

NUTRITION + HEART HEALTH

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PLANET

Dr. Mark Hyman

The New York Times best-selling author weighs in on nutrition, diet, and the future of healthy eating

Why is treatment for children with congenital heart disease stalling?

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An Alternative Way of Eating Is

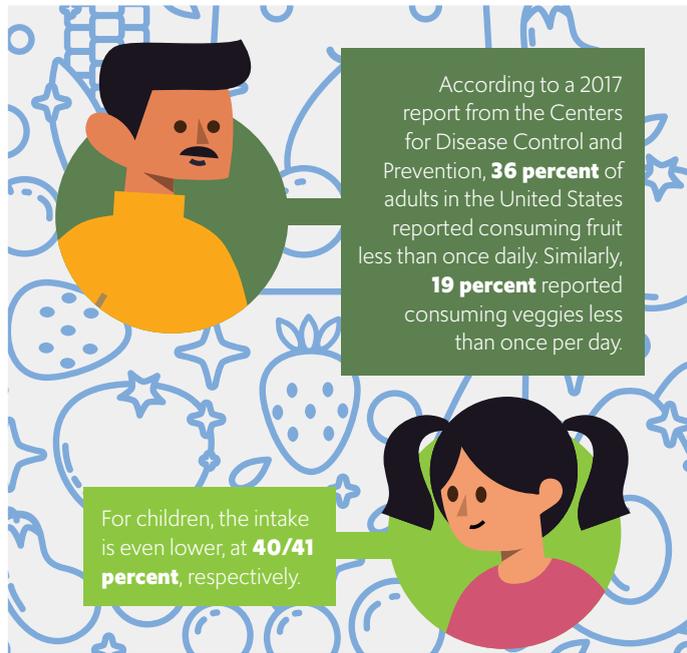
Taking Over the Mainstream

Though there's a strong link between diet and chronic disease, many individuals still don't take the steps necessary to prevent or manage health conditions by eating nutritious foods. Yet, the tides may be turning, as awareness of this association grows and diet industry experts witness a rise of interest in plant-based eating, which is sometimes referred to as a vegan or vegetarian diet.

A 2018 Nielsen study commissioned by the Plant Based Foods Association revealed that sales of plant-based foods (think veggie noodles and cheese alternatives) increased by nearly 20 percent in the last 52 weeks of 2018. Plus, Google Trends data show a relatively steady increase in searches for the term "plant-based diet" over the past year.

What does a high-quality diet look like?

An analysis of 33 past randomized controlled trials suggested that



following a vegan or vegetarian diet may alter gut bacteria in a way that improves metabolic and, potentially, cognitive health, and the U.S. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion's

2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans calls for eating plenty of whole foods such as fruits, veggies, whole grains, and nuts, while minimizing added sugar, saturated fat, and sodium.

Power to the patient

To accelerate the change to more healthy eating, healthcare professionals can educate themselves, and patients can advocate for themselves and their children in the doctor's office to get the proper plant-based nutritional information. For those whom nutrition is already a passion, health coaching can provide an avenue for informing others of the perks of healthy eating. By one estimate, the health coach industry — one that offers flexible working hours and relatively affordable certification — now amounts to \$6 billion.

Also, many insurance plans cover nutrition counseling from a registered dietitian nutritionist if specialist care, say, for managing a certain health condition like reducing obesity, is needed.

Helpful resources abound to make trying the next big trend possible. ■

Melinda Carter

Publisher **Shannon Ruggiero** Managing Director **Luciana Olson** Lead Designer **Tiffany Pryor** Designer **Kayla Mendez** Lead Editor **Mina Fanous** Copy Editor **Seth Garben** Director of Sales **Stephanie King** Director of Product **Faye Godfrey** Cover Photo **Courtesy of Dr. Hyman** All photos are credited to Getty Images unless otherwise specified. **This section was created by Mediaplanet and did not involve USA Today.**

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How Prescription-Grade Plant-Based Food and Technology May Be a Pathway to Preventative Healthcare

design specific meals for each person's unique health needs based on microbiome science, peer-reviewed clinical studies, and behavioral science. They make and deliver all of the meals, which are organic, plant-based, of fine-dining quality and customized to the exact health goals each one has.

