

EAT FAT

TO

Feel Sexy

Change Your Oil to Supercharge Your Libido



Dr. Shirley Mcilvenny, M.D.

www.eatfatfeelsexy.com

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DEDICATION

*This book is dedicated to all the people who believe
you are what you eat.*

Eat the best to be your best!

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CONTENTS

PART 1 *Where Has the Love Gone?*

- | | | |
|---|---|----|
| 1 | I'VE LOST MY MOJO
Low Libido in Men and Women | 09 |
| 2 | WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT
How Libido works | 17 |
| 3 | LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX
Hormone Imbalances | 25 |
| 4 | I GET KNOCKED DOWN, BUT I GET UP AGAIN
Erection Problems, Chronic Diseases | 39 |
| 5 | WORKING 9 TO 5 ... TOO BUSY FOR SEX
Role of Sleep, Relaxation and Depression | 57 |
| 6 | I'M TOO SEXY FOR MY PARTNER
Differing Sex Drives | 73 |

PART 2 *If Music Be the Food of Love, Play on...*

- | | | |
|----|--|-----|
| 7 | GREASED LIGHTNING!
Change Your Oil and Supercharge Your Libido | 83 |
| 8 | GIMME SOME LOVIN'
Healthy Foods to Boost Your Libido | 111 |
| 9 | HEY FOOD, DON'T MAKE IT BAD
Banish the Bad and Let Your Body Live | 133 |
| 10 | GET DOWN ON IT
Getting Down to the Nitty Gritty | 163 |
| 11 | COME ON BABY LIGHT MY FIRE
Inflame Your Passion, Not Your Body | 183 |
| 12 | YOU'RE THE FIRST, THE LAST, MY EVERYTHING
Sex Life – Formula One | 197 |

———— PART 1 ————

Where Has The Love Gone?

1

I'VE LOST MY MOJO

Low Libido in Men and Women

WHERE IT BEGAN...

Adam and Eve didn't have many problems with their libido back in the day. And it's no surprise. In the Garden of Eden, there would have been an abundance of healthy foods – no preservatives or processed foods there! From all the paintings, we see that there must have been plenty of greens, nuts and seeds, along with veggies and fruit. And when Eve gave Adam an apple, honey and nectar would have sweetened the deal.

Fast forward to today and our libidos are fading fast. In a recent Australian study, published in the *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy*, 66 percent of women reported being dissatisfied with their sex life, with 26 percent suffering from low libido. Among the most common problems reported were anxiety or inhibition (38 percent), lack of sexual pleasure (16 percent), difficulty in achieving orgasm (15 percent) and lack of lubrication (13 percent). Things aren't much better across the Pacific; in the USA, nearly 40 percent of women complain about lack of interest in sex. Low libido has always been considered a female problem, but more and more men are admitting that they don't feel up to it either – about 12 percent of them, according to the New England Research Institutes.

YOU'VE LOST THAT LOVIN' FEELING

Getting accurate figures about how many women experience low libido is difficult. Many women have low libido but don't report it as a problem. When they *do* bring it up, it can be categorised as hypoactive sexual desire disorder (HSDD). But this tends to make it sound like a disease rather than the simpler feeling of 'I'm exhausted and have no time for sex'.

For the first time, we're now finding men complaining about their sex life. And this is where low libido for men rears its ugly head. In the Australian study, 56 percent of men were dissatisfied with their sex life. Nearly all of these overwhelmingly *wanted* more sex, whereas only 2/3 of dissatisfied women wanted more sex. Now this might be due to nothing more than a mismatch in frequency of desire, rather than a lack of libido in women. But there are still a significant number of women who feel their libido is low and want to do something about it, either for themselves or to please their partner.

As I said before, low libido has historically been considered an exclusively a female problem. A study of men's sexual health reported that 11 percent of men had low libido. Who knows whether this is due to more work stress, financial worries or pressure on relationships? But my feeling as a doctor is that this heightened awareness of our deflating libidos is caused by more than just the Global Financial Crisis. In other words, the economic chaos around the world isn't the only thing affecting our sexual desires.

For example, fatigue is on the increase too, with a recent study reporting that 90 percent of nurses suffer from fatigue. So what else has changed? Well, we have always had stress and difficult relationships, so those aspects are nothing new. To me, the biggest change in our lives has been our diet. In the last fifty years, the nutrients we get from our food have been depleted by poor soil and picking produce before it's ripe. We've

also been exposed to thousands of new chemicals. Along with our less nutritious food, we eat the residues of pesticides, insecticides, fertilisers, preservatives, colourings, flavourings, artificial sweeteners, acidity regulators, thickeners ... the list goes on and on.

Many of the women I see with low libido are around the menopause age. They have an imbalance of hormones and a host of other symptoms as well such as hot flushes, insomnia and brain fog. Now these problems aren't always caused by lack of hormones. They can also be due to other causes, like liver toxicity. It seems that we can trundle along, surviving on unhealthy food for a number of years, before we see any real ill effects. Then we reach the menopause and the wheels start to come off. Weight gain may also become a problem at this time.

While boosting the hormones is a popular treatment for these symptoms, I don't think it gets to the bottom of the problem, which is determined by what we eat. So while I am happy to try a few hormone patches and creams, I also work on diet with my patients to improve their general health. We get better energy production, better sleep, more brain clarity and better health while preparing for the next life phase, if we make some permanent healthy changes to our diet.

What does this have to do with low libido? Well, younger women have low libido problems and hormone imbalances too. We seem to be suffering from an epidemic of endometriosis, fibroids and polycystic ovarian syndrome – all diseases that can be related to diet. Unfortunately, our emphasis is often on finding a drug to fix these problems, rather than getting to the root of the problem (yes, our food) and sorting it out from there.

That's what gives me real satisfaction – not writing scripts for pills, potions and creams, but understanding how the body works and, more importantly, how it *doesn't* work. So many of today's diseases start with a poor diet – lack of the right nutrients and too much of the bad foods.

We eat what we eat and think that we're powerless to stop this relentless spread of chronic disease. But are we?

What I *do* know is that more and more people are interested in finding an alternative way to fix their bodies. They want to get healthy in a more natural way, without the pills, scripts and blood tests. We now realise that drugs aren't the panacea we once believed them to be. Every day, more and more side effects are recognised with many of the drugs we take regularly. While a great number of these drugs can be life-saving, we enlightened health professionals believe that for chronic disease they should be a second-line treatment. Changing your lifestyle should come first.

There is already a lot of advice telling us to change what we eat and get healthy, but so few of us actually make those changes. People are either confused about all the information or too apathetic to make any changes. It all seems too hard, so it doesn't happen.

That's what I want to help you with. If you follow my step-by-step approach, we'll get your health back to what it should be and your libido soaring to heights you never thought possible. With this book, I want to show you how you can go a long way toward improving your libido and general health just by making some simple changes to your diet. Not only will your libido increase; you'll see your energy, endurance and concentration getting better too. You'll be better placed to deal with those life stresses that pass our way on a regular basis, and that will increase your confidence.

WHY, WHY, WHY?

Now let's take a look at some of the common reasons why our libido flags.

Psychological Causes. This is a big category, as stress, anxiety and depression can all put a damper on our desire. If you feel that you are de-

pressed, don't suffer in silence. Get to your doctor or counsellor and get some help before it gets worse.

Relationship Issues. Another common reason why libido is low is issues in the relationship. This tends to affect women more than men in the downstairs department, and we'll go into more detail about this later. But you can bet that if you're still secretly seething at your partner about something that happened last week, you're not likely to want to have sex with them and that's a fact.

Stress, Overwork, Exhaustion. The same old chestnuts that keep coming up when we look at the causes of so many health problems today. And we still don't take them seriously enough. How many of us get enough sleep every night? How many of us take the time to relax properly and de-stress? Oh yes, we'll get around to it someday, but in the meantime we're putting other problems ahead of our own health, right up until our body crashes and lets us know that it's not going to put up with it any longer.

Imbalanced Hormones. Special times in our life cycle, like menopause, come with hormone imbalances, and many men suffer from low hormone levels too. Testosterone naturally declines with age, but it seems to be becoming more common for men to suffer from low testosterone at a younger age. Read on to find out what to do about that.

Chronic Medical Diseases. Diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease all take their toll on our libido. Not to mention the side effects of all the medications. It's not that unusual to see someone on half a dozen different drugs, and there are bound to be problems with the interactions between them. That's definitely not good for libido.

Pelvic Problems. Both men and women suffer when we have health issues in our nether regions. Whether it's prostate problems or endometriosis, we know that something is wrong and the old libido suffers just as much.

Brain Fog. Not much talked about, but an imbalance of brain hormones can make us feel uncomfortable and distressed. Not much good for the libido either, especially when our feelings of love, affection, caring and desire are controlled and co-ordinated by our brain. That's why depression can have such a big effect on our libido.

This might seem like a long list, but there are some common threads. Sort out your diet, and get your whole body working at peak performance again, and lo and behold, the old libido will start rearing its head again. Much to your surprise and delight (and that of your partners)!

Now you might think that this sounds really hard and boring. 'She's going to tell me to give up everything I like, and life won't be worth living.' Like the old saying – if you make these changes, you won't live until you're 150 – it will just seem like it!

Well, nothing will be further from the truth. You see, I like fun just as much as the next person, so I wouldn't be interested in doing anything that stood in the way of a good time! But what you'll find is that you'll feel much better with just a few changes, and you'll *want* to do more. You'll be interested in finding out what the different foods can do for you. You'll crave more information, and you'll crave more results.

And I believe that you can have a little bit of *any* type of food now and again. As the saying goes, a little of what you fancy does you good. As long as you don't fill your diet with rubbish on a daily basis, you'll be able to indulge on those special occasions and enjoy it, without feeling guilty and without worrying that there'll be a day of reckoning afterwards.

And even if there is, I'll show you how to detox quickly and easily after a big party or celebration.

Now I'm not just talking to the young people here. Because I don't believe that getting older means that you have to give up and accept slow-

ing down, getting immobile and spending all day watching what you used to do all day, instead of doing it yourself. I don't intend to take getting older lying down and I don't want that for you either. I intend to grow old disgracefully, staying fit and healthy, mobile and active (if you know what I mean) and I want you to be able to enjoy that too.

So read on and find out the easy things you can do to boost your libido naturally. In the next chapter, we're going to look at how libido works and what controls it.

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2 _____ WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT? *How Libido Works*

Libido is this wonderful, complex dance of emotions, feelings, physical sensations and primeval needs, all wrapped up in a package between two or more people. It's hard to unravel its mystery and explain all the elements and how they fit together. But by going through the basic emotional and physical elements, we can decipher what's going wrong in low libido and what we can do about it.

First, let's look at the physical side of libido – the basic primeval need to procreate. Now, every species is hot wired to go forth and multiply – otherwise the species would die. From the moment each larva, nymph, mammal, bird or fish is mature enough, nature encourages members of every species to go at it with relentless insistence. This ensures that there are enough young of the species to expand and progress the population.

As humans, we're lucky that many of our natural predators became extinct a long time ago. Our main predator now is ourselves. With the exception of a few sharks, hungry lions, snakes and spiders, we pretty much go about our business without fear of being suddenly gobbled up by a ravenous mammoth or sabre-tooth tiger. Wars, car crashes and serial killers aside, we are at the top of the food chain. And in population terms, our success as a species has been greatly enhanced by plentiful food, good health and plenty of sex.

And the sex is down to libido, for the most part. When we look at how libido works, we see a myriad of hormones, brain chemicals and physical reactions, which keep our libido in a heightened state of awareness. On the other hand, hormones that *decrease* libido are in short supply – and for good reason. When a species is under stress – usually from famine or disease – fertility and reproduction are the first functions to go. The animal may survive, but they cannot spend enough energy and nutrients producing more young ones in that situation, and so can't keep the chain of life going. So we are hotwired to keep at it like rabbits – to keep *breeding* like rabbits – unless we're under stress or pressure. Any species that doesn't keep reproducing quickly dies out.

Ever think about this fact? If the human race stopped breeding tomorrow, due to disease or radiation or some unforeseen virus, how long would it take before humans died out? After about eighty years, there wouldn't be many of us left. A little less than 10 percent of the population is under age five right now, so in eighty years' time, over 90 percent of the population would have died out. Only a few oldies would still be kicking around. So it's vitally important to keep the libido going – we are much more fragile as a species than we believe. Now you might think the opposite, and that we need to curb the population growth, and you'd be right about that too. Our population is currently at over 7 billion, and is reaching capacity now – the limit at which we can provide good quality food for everyone. But as a species, we are ultimately just as fragile as any other animal, insect, fish or fowl on Earth. No wonder men are programmed to think about sex every five seconds. It's not a bad thing – its biology!

WE ARE HOTWIRED FOR SEX

So everything in our body tries to keep the libido going to keep the species alive. Our brain, our hormones, our genes – all have one thing

on their mind - keep the libido going and fertility and the species will survive. (With a few notable exceptions, for example breastfeeding curbs libido so that the body can conserve nutrients for the baby). The body co-ordinates all the functions to one end – that humanity will continue.

And we also see this same co-ordination in our appetite control. For most of our existence, famine and food shortage was the great fear. It's only in the last fifty years that some of us in the Western world have had access to unlimited supplies of food. So everything in our genetic make-up is designed to make us hungry for food – searching and grazing on food all day in case the supply dries up, and storing up fat for the winter. But now that's turning against us, and obesity has become our biggest health problem. We've never been in this position before, where we had too much food for so long, and we're not geared to cope with it. And that constant desire for nourishment, coupled with so much rubbish dead food in our diet, is doing more than just making us fat. It's killing us *and* our libido.

So let's look more closely at how our brains are hotwired for sex.

THE BRAIN BIOCHEMISTRY WALTZ

The brain chemicals dopamine and oxytocin actually work together to get our libido going.

