

Overview

In this Speaker Series episode, we talked with Ms. Kate Costello, a Licensed Nutrition Specialist, Mentor and Wellness coach, about nutrition and how to eat in the face of challenges with our conditions.

Summary

<p>What is a diet?</p>	<p>Diet is defined as an everyday eating experience.</p> <p>It needs to be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accessible 2. Sustainable 3. Structured that promotes the basic 6: proteins, fats, carbs, vitamins, minerals, and water
<p>The Perspective of Unhealthy Eating</p>	<p>The Human Trap: the idea of eating with all healthy or all unhealthy food; without variation of each</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One salad is not going to make you immediately healthy and one cheeseburger is not going to immediately undo all healthy progress as quickly as you may think. • We must build a healthy foundation that you can always fall back on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Since we eat multiple times a day, we have multiple opportunities to restructure and correct old habits
<p>When taking Immune Suppressants, can nutrition keep you from getting sick?</p>	<p>Absolutely, but nutrition treats the entire body not just pieces. So whatever you are doing for the immune system, will be done for other parts of your body.</p> <p>Regardless of taking immune suppressants, eat healthy as you would normally. You may have to turn the dial a little bit in some categories, but for the most part, the strategy does not change.</p>
<p>Four Foundational Ways to Support the Body</p>	<p>Here are four foundational ways to support the body:</p> <p>Digestion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • between 70 and 80% of our immune system is in our gut • To improve digestion try: a balanced diet, anti-oxidants, certain nutrients like vitamin C, B, Zinc, probiotics, hydrations, limiting sugar, and avoiding processed foods

Four Foundational Ways to Support the Body

Sleep

- Sleep is crucial for improving the immune system
 - Late nights will only hurt your health and body
- **Practices to improve sleep:** cancel all blue lights (screens), have a regular bedtime, sleepy practices like tea, reading, meditation, or stretching
- The more structure you have, the more successful you will be at achieving quality sleep

Stress

- For every one stressful thing that happens in the day, what is your anti-stress thing that you do? How do you buy back some of your protection from the stressors in your life?
 - **Use the things that you're already doing as anti-stressors**

Blood Sugar

- High blood sugar can cause inflammation, increase risk for infections, alter cytokines (proteins that protect the immune system), increase oxidative stress, and ultimately change the gut microbiome
- **Tips for maintaining blood sugar:** increase protein and fiber, adjust meal timing, and be mindful of how much carbs you are eating

When taking steroids, how can I avoid weight gain? Are there diet changes that can help?

Steroids increase appetite, alter metabolism, contribute to fluid retention, increase lipogenesis (conversion of glucose to fat), and decrease muscle mass.

Here are some solutions to avoid weight gain:

- Plan and prepare balanced meals so that you are ready for sudden increases in hunger
 - Focus on whole foods, fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, healthy fats, etc.
- Increase protein
 - Corticosteroids can lead to muscle catabolism and the breakdown of muscle mass. Protein is essential to muscle growth.
- Limit added sugars and refined carbs
- Reduce your sodium intake
 - Avoid sodium from “bags and boxes”
- Stay hydrated

What dietary changes or supplements can I add to help with inflammation?

Dietary Changes

- Eat whole grains, lean proteins, healthy fats, colorful fruits and vegetables
- Eat Omegas
 - Plant-Based Omegas: Chia, Flax, Hemp
 - Animal-Based Omegas: S.M.A.S.H fishes
 - AKA Oily fishes: Sardines, Mackerel, Anchovy, Salmon, Herring
- Use spices and herbs like ginger and turmeric

Supplements

- Everyone's medication and condition is different, so there isn't a silver bullet supplement that works for everyone
- Have conversations with your practitioner, nutritionist, and have labs done to understand the exact supplements you need
- Do not go to Costco for supplements, use reputable brands

Here are some Generic Supplements that can help reduce Inflammation:*

- Fish oils, Omegas, Fat Solubles, Vitamins A,B,E,K, Magnesium, Alpha-lipoic Acid, B-complex, Vitamin C, Zinc, Selenium, Calcium, Iron
- Herbs like Turmeric, Ginger, Lion's mane mushroom, etc.

***This is not a list things to try in trial and error; consult a professional before taking any supplement**

Life-Style Changes

- Daily Physical Movement
- Daily Bowel Movement
- Stress reduction: connect to nature, self-love/love, play
- Understand how to eat:
 - i. Daily ways of eating: eating something or a specific category of food once a day,
 - a. Ex: eating a smoothie with Chia in the morning
 - ii. Intentional ways of eating: such as eating twice a day
 - a. Ex: adding fruit to your breakfast and lunch
 - iii. Medicinal ways of eating: eating high amounts of healthy foods, most frequently with high quality
 - a. Ex: Eating protein with every meal or drinking a gallon of water everyday

<p>Is there a diet to improve nerve health?</p>	<p>Yes, because nerves are cells! What does every cell need? It needs amino acids. It needs fat. It needs carbohydrates, or energy. Nutrition does not treat one area of the body.</p> <p>Omeegas, minerals, and certain herbs have been helpful in nerve regeneration and nerve signaling. Yes, it is a thing, but this is a deeper conversation for another time.</p>
<p>When dealing with Dysphagia (difficulty swallowing) are there still ways to maintain a healthy diet?</p>	<p>Yes, there are certain foods like smoothies or shredded chicken that can help.</p> <p>We encourage you to work with an integrated team of nutritionist, occupational therapist, speech therapist, or whoever can support you.</p>
<p>What is the Vagus Nerve and how does it relate to nerves?</p>	<p>The vagus nerve, Cranial nerve #10, touches every single organ in your body. It governs swallowing, gut, brain access, and motility.</p> <p>I did see a study about rats with dysphagia after a stroke. They did vagal nerve stimulation in these rats and it improved dysphagia, possibly because of increasing remyelination, increasing new blood vessels and reducing the inflammatory response.</p> <p>You don't necessarily need a vagal stimulator. You can do certain exercises such as singing and humming, intentional breathing, gargling that all will impact and strengthen the vagus nerve.</p>
<p>I want to gain healthy weight and muscle to help improve my condition. Do you have any tips?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase protein consumption 2. Support digestion by increasing nutrient intake 3. Start strength training to convert calories into lean muscle mass <p>If you want to gain weight:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase calorie intake in a healthy way <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Eating salads versus pints of ice cream <p>Muscle is the key to longevity</p>

Where can I start when it comes to nutrition?

Every meal is an opportunity to start and restart at supporting the foundational six: proteins, fats, carbs, vitamins, minerals, and water. The more you reinforce these, the more it will impact your health and wellness.

Focus on those foundations of regulating digestion, sleep, stress and blood sugar.

Start small and create a simple plan

- Define your priorities and goals
- Focus on changing one habit and then adding more changes
- Food is an everyday, all day thing

Relevant Resources

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