The meal plans are particularly targeted for those with health needs including periods, IBS, fertility, menopause, diabetes, and anemia. Consumers are encouraged to keep a food journal and to track their results. Doctors can access a dashboard to see what their patients are eating and how it's impacting their biomarkers.

"WeTheTrillions provides a unique service to people wanting a customized approach to healthier living," said Dexter Shurney, M.D., MBA, MPH, FACLM, DipABLM, the president of the American College of Lifestyle Medicine. "Being able to obtain foods specifically selected, prepared, and monitored to meet their specific health needs is a revolutionary development for consumers, their providers, and others."

Often patients want to eat better or struggle with what foods they should eat. They may have other challenges like portion control, ingredient accessibility, or not having cooking expertise. A meal plan like this removes these obstacles.

"We just want to be hands-on 100 percent until [people] reach a sustainable state of health, as they define it with their doctors," says Bounahmidi, explaining each person has their own well-being needs and goals. ■

Kristen Castillo

— SPONSORED —



Sixty percent of Americans have a chronic disease and 40 percent have two or more.

Preventative healthcare, such as a healthy diet, may avert or improve these conditions. That's according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. They say poor nutrition is a lifestyle risk for chronic disease such as heart disease, diabetes, cancer, Alzheimer's disease, and others.

One company, WeTheTrillions Public Benefit Corporation, wants to re-engineer preventative healthcare

through medical software and customized plant-based meals and snack plans.

Food as medicine

Lamiaa Bounahmidi, the company's founder and CEO started the company after working as a research and data engineer looking at diabetes. She realized she was working on the end stage of diseases and that the real focus should be on prevention.

She says 80 percent of the costliest diseases are preventable through food. Yet there are very few clinical-grade interventions that are accessible to patients to help them prevent and reverse-manage symptoms and potentially reverse their medical conditions.

Research shows diet plays a significant role in shaping a

person's intestinal microbiome, helping control chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), obesity, cardiovascular disease, and cancer.

Bounahmidi encourages consumers to redefine how they look at themselves. Instead of seeing yourself as one unit, think of yourself as the trillions of microbes and cells that are inside of your body.

"We're going to take pseudoscience out of taking care of yourself," she says.

Next, think of the human body as a system that can be regulated with quality food. She says the right foods, such as bio-available customized plant-based food combinations, can help patients with chronic diseases manage their conditions. According to stud-

ies, plant-based diets have been linked to lower risks of developing coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

Personalized approach

WeTheTrillions is the first healthcare provider focused on customizing diets based on an individual's health profile, including looking at hormonal imbalances and chronic illnesses. The company works with health professionals to help them treat illnesses with diet and lifestyle changes, instead of just prescribing medications.

It all starts with a three-minute online assessment, asking consumers a series of questions to better understand their health, lifestyle, and preferences. Next, the company uses a proprietary algorithm to

4 Ways to Eat More Sustainably This Spring

Are you wondering how to combat climate change using nothing but your diet and shopping habits? Read on.

Climate change being the massive problem that it is, you may wonder how any one of us can make a significant difference. The truth is we only need to look as far as our kitchens to find a way to have a significant impact on climate change. Here's how.

1 Buy local

Buying locally produced food helps reduce pollution and energy use because it requires less transportation and refrigerated storage. Look for locally grown food in your grocery store, shop at farmer's markets, or sign up for a community supported agriculture share.

2 Eat less meat

Meat has a much higher carbon footprint than fruits, vegetables, and grains because the production and processing of meat requires more energy and releases damaging methane gasses into the air. This means that every meatless meal you eat is a win for the planet!