Dopamine. When we meet someone new and become interested in them, we get a rush of dopamine in our brain. This is a chemical that's released at nerve endings, and sends signals to other nerve cells to get a reaction. For this reason, it's called a neurotransmitter – it transmits messages to get a response. There are five different types of dopamine receptors throughout the body, named D1 – D5 (there may be more that we don't know about). Dopamine receptors are widely distributed in the

brain, and certain types are concentrated more in certain areas. Their job is to receive the dopamine and give the body its reaction.



Science Stuff

Dopamine is involved with reward-driven learning. In other words, when you get an unexpected win at something – like you win a scratch card or a raffle – you get a rush of dopamine, to signal pleasure. (You don't get the same rush of dopamine when you are expecting to win, only when it's unexpected.) This gives us a feeling of enjoyment, and increases the desire to repeat the behaviour. Every time you get an unexpected reward, the rush of dopamine keeps you coming back for more.

Eventually we learn to anticipate a reward with that behaviour, and that's called a conditioned response. Party drugs like cocaine and amphetamines act in this way – by raising dopamine levels and teaching the brain to expect those new levels. That, in turn, sets up the addiction. Dopamine is behind many other addictions as well, like gambling, shopping and exercise.

Dopamine has many important functions in the brain, such as motivation, reward and punishment, sleep, mood, attention, memory and movement. Imbalances of dopamine can cause a range of problems, such as ADHD, schizophrenia and Parkinson's disease, so it's an important brain chemical to get right. But that's a whole different story which we don't have room to cover here.

To get back to libido, when we're getting to know someone new we get a release of dopamine. This gives us a feeling of pleasure – of light headed-

ness, of rapid pulse and more energy. At the same time, we are spending a lot of time with that person, involving a lot of cuddling and physical contact. This releases oxytocin from the hypothalamus in the brain.

Oxytocin. Oxytocin is sometimes called the ‘love hormone’ because the more cuddling and affection you get, the more oxytocin your brain makes. It’s also involved in sexual arousal. So the combination of oxytocin and feelings of love, along with dopamine rewarding us, keeps us addicted to spending time with the person, doing lots of cuddling and kissing, and obviously having lots of sex too. This bonding cements the relationship and promotes feelings of love for the other person. Oxytocin is also produced when mothers bond with their babies.



Science Stuff

Absence of oxytocin is seen in psychopaths and sociopaths, who feel little empathy for people and especially other people’s suffering. Oxytocin has an important function in women, as it’s released during labour and when the nipples are stimulated to produce milk for the baby. This produces maternal feelings in the mother, decreases her anxiety and increases bonding with the baby.

Now during sex, we get a big blast of dopamine, and this is greatest in the lead-up to orgasm. Dopamine immediately drops off at the point of orgasm, and we get a flood of oxytocin from the brain. This happens in both men and women. Oxytocin produces feelings of contentment, calmness and security, and reduces feelings of anxiety and fear. It also increases empathy in males (that’s just before they fall asleep). So this

is a good time to hit them with that big credit card bill – they'll be so sympathetic!

Prolactin. Straight after sex, the big guns of prolactin weigh in. Prolactin switches off libido, which allows for a good recovery time. This usually lasts up to one hour. Too much prolactin can turn off your libido entirely, though, and make you feel anxious and hostile. Prolactin is important in that it turns off sexual desire once orgasm is achieved and allows you to get on with the other tasks, such as hunting food, feeding infants and folding laundry.



Science Stuff

Some people think the rise in prolactin lasts for a lot longer than sixty minutes, and can cause a bit of hostility in couples in the week or so after intercourse. At present, there isn't much scientific evidence for this, but traditional cultures suggest that frequent sex might give you violent swings in dopamine and prolactin levels, which give you see-saw moods. So you swing from intense attraction (encouraged by bursts of dopamine), followed by sex, which leads to more dopamine and oxytocin, followed by a hangover period of prolactin, when you wonder what you ever saw in your partner. Scientists now believe that prolactin plays an important role in helping the embryo implant into the uterus. So this would explain why it might stay elevated for so long after intercourse – so that the fertilised egg is well implanted.

So now you can see how complicated libido, physical attraction and sexual desire are. And we haven't even started talking about the sex hormones yet!

THE BOTTOM LINE

As you can see, our libidos are controlled by many interacting hormones and chemicals. We need to produce these substances in good quantities to make it all work. But where do we get the building blocks for these chemicals? From our food. Poor food means poor hormone levels, and that means a sluggish libido. It's common sense, isn't it? Meanwhile, smoking, too much alcohol and party drugs can also dampen our enthusiasm for sex.

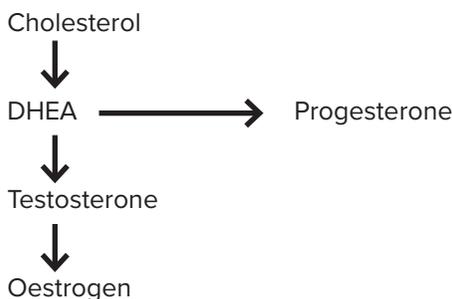
In the second part of this book, I'm going to show you easy ways to improve your health and libido through making some simple changes to your diet. You'll be surprised by what's coming up – some foods you thought were healthy aren't, and some foods you thought were forbidden will get the green light. Indulge as much as you like – eat it or slather it on, at your discretion! Can you predict which foods I'm talking about? Read on to find out.

3 LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX (AND DRUGS AND ROCK AND ROLL) *Hormone Imbalances*

LET'S GET PHYSICAL...

We make several different sex hormones, and each can have an effect on libido. Obviously it's more complicated for women, with their cycles and different life stages such as menopause, but men can also suffer from an imbalance or a lack of the right hormones.

Cholesterol is our mother hormone, from which all the other sex hormones are produced. First, cholesterol is changed into progesterone and DHEA (Dehydroepiandrosterone), then from DHEA to testosterone and oestrogen. DHEA is made in the adrenals, and can be low when your adrenals are burnt out. In that case, we don't have enough of the chemicals that make us crave sex.



MALE HORMONES

Obviously, men need testosterone to stimulate their libido, but this male hormone is also involved in many other functions. It is made primarily in the testicles or testes, although small amounts are made in the adrenal glands. It is the main male hormone, and is vital for the testes to produce sperm, and the prostate gland to function.

At the same time, it stimulates the growth of body hair and deepening of the voice, as well as muscle development. These are some of the so-called secondary sexual characteristics caused by testosterone, and signify that a boy is maturing into a sexual being. Testosterone is also important to overall body function, as it keeps the bones strong and prevents osteoporosis, or thinning of the bones.

Like Goldilocks, it needs to be just right. The muscle development stimulated by testosterone is one of the side-effects that a lot of young guys are after. Taking large doses of testosterone as an anabolic steroid is popular among the gym junkies for this reason, but it has lots of nasty side effects later on, such as shrunken testes, infertility, liver toxicity and breast development. So it's not such a good idea to take more of that hormone than you actually need.

Having a high testosterone level seems to be associated with baldness and acne, but it can also be a good thing. Good testosterone levels are associated with a reduced risk of heart disease and lower blood pressure.

Older men. As we get older, testosterone levels naturally fall, and this results in a few problems. Men with low testosterone often feel tired, and have low energy and low libido. They may also lose muscle mass and strength. So any way to boost your testosterone as you get older is a good thing. You can get testosterone hormone replacement, but there are strict criteria, and you do run the risk of a few of those side effects.

A much better approach is to boost your testosterone naturally as much as you can. And what better way to do that than with delicious, wholesome foods? Foods that you can cook together or spread over each other as you wish (yum).

Trevor was a sixty-three-year-old patient of mine who was tired and fed up. His libido was flagging, too. He worked in real estate, working long hours and fighting a difficult law suit with a commercial property owner at the same time. When we tested his testosterone, we found that it was on the low side, but there were a lot of other things going on as well. As a busy business owner, he ate out a lot, went to a lot of business meetings and lunches, and was generally too busy to cook at night. He was extremely stressed about the court case. Although he didn't feel like sex much, he had no problem with erections, particularly in the morning.

I gave him some testosterone cream to get him feeling better while we worked on his diet. We worked out some plans for quick and healthy meals and lunch choices. That helped to clean up his diet. But he needed to work on his stress too. He started seeing a psychologist, who helped him with ways to de-stress and reframe the problem – most things we worry about aren't as bad as we fear, and in the big scheme of things, are just another of life's problems to be worked out. Thinking about his problems this way changed things for Trevor. He was more positive about the future, could see a way forward and learnt how to manage his reactions to stress. The end result was his libido bounced back with much bravado and he had a clear plan to keep his health, both physical and mental, on track from now on.

FEMALE HORMONES

Women have a totally different experience with their hormones. First of all, you have the monthly cycle and all of its fluctuations. The main hor-

mones controlling the cycle are oestrogen and progesterone, and these are under the control of the pituitary gland in the brain. In young women, the ovaries produce oestrogen, progesterone and testosterone. The ovaries make oestrogen by converting testosterone, but it is also made to some extent by the adrenals and fat stores. Oestrogen increases libido, and makes sure we mate when we are most fertile.



Science Stuff

Two hormones from the pituitary – FSH and LH – control oestrogen and progesterone production according to the monthly cycle. FSH, or follicle stimulating hormone, increases oestrogen during the first half of the cycle, which stimulates a follicle or egg in the ovary to mature and get ready to be released. A burst of LH, or luteinising hormone, helps the follicle release the egg (ovulation), which then travels to the uterus to await fertilisation. If pregnancy doesn't occur, progesterone takes over in the second half of the cycle until the egg and lining of the uterus slough off and are released as a period. If you don't have enough progesterone, this can give you the usual PMS symptoms of bloating, pain, mood swings and chocolate cravings.

Like in men, a woman's libido is under the influence of testosterone. Testosterone levels vary during the month, with a peak at ovulation and higher levels in the morning. In theory, our libido should be at a peak during ovulation, to ensure sexual activity during our fertile part of the cycle. But that's not always the case. Some women notice an increase in their desire for sex around ovulation, but others have different peaks, with a few noticing increased libido during a period.

Most testosterone is carried around the blood by proteins, for example the sex hormone binding globulin (SHBG) and only 1 to 2 percent of testosterone is available and active. But that one percent serves a vital role in stimulating our libido.

You can see that a reduced level of testosterone could have a negative effect on libido, as well as reduce oestrogen levels. Some contraceptive pills, especially those for acne, reduce testosterone, and so reduce libido as well. Testosterone increases sebum or oil production in the skin. So suppressing it using oestrogen and progesterone (like using the contraceptive pill) helps reduce the amount of oil produced which blocks pores and causes the inflamed red spots. This is great for acne but not so good for libido.

When it comes to mating, animals, fish, birds and the like instinctively react to times when the female of the species is in heat. Human libidos, apart from the fluctuations mentioned above, are generally free from this phase of hormonal control, and we mate at any time during the cycle, pregnancy and after birth. Therefore, compared to animals, humans are less constrained by biology and more controlled by social conventions about sex.

MENOPAUSE

Around menopause, many women suffer imbalanced hormones and their symptoms. The typical hot flushes are due to fluctuations in oestrogen levels as the ovaries gradually stop producing the hormone. But there's another phase a few years before the hot flushes start, called peri-menopause which can start around forty-five. At this time, women can suffer the effects of too much oestrogen – painful breasts, mood swings and irritability, as well as increased PMS. Progesterone cream or troches (little pills that dissolve in your mouth) are useful to balance the hormones. A

healthy diet at this time is critical as well, but women often have little time to look after themselves, as they're looking after children, elderly parents, etc. But this is a time when it pays to put yourself first. You can't help anyone if you are under the weather yourself.

Like men, testosterone levels fall in women as they age, and again testosterone cream can be used to enhance libido during the menopause. However, women run the slight risk of increased hair growth with testosterone supplements, so any natural way to increase libido without having to resort to hormones is better. Getting the right nutrients will boost your own production of testosterone, so that you can manage without testosterone at all or with smaller doses.

My patient Narelle was fifty-five and looking for a new partner. She had found a good bloke who was friendly and fun, but she was worried that her libido seemed to have flown the coop. She just didn't have any interest in sex at all. She had passed menopause, and had had some vaginal dryness in the past. Some local oestrogen cream sorted out the dryness and compounded testosterone cream rubbed on her arms and thighs every morning boosted her libido within a week or two. But the real improvement came when she gave up wheat. "I didn't realise how much bread was making me feel tired and lethargic. That bloated feeling has left my gut and my constipation has gone completely." At the time, I found Narelle had Vitamin B12 deficiency, most likely brought on by the wheat intolerance. A few B12 injections built up her stores again, and going wheat free ensured that she didn't get low on B12 ever again. This essentially fixed her libido problems.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Good production of sex hormones from cholesterol is essential if you're to have balanced levels of all three hormones. That balance keeps our

cycle regular and fertility functioning. You need to make sure you're getting the right nutrients to make good levels of all the necessary hormones – zinc, magnesium and B vitamins, for example. We will go into this in more detail in Part 2.

LET ME HEAR YOUR BODY TALK...

In reality, libido is about much more than just hormones. Sexual behaviour involves a complex mix of multiple hormones, brain activity and behaviours. Recent research has focused on which areas of the brain are most active during sexual arousal and activity. Many of these studies are carried out on other mammals, but they should also apply to humans.



Science Stuff

Our subconscious brain controls our basic body functions and instincts. Some people call it the lizard or reptilian brain because it evolved before our 'conscious thought' brain – the cerebral cortex. In general, sexual activity is controlled by the cerebral cortex. But during arousal, men tend to have more activity in the subconscious brain – particularly the hypothalamus and amygdala, which are areas that *control* our subconscious, thus showing that men behave more instinctively towards sex. Women, on the other hand, have a more considered approach, which involves the cerebral cortex and includes feelings about the current relationship as well.

