want chips just get the little Fun Size bag. ***Control your situation or your situation will control you.***

Principle #3: When you eat matters.

Food eaten late in the day is much more likely to be stored as fat than food eaten early in the day. Energy expenditure goes down while you are sleeping. Anything you ate right before going to sleep cannot be utilized immediately, so it is stored instead. Your stomach empties more slowly because you are horizontal. The tissues of your digestive system grow, rebuild and repair themselves while you sleep so digestion will happen very slowly if you eat right before bed.

With that in mind, consider three reasons why controlling the time that you eat can be beneficial:

- 1) *When you limit the amount of time you have to eat, you eat less.* Simple as that. This is Principle #2 at work and has nothing to do with the specific timing. Any restriction that reduces the total amount you eat would be beneficial. Eating only at mealtime is a form of time restricted eating that would have a dramatic effect on a chronic snacker.
- 2) *It gives your body a break.* All that crap the food industry puts into the food supply may not be as toxic as the nutrition justice warriors have led you to believe, but it is a burden that your body has to deal with. If you eat throughout the day and up until bedtime then your body is always dealing with that burden. It is important that your eating window be fairly narrow. The most popular time restricted eating plan is the 8:16 plan, 8 hours to eat every day and then 16 hours for your body to recover.
- 3) *It puts your digestive system into the same rhythm as the rest of your body.* Your circadian rhythm is the pattern that your body cycles through every day. You fall asleep and wake up at about the same time every day based on this rhythm. Your metabolism runs at different rates at different times of day based on this rhythm. But your digestive system has to respond to food. When you eat it has to go to work, even if the other systems in your body are slowing down. If your window of eating is as early in the day as possible, between 7:00AM to 3:00PM, then you are digesting food only when your body is the most active.

Do not let perfection be the enemy of good enough. There is no perfect way to lose weight, but there is a perfect diet for losing weight based on these three principles. It is a raw, whole food, vegan diet eaten entirely between 7:00AM and 3:00PM. It is completely nourishing because it is whole food vegan, so Principle #1 is covered. With no industrial food, cooking or meat, it is completely devoid of foods that can easily or accidentally be overeaten, so Principle #2 is covered. And with a short eating window as early in the day as possible, Principle #3 is covered.

Are you really going to follow a diet like that? It is a way of eating that you are completely unfamiliar with. That would make it hard enough. But you will also be doing it completely alone. None of your friends or family will join you on such a diet. In fact, they will probably try to sabotage you at

every opportunity. You will also have to prepare all your food yourself because no restaurant anywhere near you prepares food exclusively this way. You are not going to follow the perfect diet, but you also don't need to. ***Do not let perfection be the enemy of good enough.***

Do not do anything to lose weight that you do not plan to keep doing forever. Forcing your body to lose weight may lead to fast results but your body will start working against you. You can put your body to work for you with good eating. Nourish your body by eating more whole plants. Devise a strategy to make overeating less of a burden. Give your digestive system a break by eating as early in the day as possible. It's simple.

Of course there is a big difference between simple and easy. It's not hard to understand what you need to do but it takes effort and dedication.

Nutritional Health Center can help you with that.

A FINAL WORD ABOUT WEIGHT LOSS MEDICATIONS

You already knew everything you needed to know before you read this book. You knew that you should eat your vegetables. You knew that overeating causes weight gain and health problems. You probably even knew that late eating could cause problems. It just never occurred to you that those three principles could explain the results of every nutritional study and every weight loss diet you have ever heard of.

We didn't tell you any secrets here. Beware of anyone in the weight loss industry who says they have a secret to tell you. They're lying. You need to make some fundamental changes to your eating patterns. That is going to take a plan and some dedication. We can help you with both of those things at Nutritional Health Center.

Your plan should be to establish new habits by consistently following a set of rules that require you to change your behavior in some way that relates to the three general principles of nutrition. But you don't want those changes to be so drastic that your body and your mind fight relentlessly against you. If you need help devising those rules, we offer counseling sessions and we would be glad to sit down with you and help you find the rules that are best suited to your lifestyle.

Common wisdom is that it takes one to three months to establish a new habit. How long it actually takes depends on how dedicated you are to behaving consistently. Anytime you change your eating patterns your appetite can become an issue. Prescription appetite suppressants can help with that. These medications can be used very effectively for up to six months at a time, which makes them ideal for small to moderate lifestyle changes. The goal of using the medications is to reduce your appetite so that you are in control of your eating patterns without reducing it so much that undereating becomes a problem. A little undereating is fine, probably even beneficial. Drastic undereating is not.

We believe that the approach we have described in this book is the best way to change your eating habits. But if you have a different plan, we can still support you with appetite suppressants. Visit our website or call us for more information about medications and costs. We have offices in Greenville – (864)254-9930 and Spartanburg – (864)585-6400.

Leafy Greens

(serving size **1 cup**, uncooked, loosely packed)

Kale
Collard Greens
Turnip Greens
Mustard Greens
Spinach
Cabbage
Lettuce (Red/Green Leaf and Romaine)

Brightly Colored Vegetables

(serving size **1/2 cup**, cooked)

Beets
Carrots
Peppers
Plantains
Eggplants
Tomatoes
Sweet Potatoes

GRAINS

(serving size **1/2 cup**, cooked)

100% Whole Grain Bread (1 slice)
100% Whole Grain Pasta
Brown Rice
Wild Rice
Steel Cut or Rolled Oats
Quinoa
Popcorn (3 cups, popped)

Beans and Legumes

(serving size **1/2 cup**, cooked)

Black Beans	Sweet Peas
Pinto Beans	Kidney Beans
Navy Beans	Lima Beans
Great Northern Beans	Edamame
Black-eyed Peas	Lentils
Chickpeas	Avocado

Fruits

(serving size **1 cup** diced, or **1/4 cup** dehydrated)

Apples	Lemons/Limes
Bananas (1/2 cup)	Melons
Blueberries	Oranges
Cherries	Peaches
Cranberries	Pears
Grapefruit	Pineapple
Grapes	Strawberries

Nuts & Seeds

(serving size **1/4 cup**)

Almonds	Pine Nuts
Brazil Nuts	Pistachios
Cashews	Walnuts
Filberts	Flaxseeds
Macadamia Nuts	Pumpkin Seeds
Peanuts	Sesame Seeds
Pecans	Sunflower Seeds

Other Vegetables

(serving size **1/2 cup**)

Artichoke	Mushrooms
Asparagus	Olives
Broccoli	Onions
Cauliflower	Potatoes
Celery	Radish
Corn	Squash
Cucumber	Water Chestnut