3 Go organic

When you buy USDA Certified Organic it means your food was produced without pesticides and care was taken to preserve the soil and the environment. In the grocery store, certified organic produce has a PLU code that starts with the number 9 on the sticker.

4 Waste less food

Americans waste an average of an entire college football stadium's worth of food every day. We can work on eliminating that problem by buying only the food we need and learning to love our leftovers. Composting food waste is another way to help the planet by turning scraps into new soil.

Micaela Preston, Founder, Mindful Momma

Plant-Based Nutrition Is Changing How Doctors Talk to Patients



PHOTO: LAURA CARRASCO

Dr. Scott Stoll has been championing plant-based nutrition in his medical practice for 17 years, and the changes to his patients' health have been remarkable.

Dr. Scott Stoll is a co-founder of the Plantarian Project, a not-for-profit organization educating healthcare providers on the benefits of plant-based nutrition. "I spent several years trying to answer the question: Is it possible to prevent, suspend, and even reverse disease?" Stoll said. "After reading all the diet books and thousands of research articles, I discovered that the more plants people consume, the healthier they become and, in many cases, the chronic

lifestyle diseases that are an epidemic globally can be suspended."

It's a lifestyle change

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, around 75 percent of the cost of healthcare in the United States is related to "lifestyle diseases," which are affected by what we eat, how much exercise we get, and unhealthy habits such as smoking. "In the end, this is a collaborative effort," Stoll said. "It goes all the way from farmers and agriculture to healthcare providers to government to local communities to begin solving this global crisis that really centers around what's on our plates."

Stoll noticed that many patients suffering chronic

diseases or ailments — including arteriosclerotic heart disease, type 2 diabetes, ulcerative colitis, asthma, and irritable bowel symptoms — saw dramatic improvements after switching to plant-based nutrition. "In many cases, these same diseases can go into remission with an aggressive intervention of whole food, plant-based nutrition and lifestyle."

A buffet of offerings

Along with the annual conferences — which now take place in California, New York, London, Bangkok, and Saudi Arabia — Stoll helped establish an online directory for patients seeking doctors working with plant-based nutrition. "It's a global directory of allied healthcare providers that are utilizing a food-first approach to healthcare," Stoll said. "Simply by going on plantbaseddocs.com and identifying a location, there's a directory that comes up of physicians locally and also physicians that practice telemedicine, so that people can find a doctor that is integrating traditional medicine, which we still need, and plant-based nutrition."

Because plant-based nutrition is about changing our eating habits, Stoll recognizes that many people dismiss the idea as a diet. "There are so many misconceptions around this," he said. "It is not a diet, it's a lifestyle. It's not about sacrifice and deprivation and starvation and all the things we associate with diets. This is really about abundance. Full plates and fulfilled lives." ■

Ross Elliott

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These Are the Foods That Should Be on Your Plate

Though diets and supplements might be trendy, they nearly always fall short of long-term goals, and can even negatively impact overall health. Lifestyle changes are the way to go.

Eating healthfully and building good physical activity habits can be difficult for people looking to lose pounds quickly with minimal effort. But fad diets, which often require food restrictions, pills, or potions, are not healthful, long-term lifestyle options.

Instead, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics recommends setting realistic weight loss goals that can be met with healthful eating habits and physical activity, along with strategies to support lifestyle changes. Here are some general changes to incorporate into your daily program:

- Review your eating habits. Are your portions too big, are you regularly consuming high-calorie foods and drinks, or are you skipping meals or overeating for emotional reasons? Are you at risk of developing an eating disorder?
- Identify and change the habits that are impeding your weight loss goals. Change one habit at a time by replacing it with a healthier choice.
- Incorporate healthful eating and physical activity habits into your lifestyle. Fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables, 25 percent of your plate with grains, and 25 percent with protein foods. Limit added sugars and solid fats. Grill or bake your foods rather than frying.
- Get moving! Adults should participate in at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity per week, including at least two days of muscle-strengthening activities.