While our brains are pondering sex, both genital areas in men and women are richly endowed with nerves so they can receive messages from the brain and send messages back. During the prelim to sex, the rich blood supplies respond to nerve signals, so that sexual arousal increases blood flow to the pelvic area. In men, this results in an erection while in women, it results in engorgement of the genital tissues and lubrication. Women also pick up information from other senses like touch, to heighten the arousal and desire.



Science Stuff

From looking at male and female brains using MRI machines during arousal, we can get even more detailed information about the differences between men and women. In the hypothalamus, the preoptic area (POA) is a hormonally sensitive region that shares connections with other brain regions relevant to mating. The POA, which is considered the critical area for male sexual behaviour, is much bigger in males and has more connections with other parts of the brain than in females. The POA in females tends to inhibit the expression of sexual behaviour.

RESEARCH USING VISUAL SEXUAL STIMULI (VSS)

A lot of research is carried out using visual sexual stimuli to induce arousal in humans and then study it. In other words, we show men and women sexy videos and then measure what happens in different parts of the brain. Lots of fun!

Now we know that men respond more to VSS than women. VSS produces greater brain activations in the hypothalamus and amygdala in males than in females, and these areas of the primordial brain act faster. Our cerebral cortex, the thinking and conscious part of the brain, works a lot slower. This means that men – who access the hypothalamus and amygdala during sexual arousal – find the videos more stimulating, while women – who access the cerebral cortex – find them rather uninteresting and also take longer to respond.

It's well known that our conscious brain works much more slowly than our subconscious brain. Our subconscious controls our emotions, especially those linked to memory and works in a flash. For example, imagine that you're afraid of dogs because you were bitten by one as a child. When you see a dog, you instantaneously feel fear – the adrenaline starts coursing through your veins immediately, and you start to shake. Your pulse quickens and you prepare to run away. That's your subconscious reacting to fear= emotion + memory. After a few seconds, you control your fear, and realise that it's just a small dog and won't hurt you, and you begin to calm down. That's the conscious logical cerebral cortex which has now caught up with the subconscious, and takes over your behaviour.

So how does that affect arousal in both sexes? Simply put, men are quickly aroused by their subconscious brain – they act instinctively and impulsively. Women need longer stimulation because they tend to take a more thoughtful, conscious cerebral approach to sexual activity.

During foreplay, women's brains may react in areas of the cortex which induces feelings of empathy and perspective. In both sexes, there is a decrease in activity in areas of the temporal lobe, which are associated with moral judgement or embarrassment, so that's when the beer goggles get to work and you end up with someone that you regret the next day.

Menopausal women have less brain activation than younger women to VSS, so not only are their hormones not helping, but their brain is

also not reacting as well as it should to sexual stimulation— a double whammy.

The good news is that during orgasm, both males and females activate the same brain areas, so we all end up at the same place, even if we take different routes through the brain to get there.

I WANT TO KISS YOU ALL OVER...

As we have already mentioned, women take longer to get going and react to external messages from their brain rather than internal messages from their pelvis. Men tend to be more in tune with their internal bodily sensations during sex, possibly because their arousal is much easier to see. Research indicates that many women are not aware of being aroused, and are not conscious that the normal bodily changes described above are happening. On the other hand, many women report feeling mentally sexually aroused when nothing much is happening down below. Why this happens, no one knows. Research also shows that genital response often precedes subjective sexual arousal by several seconds, and can occur without women realizing it. This disconnect between what we feel and what's happening down below seems to be related to low libido and poor enjoyment of sex.

A woman's experience of sex is not just physical, but cognitive and emotional as well. As they seem to respond to messages from the cerebral cortex, the logical thinking brain, rather than the sub-conscious feeling brain- beliefs, values and attitudes colour their enjoyment of sex. If there's problems in the relationship, this will colour their attitude to sex with that person.

THE GOOD NEWS

Women who are more in tune with their bodies seem to experience better sex. So it pays off to pay more attention to your body and try to be more aware of your bodily sensations – not just in regard to sexual arousal, but also to hunger, thirst, tiredness, stress, etc. Women also respond to touch, so spending more time on touching, especially other erotic zones like breasts, nipples and skin in general, will allow women to catch up with their men.

DEEP, DEEP DOWN...

The famous G spot is an area on the anterior vaginal wall which represents the coming together of three sensitive tissues – the anterior vaginal wall, the urethra, and the space between the bladder and the vagina. When stimulated, this area is more likely to produce female vaginal orgasm, which is great news. Many women feel that a vaginal orgasm is more intense than a clitoral one but that is not always the case.

The health of the supporting muscles and ligaments in the pelvis is also important for good sex. Low muscle tone in the vagina and pelvic floor muscles can lead to poor sexual function and lack of pleasure. So it pays to keep your pelvic floor muscles in good working order. Do your sex-exercises regularly – while cooking, at the bus stop, whenever you can – to keep those muscles in tip-top condition.

On the other hand, high muscle tone can lead to painful sex. High muscle tone can be caused by general inflammation in the body, much the same way as people get muscle cramps in their legs. This is often caused by low magnesium, so if you're short of magnesium, it's certainly going to affect your vaginal and pelvic floor muscles too. It doesn't just stop at your calf muscles.

Female orgasms result in rhythmic pelvic muscle contractions, which spread all over the pelvic area. This obviously requires good muscle tone throughout the area. When women complain of poor enjoyment of sex, one of the things that bothers them is failure to reach orgasm, or unsatisfying orgasms. If your pelvic floor muscles are out of whack, either too flaccid or irritable with inflammation, or lack of the right nutrients for strength, you won't get that spread of rhythmic contractions and relaxation, which signals orgasm and gives you a feeling of satisfaction and climax.

As we get older, the vaginal lining gets thinner and dryer as well, which can cause intercourse to be painful. This can be easily treated with oestrogen creams and lubricants, but the pelvic muscle problem needs more attention. Luckily, I have the answer. In Part 2 we're going to get rid of inflammation and muscle cramps for good. Hurray! In the meantime try coconut oil applied to the vaginal area to help with dryness. No need to suffer when there's lots of things *you* can do to fix these problems.

Jessica, another patient of mine, had rheumatoid arthritis. It started in her late twenties. She also complained about her unsatisfying sex life – she and husband Cameron had sex regularly, but Jessica failed to orgasm, and when she did it didn't feel right. It was over too quickly and she never felt really satisfied. It never seemed to spread all over her pelvic area like it used to ... something seemed to be stopping it, like there was a blockage.

I took a careful dietary history. Jessica was convinced that there was nothing wrong with her diet – she ate fresh food, never had take-aways or fast food and ate whole grain bread. But she ate a lot of cheese, was addicted to Frappacinos and had the occasional muffin. We cleaned all the wheat and dairy out of her diet, and added lots of flaxseed oil. Some simple vitamin supplements boosted her zinc and B vitamin levels. Within a few weeks, her arthritis pain was greatly reduced and her joints were less stiff. And lo and behold, her next orgasm was much more sat-

isfactory. There was no feeling that something was blocked. The orgasm spread widely throughout all her pelvis muscles, and she felt sated and content. She continued to follow the diet instructions, while her health improved and her sex life soared. She felt like a new woman.

So far we've focused more on the female anatomy in this chapter. So to make up for it guys, we'll get into the male physical issues in the downstairs department in Chapter 4, when I'll tell you all about Josh and Brian.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Hormones, brain and pelvis all come together to provide a great libido and a satisfying sexual experience. Without the right nutrients, hormones will be low and imbalanced, the brain won't come out of its fog to get the right neurons firing, and the female sexual organs won't get their act together. I can't emphasise enough how important the right building blocks are to get all these processes functioning in top gear. If you are interested in finding out what foods to eat and what to avoid, go straight to Chapter 7. If you want to read more about male sexual problems, let's not wait any longer and move onto the next topic in Chapter 4.

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4

I GET KNOCKED DOWN, BUT I GET UP AGAIN

Erection Problems, Chronic Diseases

GETTING AN ERECTION

It's pretty common these days to find guys who have problems getting an erection, especially as they get older. About one in five men over the age of forty experiences erectile problems, while one in ten can't get any sort of erection.

HERE'S HOW ERECTIONS NORMALLY HAPPEN

As a man gets sexually aroused, messages from the brain tell nerves going to the blood vessels in the penis to open up and let more blood in. There are two tubes of spongy tissue running along either side of the penis and these fill up with blood. Any outflow of blood is blocked.

Some men have little interest in sex, but can achieve an erection. Other men can achieve an erection but can't reach an orgasm or ejaculate. Erectile dysfunction(ED) is the inability to get or keep an erection. In this case, penetrative sex may not be possible. For sex to happen, the penis needs to become erect and last long enough to enter the partner and achieve orgasm.



Science Stuff

When a man is aroused, he makes a chemical called cyclic guanosine monophosphate (cGMP), which helps keep the erection going. Everything in nature must be kept in balance, so in keeping with all other systems in the body, there is a chemical which works against cGMP. Phosphodiesterase inhibitor 5 (PDE5) is a natural chemical that breaks down cGMP and reduces an erection. Keeping these chemicals in balance and keeping the cGMP as the dominant chemical makes a good hard erection happen. Medications such as Viagra[®], Cialis[®] and Levitra[®] block the PDE5 to keep the cGMP active and dominant, thereby ensuring a good erection.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU HAVE ERECTION PROBLEMS?

There are many reasons why sexual performance hits the skids. They can range from depression to stress, exhaustion and other physical causes. So how can you tell if it's a physical cause? To start with, psychological causes tend to decrease while we are asleep or totally relaxed. So if you wake in the middle of the night or early morning with a good boner, then you can be pretty sure that the erection process is working fine physically. You've been relaxed all night mentally, which is why you can get an erection in the morning. Similarly, if looking at porn and masturbating produces a good erection and easy orgasm, then the plumbing is working just fine. Good sex while on holiday or a weekend away also suggests that you're fine physically. In that case, stress might be a factor.

On the other hand, if morning erections have decreased in frequency and hardness, and if it is difficult to maintain an erection, then there may

well be a physical reason behind the problem.

There can also be a mixture of problems, such as a physical cause which then sets up a fear of poor erection resulting in a psychological problem too. The same things that cause depression can also be responsible for poor physical performance.

WHAT HEALTH PROBLEMS CAUSE ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION?

General ill health, such as obesity and a poor diet, is going to reduce erections. You cannot perform like a tiger if you do not put a tiger in the tank. Although low testosterone does not normally affect the *quality* of erections, the same problems that cause low testosterone and libido can also cause erection problems. So not getting the right nutrients in your diet and getting too many toxins from processed food, smoking and booze will interfere with the good balance of chemicals like cGMP and good blood flow. That, in turn, keeps you from getting and maintaining a good erection.

Some experts say that most mechanical reasons for erectile dysfunction involve some decrease in blood flow to the area. If your general health isn't good then your penile blood vessels can be narrowed by hardening of the arteries. So poor erections are common in people who have high blood pressure, heart disease, atherosclerosis and diabetes. At the same time, a lot of medications for these conditions reduce your ability to get an erection too. Try to find out as much as you can about your medications to see if poor erections are a side-effect.

The upshot of the whole shebang is that if you want to run a monster truck, you've got to spend the cash on good maintenance and quality lube. Pour in cheap and nasty fuel and you'll end up with an old banger that's timings off and running on the whiff of an oily rag.

DON'T CONFUSE LACK OF SEX DRIVE WITH ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION

It's especially important to understand the difference between lack of libido and erectile dysfunction. Men with ED usually have a strong sex drive. They have difficulty getting or maintaining an erection because of circulatory or nerve problems. And the lack of a good stiffy can be the first symptom of cardiovascular disease or diabetes. So if that's your problem – get off to the doctor and get a check-up.

On the other hand, men with a lack of libido may, in fact, be able to sustain a great erection once aroused. For whatever reason, their sex drive is low. That doesn't mean they can't perform; it just means that they don't necessarily want to. That's the difference between low libido and ED – low libido is like having a classic Ferrari that never gets out of the garage because the owner has lost interest, while ED equates to the old Holden run-around, that sounds a like lawnmower and break downs on every corner.

LOW TESTOSTERONE

Normal sex drive can vary a lot – some men are very driven sexually, right out there to sexual addiction, while others are at the very low end of the scale. Most men are somewhere in the middle. What counts is the sort of sex life you *want* to have, and also whether your sex drive has decreased recently. As men age, their testosterone naturally decreases. This can affect libido and drive, but mostly don't affect erections and sexual performance.

Other hormones can play a role too, such as low levels of thyroid hormone or, rarely, high levels of prolactin, a hormone produced in a gland at the base of the brain.

LOW BRAIN CHEMICALS

Sexual desire obviously involves the brain, and the brain's chemical messaging system is intimately linked to sexual desire. One of those messengers is dopamine. We talked earlier about how important a good balance of brain hormones are. With a low dopamine, that excitement about sex and the build-up beforehand are missing. An example of an imbalance of dopamine is Parkinson's disease where the brain dopamine is known to be low. Some patients with Parkinson's disease notice an increase in sexual desire when they take dopamine-enhancing medications.

Men who have a reduced sex drive often don't want to talk about it, and their women may not want to talk about it either. There's this myth that men are supposed to want it all the time and be ever ready. If they don't, their partners may be afraid that it's their fault – they're not attractive anymore, a lousy lay, etc. And of course if he's not willing to talk about it, she can put two and two together and come up with some pretty wild ideas about why he's not interested in sex with her anymore (for example – he must be having an affair). If people aren't talking through the problem or getting help, then problems escalate and soon they aren't talking about anything but screaming at each other.