Visit the Academy's online Find an Expert service to find a registered dietitian nutritionist to help you create a personalized plan tailored to your lifestyle, food preferences, and goals.

Malina Malkani, MS, RDN, CDN, National Spokesperson, The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics



Discover the Role of the Food Scientist

Though they might not make the front page of the news, food scientists research, scrutinize, and test the stuff we put into our bodies every day, safeguarding us from food-related complications and illness.

The role food scientists play in our lives is often unknown to the masses, despite the fact that they have a large influence on what we eat. So, what exactly is food science, and what do food scientists do?

The role of food scientists

First, think about the various items you would normally throw into your grocery cart: milk, bread, canned goods, cereal, chips, cookies, soda, juice, cheese, etc.

Anything edible you throw into your grocery cart has been reviewed by food scientists who create, manufacture, and market food items for you to take home and enjoy.

Fast food chain restaurants are also influenced by food scientists who ensure that the menu items are delicious, safe, and ready to eat when you order.

At a trip to a convenience store, if you buy an energy drink, a donut, or an ice-cream bar from the freezer, know that a team of food scientists have worked to create, produce, and sell these products for your convenience — whenever and wherever you want it.

Facets of food science

Food science is the applied science devoted to the study of food. The Institute of Food Technologists defines food science as “the discipline in which the engineering, biological, and physical sciences are used to study the nature of foods, the causes of deterioration, the principles underlying food processing, and the improvement of foods for the consuming public.”

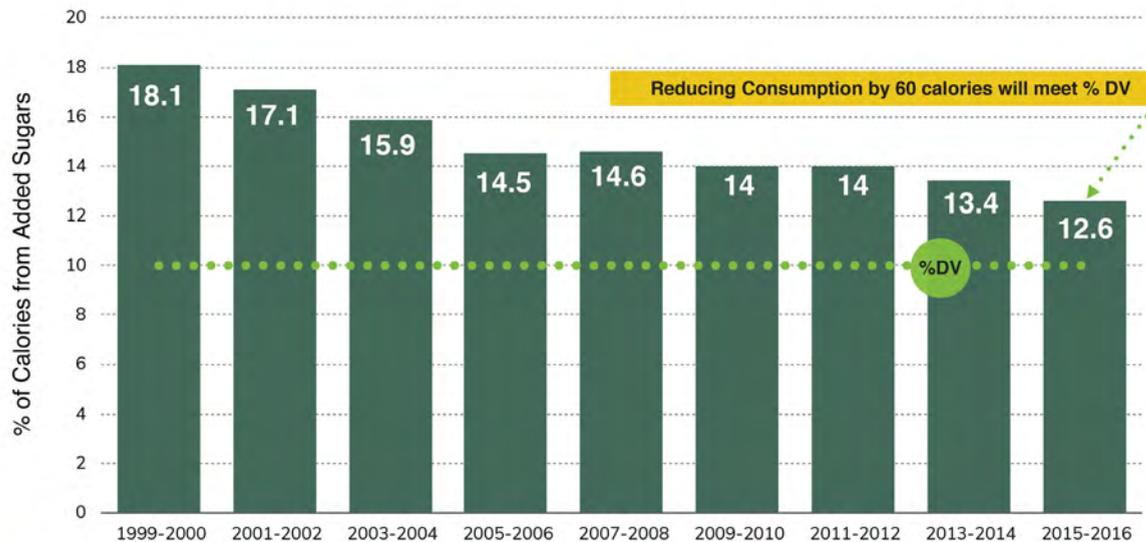
Activities of food scientists include the development of new food products, design of processes to produce these foods, choice of packaging materials, shelf-life studies, sensory evaluation of products using survey panels or potential consumers, and microbiological and chemical testing. Food science brings together multiple scientific disciplines, incorporating concepts from fields such as microbiology, chemical engineering, and biochemistry.