SYMPTOMS OF LOW TESTOSTERONE IN MEN

There are a range of symptoms indicating low testosterone in men, including:

- Lack of energy – feeling tired, frequently falling asleep around the house or after work
- Decreased interest in sex
- Fewer spontaneous or early morning erections

- Difficulty getting an erection, and taking Viagra isn't working as well as expected
- Loss of muscle bulk and strength. Not being able to lift heavy weights like before
- Weight gain, especially around the middle, or in the form of love handles
- Grumpiness and bad moods, feeling out of sorts
- Poor concentration and memory
- Testes getting smaller and breasts increasing in size, in the form of man boobs
- Hot flushes, especially at night

Most men with a low testosterone only have a small drop which is insignificant. It doesn't usually cause any symptoms and doesn't bother them. About 25% have this kind of low testosterone. But about 6% of men have a testosterone low enough to give them problems. Loss of sex drive, fatigue, loss of muscle, depression and thinning of the bones are some of the biggest problems that come out of low testosterone.

Testosterone replacement therapy is available, but achieving a healthy lifestyle can really reduce your dependence on these hormones. Better to make your own hormones rather than relying on a replacement that costs a lot!

Two of my patients, Josh and Brian, had been together for about five years. Brian was a successful advertising executive in his fifties, but had a stressful job that required long hours and a whole load of responsibility. Josh was a good-looking banker twenty years his junior, who played rugby at the weekends. Although Brian looked after himself and kept trim, he had noticed that his erections weren't always that great and sometimes he lost an erection during sex. He was starting to get a com-

plex about it, and obviously the age difference between them was playing on his mind.

When we checked his adrenal levels, they were flat as a pancake. The batteries were empty and his testosterone was in the low/normal level. We cleaned up his diet and he took some long service leave. I prescribed testosterone cream for a few months to boost his levels, but we wanted to get him producing more of his own natural testosterone. So I also prescribed some supplements and a new dietary plan. Rest and relaxation on a daily basis was also part of the script. During the time off, Brian also took stock of his lifestyle and rearranged his priorities to enjoy life more. Travel was something he wanted to do, and to everyone's surprise he bought a boat – something he had wanted to do for years but never thought it was on the cards. When Josh got over his shock, he was delighted to reduce his sporting commitments so they could take off to the Whitsundays and the Barrier Reef more often.

So here's an example of how food, physical health, mental attitude and lifestyle all combine to produce a physical symptom. All areas needed to be addressed to find the complete solution. Brian did just that – made step-by-step changes in each area – food, exercise, stress, work and relaxation – and the results were tremendous. Picture them sailing off into the sunset – keys, radio, supplies, maps, libido...

STRESS, EXHAUSTION AND DEPRESSION

Stress, exhaustion and depression can also affect performance, and may occur together, along with physical health problems. If you are constantly stressed at work, and exhausted from your job, you are not going to be fit to perform late at night when you get home. Worse, many couples don't even make time for sex. While a quickie after a boozy night out might be fun, enjoyable sex lasting a long time and satisfying both part-

ners requires you to be rested, relaxed and happy. Date nights, scheduling sex appointments with your partner, Sunday morning lie-ins and planning for regular time alone, all help to give sex the priority it needs.

Depression is a common cause of erectile dysfunction, and the treatment can be a potent dampener on sexual function too. One of the most common side effects of SSRI anti-depressants is poor erection and orgasm. One of the signs of depression is lack of interest in things you used to enjoy- so loss of libido can be a sign that the depression is getting to be a problem, needs to be looked at and managed. Now I'm not a great fan of anti-depressants and I believe a lot can be done on a physical level by eating the right food and getting the right nutrients. But there are times when it gets out of control and that's where you need a professional. Cognitive behaviour therapy or CBT as psychologists call it can be very helpful as can a mild anti-depressive to lift your mood sufficiently for you to manage the other aspects. So get an expert opinion rather than suffer in silence.

Let's look at a few other common problems that men suffer.

PERFORMANCE ANXIETY

Well, we all know about guys who can't pee in front of people, but performance anxiety about sex isn't as well known. With so much results-driven pressure at work, the last thing men need is another performance anxiety at home. What with helping with household chores, being a good parent and being communicative, there seems to be little relaxing about being at home. Sex can add one more pressure to the list.

Women demand and expect satisfaction these days, and guys who don't perform are seen as not stepping up to the plate. Sex, which used to be just about fun has now become some sort of assessment, with Key

Performance Indicators and regular reviews. What is the quality and quantity of your work? How is your knowledge about the area, and is your customer service up to scratch? Ability to improve? Oops – is this a relationship breaker? Whatever it is, it certainly increases a man's performance anxiety, and can lead to erectile dysfunction (as well as a bit of passive resistance).

PORN ADDICTION

It's no surprise then that more and more men are attracted to the easy option of just pleasing themselves. No partner, no pressure, no problem.

Because of that, increasing numbers of women are looking for help with what they see as their partners 'porn addiction.' But what's really happening is that men are resorting to an easy way to get sexual satisfaction and relaxation without their performance being scrutinized or judged in any way.

I had a patient named Brad who, at the age of thirty-seven, was the manager of a large supermarket. He worked long hours, never felt he could wind down, and was always stressed. He used to overeat a bit to combat it, and gradually the weight piled on. The final straw was when he was caught with his pants down when his wife returned from a girl's night out. Oops! At 110kgs (240 pounds) he was diagnosed with depression and started on an SSRI. Well, his weight gain really started to accelerate then, and his libido – not great to start off with – sank like a stone. When I saw him, he was at his wits end – a large, unhappy guy with low self-esteem about his body and a failing sex life.

We started with a healthy eating program with some outdoor exercise, getting some sunlight every day and a good quality supplement. As his weight and health improved, his mood improved too. He eventually

ditched the anti-depressant drugs and joined the local softball team. Last I heard of him, he and his wife were expecting a baby, and he was promoted to area manager.

DRUGS, ALCOHOL, SMOKING AND STEROIDS

Party drugs and alcohol can take their toll on libido and erectile function, and the cycle of staying up late and relying on Viagra doesn't last forever without having to pay the devil. Smoking causes narrowing of the arteries, so those small penile arteries are obviously going to take a hit too.

We've already mentioned anabolic steroids, which is fine when you're an MMA fighter or body builder, and constantly flexing your muscles. For those of you not paying attention though, there are serious repercussions. I'm talking about afterwards, when your testicles have shrunk and you've got no sperm, so your girlfriend leaves you, especially when you start developing moobs and your liver starts to pack in ... am I getting through to you? These sorts of things don't help your libido, and they sure don't help your sex life!

My patient Shane was a twenty-nine-year-old plumber who worked for a big construction company, putting plumbing into new houses. His wife couldn't get pregnant, and they started attending fertility treatment. He, of course, was getting ribbing from his workmates about the new diet they were trying. It was all healthy salads and fruit for him, while the guys were tucking into pies, fries and cordial. Then he got the results – the diet wasn't working because he had no sperm. Of course then it all came out – during his gym days, he'd been taking 'supplements' to give him the buff look. He didn't ask what was in them, didn't really care, but the years of 'roids were now coming back to haunt him. No matter what he did, the sperm count didn't improve. His wife didn't hang around for

long after that, and he deteriorated into a funk of drink, drugs and misery. That's what steroid use will get you.

HOW CHRONIC DISEASE AFFECTS LIBIDO

The number of people with chronic diseases these days is truly frightening. We have become nations of unhealthy people, subject to obesity, diabetes and heart disease.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has some interesting stats. In western countries around 25 to 30 percent of people are obese, and between 1980 and 2008 world obesity doubled. Around 10 percent of people have high blood sugar, and around 30 percent have high blood pressure. What's happening to us? I'll tell you – it's our poor diet of processed foods high in salt, sugar and unhealthy animal products.

The 2007/2008 Australian Bureau of Statistics estimated that 83 percent of people over sixty-five years of age had three or more chronic conditions such as heart disease, osteoarthritis or diabetes. And here's a stat that's closer to your heart. Just under 20 percent of government spending goes toward health, and 30 to 50 percent of that can be spent on private health care. Who pays for that? Well, in some countries like Australia, 60 percent of that private spend comes from us, while the public spending comes from our taxes. So those chronic diseases are costing us loads of money. But what can we do about it? Well, the big answer is to change our lifestyle and keep healthy.

My patient Maud came to see me because she was worried about Wally, her husband of thirty-odd years. She noticed that Wally was underperforming in the bedroom, and he refused to talk about it or get any sort of help. She told me that he had high blood pressure and cholesterol, and was on about eight tablets per day. Both were in their seventies, and

they still wanted an active sex life, but Maud was getting more and more frustrated about the lack of action. Wally wasn't used to talking about this sort of problem, and Maud didn't know who to ask. She couldn't get him to the doctor at the best of times, and certainly not to talk about this sort of thing.

Maud and I talked about Wally's medication and worked out that his blood pressure tabs and cholesterol medication could be behind his poor erections. She had noticed that he rarely had a morning erection now, and often deflated before either of them could orgasm. There was a danger that both of them could lapse into apathy and abandon their sex life altogether if this kept up.

So I gave her a dietary plan that would supply them both with healthy nutrients, to boost their general health, hormones and brain too. Within a few weeks, both of them felt a lot better, and were more clear headed. Wally's blood pressure dropped, and he got to reduce his medication. At his three-month check, his cholesterol was down, and within six months he had stopped his lipid tablets. Maud commented that he looked a lot happier, and was more interested in going out and meeting friends too. His erections got better, with more morning erections and staying stiffer for longer. It was a great success – on all sorts of levels!

ERECTION PROBLEMS AND DISEASE

Chronic illnesses and chronic pain can also lead to a decrease in sex drive, likely through a combination of physical effects of the disease as well as the psychological stress associated with a chronic illness. Certain medications, such as blood pressure and cholesterol medications, can also cause a reduction in sex drive. Diseases such as diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure and high cholesterol, as well as many drugs used to treat the problem, can negatively affect sexual desire.

For example, poor erections can be the first symptom of diabetes. In most diabetics, a waning libido is often the result of diabetic neuropathy (nerve damage) to the nerves that prompt sexual arousal and desire. In diabetic women, low libido can lead to vaginal dryness, making sex uncomfortable and painful. Nearly 70 percent of diabetic men have erectile dysfunction, and many of them could be helped by better control of their disease.

The presence of erectile dysfunction may also be an indicator of underlying coronary artery disease. The narrowing of small penile arteries by deposition of cholesterol and other substances may precede the occurrence of the same process in the coronary arteries in the heart.

Cardiovascular disease can also cause decreased sex drive and/or erectile dysfunction in men. Heart attack survivors may experience decreased libido because they are subconsciously afraid that having sex will trigger another heart attack. The medications used to treat heart disease can also decrease sex drive in men.

Poor body image and the real health problems that often accompany obesity can cause decreased sex drive in men. Higher body fat means high levels of sex hormone binding globulin (SHBG). SHBG binds to testosterone, leaving less free testosterone, which is needed for sexual desire. The line from there to lack of sex drive is obvious.

PARKINSON'S DISEASE

This chronic inflammatory disease affects nerves and the brain, and can interfere with normal sexual functioning. It affects libido, as well as erection functioning. In Parkinson's Disease, cells that produce dopamine tend to die off, leaving you short of that essential sex chemical. This results in loss of interest in sex, and therefore low libido. At the same

time, muscle coordination is reduced, and damage to the nerves results in poor erections and inability to orgasm. In rare cases, the medication which boosts dopamine and treats this sort of disease can cause an over-reaction, and boost libido to addictive levels (remember how dopamine is involved in addictive behaviours).

Female Parkinson's sufferers also have sexual problems with dryness, and orgasm problems.

PROSTATE DISEASE

Neither prostate cancer nor prostate disease usually causes erectile or libido problems. However, prostate surgery for cancer may damage the nerves that are involved in erections. These nerves are sometimes removed, if the cancer has spread to them, affecting sensation in the area. Surgery for benign prostate disease, known as a transurethral resection of the prostate (TURP), may cause erectile problems in about 10 percent of cases.

DEPRESSION IN CHRONIC DISEASE

Many people with chronic diseases, like those mentioned above, get depressed about their health. The way that the disease affects their ability to be active and independent can be depressing, as well as the side-effects of medication. It also reminds us that we're getting old. Long-term pain is also very dispiriting, and can wear you down as well. Anti-depressant medication, as well as the reason for taking that medication, is a very common reason for low libido.

LIBIDO AND CANCER

Cancer can have a big effect on libido. Many of the treatments, such as chemotherapy and hormone treatments, are known to reduce libido. If you are fatigued by the treatment, or experiencing nausea and vomiting, sex won't be the first thing on your mind. In women, radiation therapy may reduce vaginal lubrication. Body image may also play a big role, particularly in breast cancer patients, who may be embarrassed about their disfigured body after mastectomy. And a lot of men find that they have low self-esteem when they get a cancer diagnosis.

The important thing is to communicate with your loved one, as well as get professional help after the diagnosis. Everyone is entitled to an active sex life, and intimacy is even more important when you have a serious illness. Avoidance as a coping mechanism just leaves everyone confused about what's going on and what's on your mind. So talk it through whenever you can. Communication will help you both emotionally and physically.

My patient Eric was sixty-four and had recently had a prostatectomy for early prostate cancer. Three months on, and he was struggling to come to terms with what had happened to him. Apart from some problems with urine incontinence, he also had erection problems – poor erection and not being able to sustain it. His partner was reassuring him that this was normal after surgery, and that it was still early. But Eric was having none of it. He wanted to be better sooner, and was pretty angry that he hadn't been told of these potential problems before the surgery. We talked it through during the consultation – really his fear was that it would become permanent. No-one likes the thought of getting old and functions you used to enjoy dropping by the wayside. And a cancer diagnosis always pulls people up short, makes them think about what's really important in life. Getting fears out in the open helps dissipate them and so Eric was relieved to talk about this and get reassurance that things would improve with time. Luckily he had nerve-sparing surgery

– the type that leaves the nerves intact, so there is a good chance that his erections would come back with time. There were other things that we could do to help as well such as erection enhancing drugs such as Viagra or Cialis as well as vacuum devices which draw blood into the penis. So Eric went away much happier about the future and feeling that he had a bit of control over what he could do to get his erections back. Knowing that there's something you can do to help yourself is always a good feeling.