Many well-known universities have world-class food science academic programs. These schools are the “feeder schools” for Fortune 500 food companies that need to hire food scientists on a regular basis to enable their business to grow, succeed, and excel on a global level. ■

Amor Cagampang, Senior Manager, Research and Development, Starbucks

ROOTED IN NATURE, NOT A LAB

Trends in Added Sugars Consumption



- The U.S. is only about 60 calories away from meeting the 10% dietary target for added sugars.
- Over the past 20 years, added sugars intake in the U.S. has decreased about 30%.
- Intake data for total added sugars is a combination of all caloric sweeteners including real sugar (sucrose from sugar beets and sugar cane), high fructose corn syrup, honey, maple syrup and others.
- Real sugar comes from sugar beets and sugar cane.

Welsh, et al. AJCN 2011, USDA WWEIA 2011-2012, 2015 DGAC 2013-2014, USDA WWEIA 2015-2016

What's in Store for the Future of Heart Care?

Mark C. Bates, director of the Center for Advancement of Cardiovascular Research, talks genetic fingerprints, new technology, and the role of regional hospitals.

In your opinion, what is the biggest innovation in cardiology in the last 10 years?

I'd say the maturation of transcatheter valves and valve repair systems, which give patients lower-risk alternatives to traditional surgery. Also, safer blood-thinning medicines have improved atrial fibrillation outcomes, and high-dose statins were shown to reverse atherosclerosis in some patients. Lastly, for the first time, genetic fingerprints have been used to understand disease patterns and optimize treatment.

What should patients know about the future of heart care?

We will see continued decline in heart disease mortality as innovations in prevention and treatment remain a focus. Diagnosis and treatment will be driven by the clinical features of the illness and aided by analyses of the diseases associated with genetic fingerprints. Also, cell and gene therapy will be used to treat conditions that presently have limited treatment options.

What role does technology play in cardio innovations?

We're entering an era where cardiovascular innovation will be driven by the collective efforts of researchers from many disciplines all over the world. Just as healthcare innovations have eclipsed what we dreamed possible 50 years ago, advances in technology will likely bring unimaginable innovations in our lifetimes.

How can the public help in getting treatment and care to the next level?

Reminding your legislators about the importance of National Institutes of Health research funding and the contribution of scientific discovery to healthcare innovation is a start. Also, communities should be proactive in moving their regional hospitals and healthcare institutions into data-driven, patient-centered, and outcome-based models.

This Heart Expert Has 4 Steps for Disease Prevention



Regular doctor visits and other lifestyle changes can help patients identify early risk factors and help prevent heart disease.

Our medical knowledge and arsenal of treatments are increasing exponentially every day, yet heart disease continues to be a major health risk in the United States. If patients are proactive, however, we could all help reverse this trend.

We sat down with Dr. Salim Virani, chair of the American College of Cardiology's Prevention Section, for some specialist advice. Here are his four important tips:

1 Find out your risks

"We know that heart disease starts pretty much in the first decade of life," Dr. Virani explains. "The most important thing is to talk about cardiovascular health as a family affair."

The American Heart Association (AHA) has a risk calculator, validated by many studies, that can easily compute your cardiovascular risks. This includes things like family history or high cholesterol and blood pressure. If you're not sure of those things, that's a great reason to take the next tip to heart.

2 Go for regular physicals

Unfortunately, this is one of the most neglected health routines for many of us, who tend to only see the doctor when we're feeling sick.

"The reason that one should have an annual physical is to talk about these major killers," Dr. Virani says. "These diseases are

very much preventable. Risk factors can be identified quite early on."

It's best to see your doctor with a list of questions, so you can use your time most effectively.

3 Find expert resources

It's easy to say "eat healthier and exercise," but it's hard to put into action if you don't know what to do.

"The AHA also has a very nice website that compiles basic concepts related to diet and exercise, how to read labels, and what kinds of foods you should eat if you want to get into exercise, etc."

If you're well-informed, changing your lifestyle doesn't have to be overwhelming — even if you think you don't have time.

4 Get out of your chair

When it comes to exercise, anything is better than nothing, and everyone can find a few minutes in their day.

"The recommendation is 1 hour and 15 minutes of physical activity every week," says Dr. Virani. "But even increasing the physical activity beyond where you currently are can reduce your risk."

Another reminder: Don't forget to ask your doctor why these things are important during your regular physical. It's much easier to stick with a new regimen if you know why you're doing it. ■

Dash Lunde

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Placing Children at the Heart of Research

Developing Small Habits Is the Key to Preventing Disease

Though we know we need to improve our lifestyles, the chaos of our busy lives can make it difficult to stick to a wellness plan that provides long-term results.

As a licensed naturopathic doctor (ND), I am a firm believer that nutrition and physical activity are key in preventing many chronic disease conditions. I often tell my patients that the key to making healthy habits “stick” is picking ones that are the most convenient for you. Here are some key tips:

1 Preparation of healthy food

Cut fruit and vegetables to have them readily available for use in salads, juicing, or for quick and healthy snacks. Also, it is important to have a good source of protein as your first meal of the day to help stabilize your glucose levels.

2 Plate method

One easy way to incorporate good nutrition for families is to utilize the plate method. Fill your plate with one-half vegetables, one-quarter lean protein, and one-quarter grains. I usually suggest beginning with a nine-inch plate to help with overconsumption.

3 Intermittent fasting

Intermittent fasting is effective in helping reduce insulin levels, which allows for a higher amount of fat burning, and has also shown to repair cells and increase growth hormone levels.

4 Setting up a good sleep routine

Avoid eating two to three hours before bedtime. Also, begin dimming the lights and starting a routine that is more relaxing to ensure that you have adequate sleep.

Making small lifestyle changes a habit can add up exponentially over time and help you to avoid preventable disease.

Jaquel Patterson, ND, MBA, Immediate Past President, American Association of Naturopathic Physicians



Why We Need to Close the Gaps in Congenital Heart Disease Care

More than 90 percent of children born with a congenital heart defect don't receive the treatment they need. That needs to end.

There's nothing like hearing a baby's heartbeat for the first time. However, each year, an estimated 40,000 families learn there's something wrong with the organ responsible for producing that cherished sound, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

A complex concern

It's possible that babies diagnosed with heart defects, called congenital heart disease (CHD), can go on to live long, healthy lives. But education and proper care are key. "It has become abundantly clear from studies performed over the past few decades that lifelong care for these patients is essential," says Dr. Jamil Aboulhosn,

medical advisory board chair of the Adult Congenital Heart Association (ACHA).

CHD may be characterized by one of 35 distinct abnormalities, including defects that are mild, like a small hole in the heart, to severe, such as a heart with only one pumping chamber. Heart rhythm issues and problems with the heart muscle itself also qualify as heart defects. For many children born with CHD, there is no cure, and while early heart care can provide a temporary fix, more surgeries and medical procedures will likely be needed later.

A call for specialized care

"The reality is that in the United States, less than 10 percent of patients born with CHD are followed at an adult CHD specialty center," says Dr. Arwa S. Saidi, vice

chair of ACHA's Medical Advisory Board. "Many patients have a gap in care after their teen years until they develop symptoms or go to an emergency room. This is clearly not ideal."

An estimated 2-4 million Americans are living with CHD today, and thanks to medical innovation, 80 to 90 percent of babies born with heart conditions survive to adulthood, according to the AAP. Though celebration of this success is warranted, experts say that to ensure more people with CHD can live quality lives, more attention needs to be paid not only to the longevity of heart care but the quality of it.

Advocates clearly state that this awareness, coupled with growing research on CHD, is a winning recipe to help people with CHD not only survive but thrive. ■

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Genetic Testing Is Making Improvements in Patient Outcomes

Genetic testing can, and is, contributing immensely to a personalized approach to healthcare.