DRUGS AND SEXUAL FUNCTION

Arousal and Erection. An erection is the result of coordination between nerves, hormones, blood vessels and psychological factors. This means there are many areas where things can go wrong. Medicines that have a physical effect on the blood vessels in the penis, those that act on the brain, interfere with hormone levels (particularly testosterone), or affect the transmission of nerve messages can all cause impotence. They mess with the balance of reactions that causes an erection, and keep it from happening.

Ejaculation. The same can be true of ejaculation, which is a complex reflex process that involves the activation of alpha receptors in the prostate gland and seminal vesicles. Medicines that block alpha receptors such as some drugs used to treat blood pressure or benign prostate enlargement can interfere with ejaculation.

During ejaculation, increased alpha receptor activation closes the bladder neck, facilitating the normal flow of semen out of the penis. If this mechanism is disrupted, it results in retrograde ejaculation, with semen flowing along the path of least resistance from the urethra up into the bladder, instead of out into the open.

Various chemicals in the brain are also involved in orgasm and ejaculation, and medicines that affect these chemicals can cause ejaculatory disturbances. The most widely prescribed centrally acting agents that affect ejaculation are selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitor (SSRI) antidepressants.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Any young bloke reading this chapter might be thoroughly despondent, thinking I hope I don't get old if I've got all this in front of me. But the truth is that it doesn't have to be like this. Many of the diseases mentioned in this chapter could be prevented with some healthy lifestyle changes early on, and I don't mean boring food with no taste, but fun food that you can make with your partner – sexy food and drinks – and a little bit of common sense.

It's time we sat up and started taking notice of the cost of our lifestyle. It's not sustainable for our economy or for ourselves to think that we can eat crap and then rely on pills and surgery to fix everything.

Even when you get a diagnosis of diabetes or prostate cancer, it doesn't mean it's too late to make some changes and get better health. But the best way is to start now. And that's what we're going to do in Part 2.

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5

WORKING 9 TO 5...
TOO BUSY FOR SEX*Role of Sleep, Relaxation and Depression*

Many emotions and feelings can interfere with a woman's or man's libido, and we're going to talk about a few common problems affecting both men and women in this chapter.

STRESS

Stress is the number 1 sex damper. It unbalances your hormones, steeps your body in stress hormones like cortisol and helps the weight pile on. None of these things are good for libido.

In the past, humans didn't have chronic stress. We had acute stress, or quick reactions when a sabre-tooth tiger chased us. Our immediate response was to activate our sympathetic nervous system for 'fight or flight'. We made adrenaline in large quantities, which diverted blood from our gut to our large muscles so we could run away. It also increased the heart rate, increased blood pressure and opened our pupils wider so we could see better. As soon as the stress was over, our bodies calmed down. Nature loves balance, and so to counteract and balance our sympathetic nervous system, we have the parasympathetic nervous system.

This part of the nervous system calms us down, making us feel relaxed. Normally the two systems are in balance, but because we are always rushing these days, we live in a constant state of sympathetic over activation. Our parasympathetic system never gets a chance, and it's certainly not the dominant system.

This means that some of our glands are also being over worked. Our adrenal glands are responsible for making adrenaline, and if we carry on living life in the fast lane, constantly living on adrenaline, those glands will get exhausted. We can manage for a few years like this, and then a winter flu or an extra stress we weren't expecting just becomes the final nail in the coffin of our adrenals. We collapse. Either it takes us a long time to recover from the illness, we get chronic fatigue, or we have a nervous breakdown. So what do we do? Well the first thing to do is be aware that we are always in a state of sympathetic overdrive. If you find yourself always rushing around, speeding when you don't need to, always on the point of a panic attack, then you are in a constant state of sympathetic over activity.

In that case, you need to activate your parasympathetic nervous system. How do we do that? Well, a few long, deep breaths is a good start. This will start the process and slow down your sympathetic nervous system. But then in the long term, you need to learn to activate your parasympathetic nervous system on a daily basis and keep both systems in balance. That's where meditation comes in. Now many think meditation is hard, but it doesn't need to be. There are some really simple techniques – like candle meditation – which you can do for ten minutes when you get home from work.

Light a small tea-light or candle. Get comfortable, and stare into the flame for about ten minutes. Feel yourself getting more relaxed. The rate at which the flame flickers puts your brain into a calm state of mind, that simple! Another easy way to relax is with holosync tapes. These tapes use music with waves, which again puts your mind into a more relaxed

state. They'll feature things like large Tibetan monastery bells, rushing water and rainfall (see below for more information about brain waves). So that's acute stress sorted.

Chronic stress, on the other hand, is handled through a different process. In the past, as cavemen, the only *chronic* stress we had was starvation. Now we have chronic stress all the time with financial worries, mortgages, relationship issues and work stress.

Because our body interprets chronic stress as – 'we're probably heading for a famine so we've got to conserve resources' our hormones work to preserve energy. We make cortisol in large amounts to handle the stress, and this starts with making too much of the hormone first thing in the mornings. Now our cortisol should be highest in the morning to get us going, but when it gets too high too early, it gets used up too quickly. And once it's used up, there's no more supply to deal with stress through the rest of the day. Eventually, our adrenals can't keep producing the amount of cortisol we are burning up, and they get exhausted. It's like the batteries are flat.

Adrenal fatigue is so common now that I pretty much test everyone for it as soon as I hear what's wrong with them. It's easy to assess the state of your adrenals with a saliva test taken four times over the course of a day. In the early stages the results show high cortisol either early in the morning or throughout the day. As the adrenal fatigue progresses, the cortisol production can't keep up and we get lower and lower levels. Many people have low cortisol in the morning and then it picks up by lunchtime. This is the classic person who feels exhausted in the morning, has to drag themselves out of bed and needs 4 cups of coffee to get going. By lunchtime their cortisol has picked up and they can keep going. But if they carry on with their hectic lifestyle, then they deteriorate into the 3rd stage which is a flat-lining cortisol – pretty flat throughout the day. It's not that uncommon to see these days. The main symptoms of adrenal fatigue are:

- Constant tiredness. Some people wake up feeling tired, feeling like their sleep hasn't been restful. Others get some cortisol in the morning, but as the day goes on, they get more and more exhausted.
- Can't get out of bed in the morning
- Need coffee and caffeine to keep you going through the day
- Get every cold and flu going around, and every illness takes a long time to go away
- Craving salty or sweet snacks
- Decreased sex drive
- Not having fun anymore

If you have those problems, get down to your doctor and get your adrenals checked. Not every doctor does the saliva tests, but local naturopaths or integrative doctors should be able to order them for you.

The treatment for adrenal fatigue is usually supplements to boost adrenal function, but that's only a short-term solution. That will feed your adrenals and squeeze a little bit of extra juice out of them, but it won't work forever. The long-term treatment is to change your lifestyle – get more rest and relaxation, switch off the adrenaline and cortisol, and opt for a slower pace of life. Your body is talking to you – telling you that it can't cope – and you have to listen.

SLEEP

Most of us don't get enough sleep these days. We stay up late, playing on the computer or watching TV, and then drag ourselves out of bed every morning for the daily trudge to work. In the past, before TV, people

would go to bed early every night. It might sound boring, but there was a lot less infertility and low libido around. Whenever there is a power cut, electricity workers strike, hurricane, or some such event forcing us all to stay in and look at the walls, the number of babies born always increases. That should tell you something about sleep and libido.

How much sleep do we need? Well, it varies between seven and nine hours a night, on average. You can use caffeine or cocaine to keep yourself going, but sooner or later that sleep debt needs to be serviced. I know a friend who skied for a full week on coke and other assorted pills without sleeping. Unfortunately, upon returning to work, he collapsed and needed a week's sick leave to recover.

We also know that sleep deprivation causes problems with co-ordination and cognition, and that our decision making may be affected, especially if it involves our emotions.

Sleep debt is also linked with:

- Increased risk of motor vehicle accidents
- Increase in body mass index – a greater likelihood of obesity due to an increased appetite caused by sleep deprivation
- Increased risk of diabetes and heart problems
- Increased risk for psychiatric conditions, including depression and substance abuse
- Decreased ability to pay attention, react to signals or remember new information

So if you're regularly not getting enough sleep, how do you think that affects your libido and sexual performance? As part of their sleep deprivation, many people don't allow enough time for sex. They stay up late, fall asleep in front of the telly, then toddle off to bed. Before you know

it, sex has been forgotten about altogether. If you want to have a great sex life, make sure you go to bed early enough so that both partners are still awake and in the mood. Or go for early morning sex, when you're both well rested. Most people know about time management at work, but don't apply it too well in their personal lives.

Schedule time for sex during the week, and book a date with your partner so that it's not neglected. Going out for dinner is not always a good idea when it comes to a date night; a few drinks and sleep-neglected partners can snooze off, and a heavy dinner is not always conducive to someone lying on top of you afterwards. Staying in with a warm aromatherapy bath or tucking up early with books and a glass of wine might be more productive. It's amazing the number of infertile couples who need to be reminded of these simple facts. You can't get pregnant if you don't have sex.

But back to the question: how much sleep do you need? You can answer that simply by noticing how you wake up in the morning. If you can't drag yourself out of bed most mornings, then you need to go to bed earlier. If you are getting enough sleep, you should wake up refreshed and ready to get up and face the day.

Good sleep hygiene is really important too. Make sure you have a good sleep routine (i.e., regular bedtime and getting up time). Irregular hours play havoc with our sleep hormone melatonin, and that can throw the whole system off. The most important factor is the time you get up. Keep getting up at the same time every morning, and you should soon find that you feel sleepy at the same time every night. Don't eat heavy meals too late, either, as your active gut will also keep your brain alert.

Looking at the computer late at night can inhibit melatonin and be too stimulating, so shut the computer down before 8pm or earlier. TV, on the other hand, has a different frequency of electro-magnetic waves, and these are more conducive to relaxation. It's similar to flame, and helps us relax. That's why we often fall asleep in front of the TV or an open fire.



Science Stuff

Our brainwaves are classified as follows:

- 1) Beta, emitted when we are consciously alert, or we feel agitated, tense or afraid, with frequencies ranging from 13 to 60 cycles per second in the Hertz scale
- 2) Alpha, when we are in a state of physical and mental relaxation, although aware of what is happening around us, with frequency around 7 to 13 cycles per second
- 3) Theta, more or less 4 to 7 cycles, is a state of deep relaxation with reduced consciousness
- 4) Delta, when there is unconsciousness or deep sleep, emitting between 0.1 and 4 cycles per second

In general, we are accustomed to using the beta brain rhythm. Beta waves occur when the brain is working on goal-oriented tasks, such as planning a date or reflecting actively over a particular issue. EEGs show few beta waves during meditation and resting.

When we diminish the brain rhythm to alpha, we put ourselves in the ideal condition to learn new information, keep facts and data, perform elaborate tasks, learn languages and analyse complex situations. Meditation, relaxation exercises and activities that induce a sense of calm also enable this alpha state.

During meditation, theta waves are most abundant in the frontal and middle parts of the brain. Theta waves indicate deep relaxation and occur more frequently in highly experienced meditation practitioners.

Delta waves are characteristic of sleep.

At the end of the day, you know when you need more sleep, and it's logical that poor sleep and stress will decrease the libido. Don't let your sleep debt be your excuse – do something about it today.

POOR BODY IMAGE AND LOW SELF-ESTEEM

Women. Despite all the progress made with bringing sex and in particular, female sexual activity and function out into the open, more women than ever feel embarrassed and ashamed of their bodies. It's great – we can talk openly about periods, tampon ads fill the airwaves, and women on TV discuss menopause, libido and light bladder leakage. TV programs like *Sex and the City* highlight differing attitudes towards sex and love, and embrace all levels of sexual activity, including gender orientation, fetishes and so-called deviancy. Anything goes.

However, with all the media pressure and perfect air-brushed bodies on display, more and more women feel embarrassed on a personal level that their own body doesn't live up to expectations. Many women can't look in the mirror, and won't let their partner see them undress or get naked. This mismatch between what we see on TV and how we feel about our own bodies gets in the way of many young women enjoying a happy, fulfilling sex life.

Other women have hang-ups about the shape of their genitals themselves, and that is illustrated by the number of women having vaginoplasties. It's sad that many young women feel so insecure that they undergo this type of surgery. Our bodies can't be made perfect, no matter how much surgery we have, and what I've found is that improving one area only highlights the imperfections in other areas. Then, the body becomes (if you have enough cash) a never-ending work in progress, and we know where that leads – grotesque, misshapen faces peering at us from celebrity magazines, with grouper lips to botoxed eyes showing

constant surprise. The trout pout is so common now that we hardly feel the need to comment.

How frustrating is it that instead of young women enjoying the sexual freedom that we fought so hard to achieve, many of them are hung up and sad. Instead of grabbing the opportunity to enjoy sex – an important function of being an adult – they are criticising themselves and trying to change their bodies.

Programs such as *Embarrassing Bodies* at least help people realise that many of us have physical quirks. That's what makes us unique, and instead of being ashamed of our big asses, small breasts or large labias, we should be celebrating our differences. You have to remember that if we were all perfect, supermodels wouldn't be so super. The goal posts would move, and some other physical characteristic like petite noses would be the next must have.

So for most of us, there is no point even trying to compete. If – like me – you are terminally short, then you just have to accept that being a supermodel is not going to happen, and get on with enjoying life.

In some respects, opting out of the good looks rat race is a blessing, because then you can concentrate on your positives – a good sense of humour, a great personality, a positive outlook. These can be very attractive qualities. And I'll let you into a little secret – many of these perfect body celebrity personas don't make great partners. Any partner of a top performing athlete will tell you that it's all about them. That ambitious self-focus that got them to the Olympics doesn't just disappear after the medal ceremony. The hardest part of being a competitive athlete or high-performing star is coming back down to earth again after an event. Those supermodel good looks don't last forever, and they become a model's own Sword of Damocles, hovering over their heads – 'Must keep my looks at all costs, because if they go what else do I have?'