Personalized medicine — sometimes called precision medicine — is a simple concept. Todd LePine, M.D., a board-certified specialist in integrative functional medicine, describes it as “realizing in the clinical context that each person is unique. They have different personalities, family histories, symptom lists, and genetics.”

Although in many ways medicine has always been personal, modern technology is driving a push to avoid broad solutions that don't take a patient's individual traits into account. Genetic testing offers many other powerful insights into an individual patient's health, now and in the future. Tests that look for the APOE e4 genotype, for example, can quantify a patient's risk for developing heart disease or Alzheimer's disease, and give them and their doctor a chance to discuss lifestyle changes that might prevent those developments.

Most people are familiar with genetic testing through films and TV shows, or direct-to-consumer labs that advertise genetic testing — but Dr. LePine warns patients against using them.

“Direct to consumer genetic testing labs are not a very good idea. They don't understand how it all fits together. They check a lot of different genetics, some of which have clinical relevance and some of which we don't even know if they have clinical relevance.”

By contrast, genetic panels ordered by a physician are more focused and thus more valuable to the patient. “Science is always continually growing,” Dr. LePine notes. “Having that information allows you to maximize your genetic potential to remain healthy.” ■

Jeff Somers

What's in Your Fridge Should Be Top of Shelf

Dr. Mark Hyman, founder of the UltraWellness Center, says that plant-rich nutrition, combined with traditional medicine, will bring about a health revolution.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF DR. HYMAN



Dr. Mark Hyman has published twelve New York Times bestsellers, founded the UltraWellness Center in Lenox, Massachusetts, and has now started his own podcast called “The Doctor's Pharmacy,” and is one of several doctors promoting plant-rich nutrition and healthier eating as a vital addition to Western medicine.

The cost of unhealthy calories

Poor eating habits account for an overwhelming percentage of the world's health problems, according to Hyman. “A lack of fresh fruits and vegetables is the No. 1 cause of chronic disease,” he said. “Forty-one million deaths a year are caused by chronic disease, mostly caused by diet, which is 71 percent of all deaths on the planet. That's more than any war or virus.”

Changing our eating habits shouldn't be difficult, but culturally ingrained ideas about healthy eating are hard to undo. “For years we were told that we needed to avoid dietary fat and eat loads of processed carbohydrates like whole-wheat bread to keep us slim and our hearts healthy,” Hyman said. “The government's low-fat food pyramid based its recommendations on some very flawed science. It became policy that was turned into the dietary guidelines and the food pyramid that told us to eat 6 to 11 servings of bread, rice, cereal, and pasta a day and to eat fats and oils sparingly.”

Now serving: a new normal

Hyman encourages patients to get informed, do their own research, and be wary of quick-fix diets and fads. “It's important

to understand that there is no magic bullet solution to your best health,” he said. “If you see someone trying to sell you a skinny detox tea or weight loss lollipops, run the other way. This stuff does not work. You have to trust your body and know that it requires multiple steps to get to your best health. This means dietary changes, exercise, stress management, and prioritizing community and healthy relationships.

“Food is the nexus of most of our world's health, economic, environmental, climate, social, and even political crises,” Hyman said. “When you make a choice to eat real, whole foods you're not only voting for your own health and the health of your family, but you're voting for healthier communities and a healthier planet.” ■

Ross Elliott

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**This Doctor Says
the Biggest Cost
to Weight Loss**

Surgery Is Waiting

Weight loss surgeries are known to have huge medical benefits, but the high price tag means many see the procedure as out of reach.

Weight loss surgery can be life-changing. Health benefits include increased fertility and cardiovascular health, and even long-term remission of type 2 diabetes.

In an interview, Dr. Umbach, who operates a bariatric surgery clinic in Las Vegas, Nevada, explains that bariatric surgery is the most effective long-term solution for extreme weight loss — more than any diet or exercise regimen, which most people are unable to sustain for very long. It's true. Studies suggest that 80 to 95 percent of people who have lost weight without surgery gain it all back within three years.

The problem is that the cost of these procedures can be astronomical.

Most individual insurance plans will not cover weight loss surgery, and even those that do usually do not include the entire cost, which is still a lot. Plus, the bureaucratic hoops patients have to go through to get insurance coverage are often totally overwhelming, despite the evidence that these surgeries are effective treatments for a variety of medical ailments.

According to Dr. Umbach, the cost of bariatric surgery in the United States averages around \$20,000. However, he also explains that, even with the high-dollar price tag, there are ways to make it work. His clinic partners with a third party to provide financing options, for example, which can be extremely helpful for many.

And at the end of the day, isn't an improved quality of life worth it?

Lynne Daggett

Diet and Exercise Alone Won't Cure America's Obesity Problem

More Americans today are living with obesity than ever before, but they're not talking to their doctors about it. That's a problem.

America has a weight problem. According to the Centers for Disease Control, nearly 40 percent of adults currently live with obesity. The incidence rate in our youngest patients may be lower, but is alarming nonetheless: 18.5 percent of children and adolescents live with obesity. If you happen to be one of the hundreds of millions of Americans struggling with obesity, you may be overlooking an important resource in your journey to better health: your doctor.

A disease that demands a dialogue

Obesity is a serious, chronic, and treatable disease. And while most people living with obesity correctly identify it as a disease, the vast majority consider weight loss to be entirely their own responsibility.

People with conditions like heart disease or cancer aren't expected to figure out a course of treatment alone — and neither should people with obesity. By carrying the burden of weight management themselves, people living with obesity are missing out on the life-changing benefits of having an ongoing dialogue with their doctor about treatment options.

Having these conversations gives your physician

the opportunity to understand which weight loss methods have and haven't worked for you; develop a treatment plan that you both can agree upon; and, start a long-term follow-up program.

The problem with "eat less, move more"

When it comes to what works for weight management, there is a lot of misinformation out there — and not just from dubious internet articles and clickbait advertisements. Many physicians lack the specialized training to create effective weight management plans based on current, medically sound evidence, and instead rely on a simple "calories in, calories out" model.

Fortunately, our understanding of obesity as a metabolic condition has grown tremendously over the past decade. We know that bodies with obesity are wired differently from their average counterparts, and we have a deeper understanding of the genetic factors underlying some people's predisposition to obesity. We've connected the dots between sleep and weight gain, and we have access to a range of effective treatment options that go beyond simply eating less and moving more.

Obesity medicine: an emerging specialty

If you struggle with talking to your physician about weight management or finding a treatment plan that works for

you, it may be time to visit an obesity medicine specialist.

In the same way that someone struggling with knee pain would be well-advised to see an orthopedic surgeon or a recent heart attack would send a patient directly to a cardiologist, people with obesity also can benefit from specialized care.

Unlike primary care doctors and other healthcare professionals, obesity specialists are certified by the American Board of Obesity Medicine. They are experts in the complexities of the disease and understand how it can present differently in different people. They know the latest, scientifically proven treatment options, and they customize weight management programs based on individual patient needs. For many people living with obesity, seeing a specialist can be a life-changing and life-saving intervention. To find a specialist in your area, visit the Obesity Medicine Association's website today.

Certainly, there are no clear-cut answers to solving America's weight problem. But our growing knowledge of obesity's various manifestations, complications, and treatment options is a powerful reminder of why it's so important for patients and physicians to spark productive dialogues and seek out the expertise of obesity specialists. ■

Craig Primack, M.D., FACP, FAAP,
FOMA, Dipl. ABOM, President,
Obesity Medicine Association



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2. Less of the Bad

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3. Won't Weigh You Down

Fruits and vegetables are low in calories. They fill you up thanks to the fiber and water they contain, which can help manage your weight.



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A healthy eating plan full of fruits and vegetables can help lower your risk of many serious and chronic health conditions, including heart disease, obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes and some types of cancer. They're also essential to your everyday health.



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