So if you're feeling embarrassed about your body shape, or particular physical quirkiness, get help now. If you are just overweight, sign on for my Chocolate Lovers Detox program. It's amazing how losing a bit of weight and feeling fitter and healthier can help your self-esteem. Don't hesitate, take action today! Putting yourself in touch with your body and its sensations will help your libido and sexual satisfaction soar.

Men. Guys often suffer from the same low self-esteem as women, but about different physical attributes. Size is always important; not just in the penis department, but also height and bulk. But think about it: some of the blokes with the most success with women are not tall or muscle-bound he-men. And those blokes have got it all figured out – they understand women and know how to get a result without much effort.

Focus on getting yourself healthy and fit. Someone who is happy and fun to be with gets a lot further than a self-obsessed body builder. Work on your other attributes. A good job and prospects are attractive; many women are fed up with the usual round of dating club bores, insolvent chancers and aggressive weirdos. A good, honest, stand-up bloke is a rarity. Make it your speciality, and you'll get more action.

And the Chocolate Lovers Detox isn't just for women. It works just as well for guys too. It's a great, healthy detox that makes people feel wonderful, and can continue beyond the thirty-day program. So give it a chance and get healthy today.

Girls are not going to be interested in an obese, wheezing geezer who looks like a poor bet to hit fifty. Make health part of your game plan to hook the best woman on the website, speed dating session, gym, etc. You *can* punch above your weight, and a healthy body can help you get there.

And don't forget about personal hygiene. Unhealthy blokes give off a nasty body odour – ask any personal trainer. A healthy bloke with a great diet will give off a healthy aroma that girls will find irresistible. So clear all the crap out your diet and give your pheromones a chance.

PERSONALITY, MENTAL HEALTH AND SEXUAL FUNCTION

Being introverted, emotionally unstable, or having depression and anxiety can lead to poor libido and sexual dysfunction. Again, these conditions may require professional help. Although some people may need medications, getting the right nutrients can go a long way to helping depression and anxiety, and I manage quite a few cases like this in my practice through good nutrition and supplements specifically designed to treat these conditions.

PAST SEXUAL ABUSE

Past sexual abuse can have a very big effect on feelings and attitudes towards sex, very understandably. Today there is more awareness and acceptance of incest in families and this means people can talk about their experiences more openly. If you have been sexually abused or the victim of incest, then you need professional help to guide you through the healing process.

Many people feel guilt and shame, especially when the abuse happens in childhood. Children often feel they have caused this to happen to them, as they can't rationalize adults owning their own behaviour the way other adults can. But even adult victims suffer feelings of guilt and shame. Luckily, most cultures view sexual abuse as unacceptable to either gen-

der (some politicians and religious orders excepted), and victims should be able to get access to professional help without being judged for it.

I can't stress enough the importance of a patient acknowledging their feelings towards sex after abuse and getting help to resolve them. Everyone has the right to a healthy sex life even after abuse, and no one should feel they don't deserve it. No matter what they've been through.

DEPRESSION

Depression is a common condition, with about one in ten of us reporting feelings of depression at any time. Depression can affect every aspect of our lives, including relationships. Studies also show that 40 percent of those people with sexual problems also have depression.

When you are depressed, you usually have low motivation to do anything, and libido usually goes out the window too. It's even difficult to find the motivation to get help. Talking about your feelings can be difficult. Many people feel guilty about being a burden to their partner and families through their depression, but these feelings are part of the disease and need to be recognised as such. Depressed partners may not notice what their partner is involved in, and even can disregard efforts to cheer them up or turn them on.

Depression is most often caused by low serotonin – our brain happy hormone. Anti-depressant drugs work by slowing the break-down of serotonin to get the body going again, but it is possible to boost your own serotonin levels with nutrients like zinc and vitamin B6. Tryptophan is a chemical pre-cursor of serotonin and can boost your levels and mood. Chocolate contains lots of tryptophan so that's one of the reasons we crave chocolate when we are depressed. That tryptophan boost can raise our mood quite quickly.

WHAT IS LIKELY TO HAPPEN IF YOUR PARTNER HAS DEPRESSION?

Depressed partners often seem withdrawn and uncommunicative. They don't seem to get enjoyment from the things they used to like to do. And they might not want to talk about it. Sometimes they don't want to bother you or feel guilty. But as the partner to someone with depression, that can make you feel you're being left out or excluded. It can make you wonder if they want out of the relationship or don't want you around. When they're not communicating how they feel, your mind will jump to all sorts of conclusions – usually false ones.

It can be very difficult, but the most important role you can play is to encourage your partner to get help. These days, there are lots of ways to help depressed people, not just with medications, but also with psychologists. CBT, or cognitive behaviour therapy, helps patients see their problems in a different light or from a different perspective. This can give them a boost to rally and start being more motivated. And it doesn't involve taking any medication.

CBT is essentially the act of changing one's habits. Depressed people get used to seeing the dark side of every situation. By reframing each episode that habit is broken, and they learn to start taking pleasure in simple treats like nature. When they accomplish that, it signals a step toward recovery.

As well as negative thought patterns, depressed people don't sleep very well either, having trouble getting to sleep or waking very early. This can have an effect on energy levels and co-ordination, so sexual performance can be reduced. Men may experience erection problems, while women might have trouble achieving orgasm. They often lose interest in sex as part of their lack of motivation for life. On the good side, sex is often the first thing that returns as the depression lifts.

Anti-depressant medications can reduce libido and sexual function, particularly with orgasm. So medication might, in the end, make the depression/lack of libido problem even worse. If that's the case, changing medication can sometimes help.

As another strategy to boost your mood, it's important to exercise when you have depression. Exercise can stimulate your own natural endorphins, which lift your mood and getting fitter will increase energy levels. Endorphins and energy will naturally lead to you feeling better, and an increased libido.

I often treat depression by clearing the diet of harmful chemicals, adding serotonin-boosting nutrients like zinc, magnesium and B vitamins, and adding healthy oils. So many people are now looking for alternatives to anti-depressants that this is becoming a serious option. Any life-style strategy that helps depression is going to boost libido and sexual function at the same time so it's a win-win situation.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Stress, exhaustion and mental illness such as depression all take their toll on our libido. Don't just sit back and let it happen. Take action by getting help for your depression, stress, or exhaustion, and start treating yourself as if you're worth it by getting enough sleep and relaxation. A healthy diet will also help with managing stress and mental illness – a topic we'll deal with in Part 2.

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6 _____ I'M TOO SEXY FOR MY PARTNER

Differing Sex Drives

Differences in sexual needs are common. The official term is 'desire discrepancy disorder', which makes it sound like an illness rather than a practical problem. Most of the time, men want sex more often than women. But that's not always the case – almost 30 percent of women say they have more interest in sex than their partner has.

There is no right and wrong answer to how often you should have sex. What causes the problem is when individuals feel that they should be getting more – either I don't feel like it but I want to feel like it more, or I feel like more sex but my partner doesn't.

If there are differences in how often you both want sex, think about what might be causing it. There could be physical, emotional, psychological or relationship issues going on. Any of those may be altering one partner's ability to have or desire for sex. Many life events get in the way of frequent sex, and stand-up comics have a field day with the '*when marriage comes in, sex goes out the window*' routines. Pregnancy, breastfeeding, exhaustion and menopause are potent libido dampeners for women, but men are increasingly exhausted with life too. You need to give sex time in your busy schedule, especially if you expect both partners to be awake and participating at the time.

If none of the above are a problem, what else could be going on? Did your partner have a good libido in the past, or has there always been a difference in your sexual needs? Have you noticed a decrease in your own libido? Perhaps some of the physical causes we've talked about are to blame. Think about chronic disease ... is diabetes a problem, high blood pressure or even medications?

If you can exclude all the physical problems, tackle psychological issues. Is there depression or anxiety, work stress or bereavement? All these causes need understanding and time for recovery. The good thing is that help is at hand for most of these problems. Get help yourself or for your partner if needed.

After all these considerations, you may be left with the fact that you are both healthy, but one partner just needs or wants more sex than the other. There are plenty of solutions to this problem, with 'outercourse' options being common, as opposed to penetrative intercourse. Try using sex toys and videos if your partner is into those sorts of things. Experiment with different types of sex – oral sex, quickies and different settings. Above all, talk about it. Negotiation is paramount, as is understanding and talking it through.

Getting enough sleep and relaxation go a long way to improving libido, so if your partner is stressed and exhausted, take some of the burden by helping out. Brainstorm ways to improve your lot together; having a goal is a great way to focus both of you. For example, we need to work out some way that we can work only three days per week next year so we have more time and feel relaxed. That might mean changing jobs, but it could also mean cutting your costs and downsizing your lifestyle. There are lots of ways of reducing your burden – be creative!

RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS

Unfortunately for women, because of the ways our brains are wired, we cannot leave relationship issues at the bedroom door. We just don't feel like having sex with a partner when there are unresolved feelings.

Anger is the number one turn-off for women. If you're still smouldering about your partner chatting up your best friend in the pub last week, you're not going to feel like having sex with him or her. Best to patch up the fight when you're both calm and logical. Don't let bad feelings fester. That can lead to years of resentment rankling under the surface, and we all know the results of that – an acrimonious split, or even violence and murder.

Good communication is important too, so chatting and showing affection will help women feel more sexy toward their partner. Unfortunately for most blokes, showing affection and cuddling rapidly leads to turn-on and arousal, and if their partner is just coming back up in her libido, that might not be the direction she wants to head just yet.

WOMEN – WHAT TO DO

If you're feeling angry about something, let your partner know. Don't huff, because last time I looked, most blokes aren't mind readers. You have to be clear about what you're angry about and what you expect in terms of changed behaviour.

Men think differently from women, so they can't guess what you're angry about – not in a million years. That means there's no point coming out with 'Well, if you don't know what's wrong, I'm not going to tell you...' They'll never get it. If it helps, write down what the issue is – this

might help to show you whether you're being reasonable or not. If it looks stupid on paper, it probably is.

Once you've got it out in the open, set aside a definitive time to discuss it. And don't let the discussion drag on all night. If he hasn't got it in the first twenty minutes, you're wasting your time. Just state your case, and at the end of the half hour or hour that you've designated, outline what you expect. Then leave it. If he has any sense, he'll take in what you have said and mull it over.

Don't expect a response straight away. Most blokes have trouble admitting they're in the wrong straight away. It may take a few days to sink in. They're also not great at responding. You may get silence. A lot of blokes just hope the problem will go away if they keep quiet, or they may use silence to wind you up. Don't let that happen. Keep calm and leave it there.

And my final word on the subject: the perfect man doesn't exist. Most of us come with baggage these days, whether it's a child, an interfering mother-in-law or an annoying habit. I see plenty of women ditch their bloke for some reason, only to take up with the same kind of guy all over again and face the same problems. Learn from each relationship. Be tolerant and appreciate their good qualities. It's not easy being a guy these days. 'But it's all they deserve,' you might say, 'after what women have had to put up with.' Put your past experiences behind you, and evaluate each guy on his own merits. If he's got a steady job and income, is understanding and affectionate, looks after the kids and does the dishes, the rest is icing on the cake. Give him a chance. Have patience with the shortcomings.

And remember, nobody wants to be around a misery guts. Don't nag and whine constantly. If you've said your piece and nothing has changed, then you need to make a decision about whether you're going to put up with it or not. If you feel you've had enough, take action and move out

or end the relationship. If you decide to stay in the relationship, draw a line in the sand. Resentment is not an attractive state. Keep your sense of humour, enjoy life and have fun with sex. Your man will thank you many times over and be putty in your hands if you show a little flexibility.

As the old joke goes, *'Men are like carpets, lay them right at the beginning and you can walk all over them for years.'*

MEN – WHAT TO DO

I'm sure you've heard the expression, *'You can be right or you can be happy'*. Some blokes swear by this strategy, which is to always give in, admit they're in the wrong – even if they're not – and move on. Sure it works, but most women don't want a permanent 'yes man' either.

If your relationship isn't going well, you're going to have to talk about it sooner or later whether you like it or not. Don't wait until you come home to a stripped house and the locks changed. If you value the relationship, act before it's too late. Most blokes will tell you that they had no idea their wife/partner was going to leave. 'It came out of the blue,' they say. Well it didn't come out of the blue for the woman, and if you're honest with yourself, the tell-tale signs were probably right under your nose.

Ignoring problems does not make them go away. Women want to talk, so let them tell you what's wrong and *listen*. Ask questions, take notes, do whatever it takes to help you concentrate, especially if you're in the habit of tuning out every time she starts talking.

And I promise, just the act of listening will impress her. Remember that women value empathy and affection, and use external clues to decide

how they are feeling about sex. So they'll look for external clues from you to show that you're paying attention. Asking a pertinent question or refuting a point in a logical style are ways to show that you're listening. Above all, *keep calm*. Most women don't like raised voices and once you've lost your temper, you've lost the argument. Slamming doors might feel good, but it's not going to help the outcome.

What to do after? Little thoughtful gifts – they don't have to be flashy, but showing you know what she likes will go a long way. Shows of affection that don't automatically lead to sex help too. Demonstrate that you were listening with a small token. Vacuum the house while she's out, cook dinner as a surprise or pick her up from work – anything you can think of to show that you care. Women like their men to be strong one moment and tender the next. So play around with it. Demonstrate your usefulness with heavy tasks or fix that cupboard that's been broken for ages and she's been nagging you about.

Above all, communicate. Let her know how you feel. She can't read minds either, so you have to talk about your feelings if it's going to work. And try not to use alcohol as a tongue loosener. Alcohol and talking can be disastrous, especially when tempers flare. Things can quickly get out of hand, and even escalate to aggression on both sides. At that point, it's harder to pick up the pieces afterwards. One or two drinks over dinner will hopefully lead to make-up sex, but more than that and you're asking for trouble.

If you feel the relationship is going nowhere, then take action. Again, resentment and buried anger won't stay buried forever. It will surface sooner or later. Some blokes are too lazy to break it off; they trundle along, not really happy with the relationship, but are too comfortable to do anything about it. They don't relish the thought of having to go out looking for sex and a new relationship, even when the one they're in is not making them happy. I'd say that situation makes you ripe for an affair, so watch out. You may end up in a tricky situation or alone at the

end of the day anyway. If you're unhappy, do something about it. Don't let it fester.

COMMUNICATE ABOUT SEX

Many women find it difficult to talk about their sexual needs and preferences. But likes and dislikes need to be communicated and discussed. Encourage your partner to talk about sex. Have fun with it – make a game out of describing your fantasies. That way you both know what you're expecting, and how to satisfy the other.

WHY HAVE SEX?

For some people, having sex is all about making themselves feel good. There is very little connection with the other partner. Others are happy to take the sex any way they can, even if their partner is not participating in a very active way. This could be you having sex to keep your partner happy, even when you're not really in the mood. This is common in long partnerships, and is all about caring for the other person's needs– not just mercy-duty sex. Co-operating and compromising helps a relationship go a long way.

Of course, just participating in sex might get you turned on and in the mood, even if you thought at first you weren't really interested. The more you have sex, the more you get in the mood for it – whether your hormones are stimulated or you get better at listening to your body. In the end, the best advice may be, *Just do it*.

THE BOTTOM LINE

There are lots of reasons why you both want sex differently. Explore all the reasons, talk and negotiate. Don't let it become a bone of contention that hasn't been addressed. There are lots of ways of successfully fixing this problem, so it shouldn't be seen as a relationship breaker, unless there are other problems as well. It will only become an issue if you avoid talking and dealing with it.

PART 2

If Music Be the Food of Love, Play on...

7

GREASED LIGHTNING!

Change Your Oil and Supercharge Your Libido

WHY IS FAT IMPORTANT TO LIBIDO?

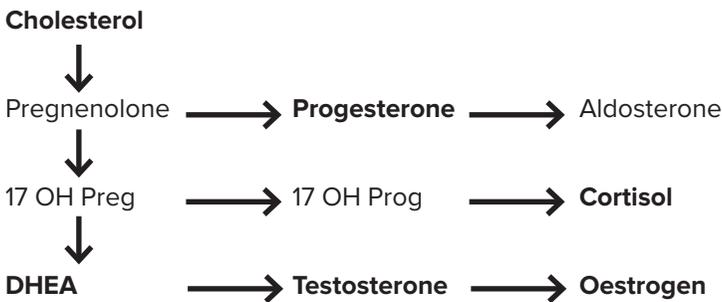
Well, we've heard in Part 1 that all our sex hormones come from cholesterol. At the same time, our brains need healthy oils to work properly. Our bodies need lots of Omega 3 oil to calm inflammation, and every cell in our body needs oil for its cell membrane. And a shortage of cholesterol plays havoc with our memory. So why has fat been given such a hard time in the media, and why have we been advised to eat a low-fat diet for so long?

First of all, let's look at how cholesterol and other oils are essential to our bodies. Cholesterol is the mother hormone, from which all the other hormones are made. This process from cholesterol to sex hormones may be blocked by lack of the right nutrients, such as B vitamins, zinc and magnesium. If you don't have enough of those nutrients in your body, the cholesterol your body makes backs up, as it cannot convert into the right hormones. It doesn't have the right building blocks to do its job.

This results in a combination of high cholesterol and low sex hormones, leading to low libido, fatigue and hormone imbalances. Lowering the cholesterol with statins will also reduce the sex hormones and decrease

cortisol, producing tiredness and low energy, as well as low libido. We've already seen how increased stress hormone (cortisol) can affect sex drive, so we want all our hormones to be nicely balanced – not too much of one and too little of another.

This diagram shows how the sex hormones and cortisol are made from cholesterol.



So you can see that we need good levels of cholesterol and its supporting nutrients so we can convert it into all our sex hormones as well as our energy hormones Cortisol and DHEA.

OTHER REASONS WHY WE NEED CHOLESTEROL

Cholesterol is needed for every cell in your body – especially the brain and liver. Enzymes convert it into vitamin D and it plays a major role in fighting bacterial infections.

Cholesterol is a waxy substance which is a major part of the cell membrane in every cell in the body. The brain holds about one quarter of all our cholesterol. The myelin sheath which covers every nerve cell is about 20% cholesterol and without it our brain cells and nerves would be like copper electrical wire stripped of its protective covering.

Most cholesterol is made in the liver. The liver uses it to produce bile acids needed for digestion of fats. Eating cholesterol makes no difference to our blood cholesterol levels. If we eat more cholesterol in our diet the liver makes less and if we eat less, then the liver starts making more.

As cholesterol is fatty it is not water soluble so it travels around the body attached to proteins with triglycerides called lipoproteins. LDL cholesterol (low density lipoprotein) carries cholesterol to cells that need it, HDL cholesterol (high density lipoprotein) picks up excess cholesterol and carries it back to the liver to be processed or re-used.

It's well known that cholesterol helps fight infections – it helps knock out toxins from harmful bacteria. LDL is able to inactivate many bacterial toxins. HDL goes down when we have an infection as it's used up in the fight, so a low cholesterol may leave you with an increased risk of infection.

Vitamin D is made from cholesterol using ultra-violet light. Now vitamin D is a really important vitamin which has a protective effect against heart disease, cancer, depression, osteoporosis and obesity. So with a low cholesterol you won't make enough Vitamin D. The rate of vitamin D deficiency in Australian, USA and North European countries is staggering since we all started covering up and working indoors. And lowering your cholesterol especially in older people who tend to have low cholesterol anyway is a recipe for disaster.

Although an in depth look at cholesterol is not strictly on the subject of libido, I believe it's vitally important for you to understand enough about cholesterol and fat, so you see the importance of healthy fats and oils in our diet. This in turn will help you understand why these are vital to an enjoyable and active sex-life.

CHOLESTEROL AND HEART DISEASE

For the last 30 years we have had it drummed into us at every opportunity that high cholesterol and eating too much fat, especially saturated fat causes heart disease. There has been masses of research on this topic much of it funded by drug and food companies with a vested interest in which way the pendulum swings. The voices of dissent have been suppressed and ignored but recently there have been a re-awakening of interest in those who have questioned the status quo. With more information being available to the general public, the masses are starting to ask questions of the authorities and demanding some straight answers. The internet has been an amazing resource in this respect and we must protect at all costs our right to have free access to all possible information so we can each make our own informed decision about our bodies and our health.

HOW MEDICAL RESEARCH WORKS

Let me tell you how medical research and protocols work. First of all someone, usually a scientist, makes a hypothesis (or a theory) about how our body functions or what causes a disease. They do research usually in a lab initially with rats or mice and look at the results (because rats and mice show results quite quickly). Next they might look at human populations but that often takes 20 years or more, because you might not develop heart disease until years after eating a bad diet.

Now the thing about research is that it can be affected by lots of external factors, so another researcher can do the same study and come up with the complete opposite results. This is quite common and normal. So usually no-one rushes out to give advice or make conclusions straight away. As more and more researchers study the subject we get a large body of evidence which eventually points us in one direction about the truth of the theory. This can take a number of years. Someone does a

meta-analysis where you group all the studies together and summarises the issue and total results, and then an expert body issues their opinion about the overall picture.

Now researchers, being human most of the time, are keen to publish positive results when their theory is proved right and not so keen to publish negative results when their theory is proved wrong. So there are a large number of studies sitting in bottom drawers and propping up bedposts with negative results no-one knows about. This has become a problem that the medical research community has become aware of so the powers that be have taken steps to make sure everyone publishes results no matter what the conclusions.

At the same time, there are literally hundreds of statistical tests you can do, so you can plug any study results into a software program and do every stat test under the sun until you come with an answer you like the look of. I know because I've done it.

On top of that you've got media releases about research, often before it hits the medical journals, telling us about another food we can't eat or some scare story. This is why we need to take our time, wait until research becomes clear, carefully weigh up all the evidence and then make the correct decision and give out sensible advice that the general population can be confident in and trust.

Unfortunately this hasn't happened with fat and heart disease because the process started about 70 years ago when these problems with research studies weren't recognised. There is now a re-examining of the evidence that high cholesterol and fat in the diet causes heart disease and people are seeing that the wrong conclusions were drawn for a variety of reasons, not least money, power, and status.

So I want to go over below the results of some of the big heart disease studies just so that you understand the significance of the results.



Science stuff

Recent research results on cholesterol and heart disease

The Framingham Study

One of the main studies looking at cholesterol and heart disease, the Framingham studied a group of over 5000 residents in Massachusetts starting in 1948. It was one of the first to suggest that high cholesterol was associated with heart disease. At the same time it confirmed that eating cholesterol in your diet does not increase blood cholesterol. There was no difference in the amount of cholesterol eaten daily in those who did and did not develop heart disease.

But when researchers went back 30 years later and re-examined the data they found that over the age of 48 it made no difference to heart disease what the blood cholesterol level was. One of the study researchers, George Mann, a biochemist, stated it was ‘the greatest scam ever perpetrated on the American public.’

Lyon Diet Heart Study

In this study 504 men and women were selected who had high cholesterol and were at risk for heart disease. Half of the group were given a healthy diet. Their risk of heart disease reduced by over 70% but their cholesterol levels didn’t change.

MRFIT Study

In the MRFIT study, 13,000 men were assigned to 2 groups. One group were given low fat diet instructions as well as healthy life-

style advice like take exercise and stop smoking and the other – the control group – got nothing more than the usual advice. The treatment group, after 7 years, had slightly lower cholesterol but virtually no difference to their deaths from heart disease. At the same time, the control group had slightly less deaths than the study group – go figure.

ENHANCE Study

The ENHANCE study used a new drug to reduce the study participants cholesterol which it did very successfully. However they had more arterial plaque – an early sign of atherosclerosis and heart disease – than those on the other drug.

The end result is that many people are now questioning the wisdom of lowering cholesterol – it certainly doesn't seem to be a major risk factor in heart disease except in middle aged men who have already had a heart attack.

So my conclusion is that cholesterol is a very minor player in heart disease and is only significant in middle aged men who already have heart disease. It is worth noting that more than half of people who are hospitalized with heart attacks have normal cholesterols.

At the same time, reducing your cholesterol with medications seems fraught with side-effects. Statins, the most common cholesterol drug, work by interfering with an enzyme called HMG-CoA reductase which works in the liver to help produce cholesterol. This is the same pathway that produces coenzyme Q10, a nutrient vital for the heart. This enzyme is used to produce energy in the body so that's why fatigue is common on statins, as well as muscle weakness and cramps. These drugs are also responsible for loss of memory and decreased serotonin in the brain. So not only are you weak and tired but liable to memory loss and depression too. Statins do seem to help reduce heart disease but it's thought

to be by being anti-inflammatory rather than by reducing cholesterol. Some studies of these drugs show a reduction in heart disease but an increase in death rates from other causes.

I and many other doctors believe that inflammation is what's behind heart disease and many other chronic diseases. Inflammation, as you'll see in Chapter 11, starts the process but also raises cholesterol. So a high cholesterol is a sign that inflammation is happening. It's merely the messenger – not the cause of the problem.

I would suggest that if you are worried about your cholesterol levels, you should read up as much as you can about the research and make your own decision about what to do, in consultation with your own doctor. If I have at least made you think twice about the current advice to have a low-fat diet and a low cholesterol, and made you want to read more about it, then I'll be very happy.

IS OTHER FAT BAD?

To find that out, we need to go back to Ancel Keyes and his research in the 1930s. Ancel Keyes was a scientist working at the famous Mayo Foundation in the USA. He had an interest in nutrition and health, and helped develop the K-rations for soldiers during World War II. He was the first person to start talking about the Mediterranean diet being healthy, but his take was that it was the low-fat part of it that was the health-giving part. His particular interest was the link between diet and heart disease.

His Seven Countries study showed that countries with a generally low-fat diet had less heart disease, and that high cholesterol was linked to heart disease. But actually, his study involved more than seven countries- he studied 22 countries. He ended up cherry-picking those 7

countries (Italy, Greece, the Netherlands, Finland, Yugoslavia, Japan and the United States) because they fitted his hypothesis that saturated fat caused heart disease. However he could have picked different 7 countries and come up with the complete reverse results.

For instance, France has a high intake of saturated fat in cream, cheese, etc but has low heart disease. This has been dubbed the French paradox, because they have a high intake of saturated animal fats, and should therefore fall under Keyes' findings that animal fat leads to heart disease. In France's case, though, that's not the case. Another example is the Greek islands Corfu and Crete – they had the same fat intake but heart disease was 17 times more common in Corfu than Crete.

At the time, many doctors disagreed with Keyes conclusions, particularly Dr John Yudkin from the UK. He re-analysed the *same* data and came up with the result that sugar, not fat, was a more important risk factor for heart disease! Malcolm Kendrick, another UK doctor used the same data, but chose different countries and was able to show that people who ate *more* saturated fat had *less* heart disease! Yudkin eventually wrote a book called 'Sweet and dangerous' in 1972 outlining how sugar is the real reason why heart disease and obesity are on the rise. If you want to read more about how about how saturated fat became enshrined in dogma get hold of 'The Great Cholesterol Myth' by nutritionist Jonny Bowden and cardiologist Dr Stephen Sinatra. It's a fascinating read of politics, money and ambition.

As a result of politics and big business, Keyes' diet was the start of the wave of low-fat advice, which has swept the world and created widespread fear of fat in our diet. But more recent re-examining of the research has confirmed once and for all, that saturated fat does *not* cause heart disease and that cholesterol is protective, especially in women, where it seems to confer health benefits.

Now why am I telling you all this, when I should be talking about libi-

do? Well, I want to show you first of all why I recommend fat and oils for your libido. And I want to reassure you that eating fat from healthy sources will not harm you in any way. So let's look at what fat is...

WHAT ARE FATS AND OILS?

Fats and oils are carbon-based molecules occurring in long chains called fatty acids. Nature tends to use these chains as triglycerides – groups of three chains (from 'tri') held together with a glycerol molecule. Thus, fats are transported around your blood stream as triglycerides. If you ever hear about triglycerides, it means we're talking about fats that your body is moving around so that it can store it up.

Despite the bad hype, we actually need fats and oils to maintain good health. The walls of our cells are made up of a mixture of oil and protein, so we need good quality fats and oils to keep our cell walls healthy. Oils also contain the fat-soluble vitamins A,D, E and K, which are essential for various functions in our bodies.

Our bodies also use fat stores to keep us warm and as a long-term energy source. Men's bodies tend to have 15 to 18 percent fat, while women have 20 to 25 percent fat (as they need a little bit more stored energy for pregnancy). Obviously, obese people have a much higher percentage of their body as fat.

Now our brain is about 2/3 fat. Isn't that interesting – you have a fat head. So obviously we need lots of healthy fats to keep our brain in good working order.

Fats come in different types – saturated, mono-unsaturated and poly-unsaturated. They can also be solid at room temperature like butter, or liquid like olive oil. Generally animal fat from meat, lard or dairy products is

saturated, while vegetable oils tend to be unsaturated (although coconut and palm oil are an exception). Saturated fats like butter and coconut oil tend to be solid at room temperature, while unsaturated fats like olive oil are liquid at room temperature. Oils and fats come in many types and may be in long, medium or short chains. The fats in butter, coconut and palm oil are a special type of saturated fat called medium chain fatty acids.



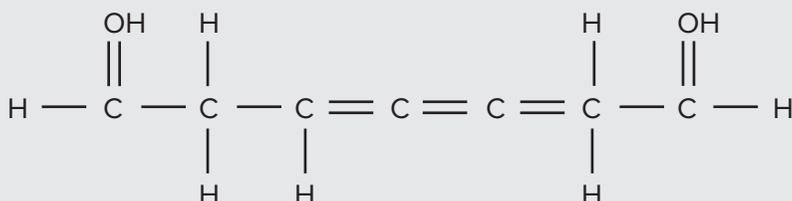
Science Stuff

Saturated Fats v Unsaturated Fats

Here is a deeper understanding of the chemical properties of saturated and unsaturated fats. Saturation refers to the extent to which the fat molecule is saturated with hydrogen molecules. The carbon atoms, which form the backbone of the molecule, can have single or double bonds on them. With 4 single bonds, 4 hydrogen molecules can bind to the carbon. The double bonds prevent hydrogen bonding – only single bonds can bind hydrogen.

When there are lots of double bonds, less hydrogen can bind to the molecule. The molecule is therefore **unsaturated** (not saturated with hydrogen). See Figure 1.

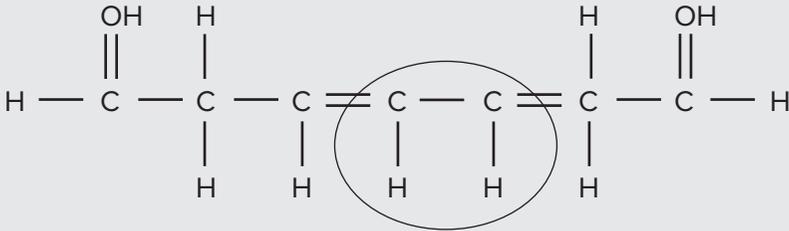
Figure 1



Polyunsaturated Fatty Acid

This molecule has three double bonds, which prevents it from being 'saturated' with hydrogen.

Figure 2



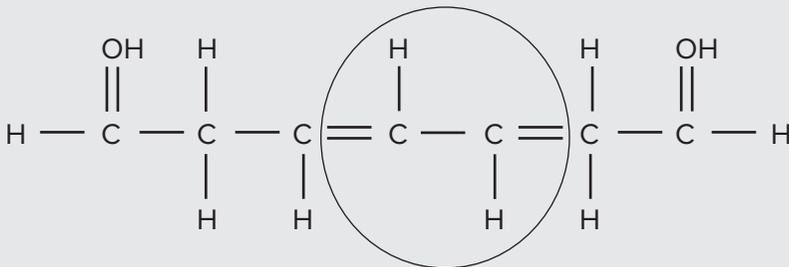
“Cis” Fatty Acid

This saturated fat molecule has only two double bonds, so more hydrogen can saturate it. It's called 'Cis' because the hydrogen atoms are all along one side.

Partially saturated vegetable oils are made by blowing hydrogen through polyunsaturated oil under pressure, making it more saturated. This means it can be made into solid spreads and margarines or whatever texture is needed.

Trans fats are fats that have been produced artificially.

Figure 3



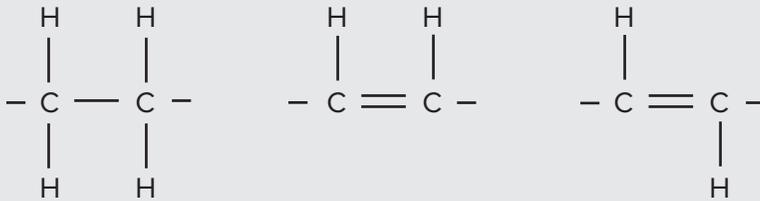
“Trans” Fatty Acid

You can see that this trans fatty acid is the same as the saturated fatty acid above except for one very important difference. This trans-fatty acid has the same two double bonds, but the hydro-

gen atoms are on opposite sides – called ‘trans’. This makes the molecule less flexible and changes its chemical properties. Also, enzymes that metabolise fats cannot recognise this molecule. Bacteria don’t recognise it either, so it never goes bad or gets broken down.

As they are less likely to go rancid, trans fats are used in lots of commercially produced processed foods, like cakes, muffins, pies, cookies, margarine, popcorn and potato chips. Trans fats cause inflammation in the body, though, and are associated with more heart disease. They also cause problems in the brain, where healthy fats are needed for proper function.

Figure 4



Saturated Fat

Unsaturated Fat

Trans Fat

So here you have a small but important difference between these fats and oils. Fats whether unsaturated or saturated are broken down in the same way to make energy for each cell of our body. They are taken into the mitochondria (the cell’s powerhouse) of the cell by Carnitine since they can’t cross the membrane by themselves. Here they are broken down into shorter chains until they become acetyl COA which the mitochondria use to generate energy. Long chain fats need to be broken down before they can be absorbed by the intestine, medium chain fats like those found in butter and coconut oil can be absorbed directly and do not need carnitine to get into the mitochondria.

TRANS FATS ARE HARMFUL

You can see from above, that there is a small but vital change in the shape of the transfat molecule making a huge difference to whether it's healthy or not. When a molecule changes shape, the body may not recognise it and use it correctly. Certainly the research shows that those who eat the most transfat have more heart disease.

You can find these transfats in any processed baked goods, cake mixes, non-dairy creamers and margarines. By changing vegetable oil from liquid to solid, usually by blowing hydrogen through it under pressure, this process creates transfats. Any product that contains hydrogenated vegetable oils contains transfat. 80% of transfats come from hydrogenated vegetable oil which is highly processed in industrial quantities. These are highly processed and inflammatory and shouldn't be reheated time and again which unfortunately is what happens in many restaurants. But it's not just heart disease, the brain also utilises transfats when DHA (a type of omega 3) is in short supply.

SATURATED FAT DOES NOT CAUSE HEART DISEASE

Since Ancel Keyes research, the myth of saturated fat and high cholesterol causing heart disease has become the basis of most dietary advice for the last 30 years. However as we said before, there is plenty of research casting doubt on this mantra. For example, remember the MRFIT study looked at 13,000 men who were at risk of heart disease? They assigned the men randomly to either a control group or a group put on a low fat diet. After 7 years, the low fat diet group had slightly lower cholesterol but the same amount of heart disease. The only drop in deaths from heart disease, were in the men who stopped smoking.

Luckily researchers have recently had another look at all the research, and downgraded the risks of saturated fat. Many naturally occurring oils, such as coconut and palm oil, are quite saturated with hydrogen, but still have healthy properties. The Cochrane Review, which is a very highly esteemed medical organisation, sums up the knowledge so far:

COCHRANE REVIEW

*‘Modifying fat in our food (replacing some saturated (animal) fats with plant oils and unsaturated spreads) may reduce risk of heart and vascular disease, but it is not clear whether monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats are more beneficial. There are **no** clear health benefits of replacing saturated fats with starchy foods (reducing the total amount of fat we eat).’*

The results of this review show that there is no health benefit to cutting down the total amount of fat in your diet and only a marginal benefit to heart disease risk from changing types of fat.

It seems that it’s not the saturation of the fat or oil which is the problem, but the healthy nature of the fat. Many animals are inflamed by stress and an unnatural diet. It seems logical then that their fat then would also be inflamed and unhealthy, and pass those problems on to whoever eats them. So the best advice would be to forget about saturated and unsaturated fats, and instead think about whether the fat or oil is from a healthy source.

If you want to reduce your heart disease risk, then look no further than the Nurses’ Health study. This followed over 80,000 women and found

that 82% of heart disease could be attributed to lack of adherence to 5 factors;

- Smoking
- Moderate alcohol
- Moderate exercise 30 mins per day
- Keep weight down – BMI under 25
- Diet low in sugar with lots of fiber and omega 3.

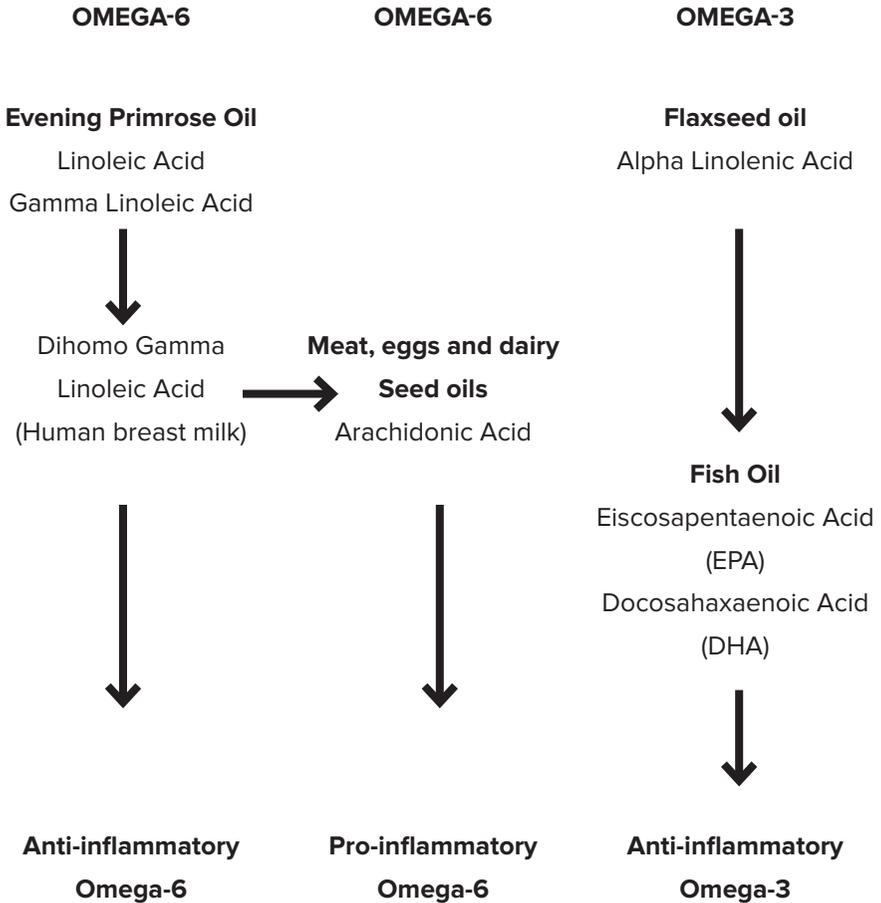
ESSENTIAL FATTY ACIDS

Fatty acids are vitally important for good brain function and to lower inflammation in the body. The common fatty acids are Omega-3, 6 and 9. Our own bodies can make Omega-9, so we only really need to take in Omega-3 and 6.

Omega-6 comes from vegetable sources like olive oil and nut oils, and also meat and dairy. But research has shown that while we get plenty of Omega-6, most of us are short of Omega-3 and our Omega-3:6 ratio is low. For great health, this ratio should be 1:1, but in Western diets it's usually 20:1 Omega-6: Omega-3. This is a big problem.

It is difficult to get enough Omega-3 fatty acid in our diet; tuna and salmon are the only good food sources of Omega-3 these days. So if you don't eat a lot of oily fish, you would benefit from supplements. Fish or krill oil is a good place to start, but flax seed oil has both Omega-3 and Omega-6, so it's also a good vegetarian source of Omega-3.

Figure 5



As you can see from Figure 5, some Omega-6 is pro-inflammatory, like that found in meat, eggs, dairy and seed oils such as processed sunflower oil and canola. These vegetable oils which are meant to substitute for bad saturated fat are highly processed and refined using industrial chemicals. After processing they contain high levels of inflammatory Omega 6 especially when they are used many times like in restaurants.

Arachidonic acid is part of our normal inflammation process, but when it gets out of hand, we get inflammatory diseases. Peanuts or groundnuts contain a high level of arachidonic acid and can lead to inflammation too, so substitute roasted peanuts with other types of raw nuts such as almonds and cashews.

So the first step is to reduce the pro-inflammatory foods and balance them with anti-inflammatory fatty acids like fish, flaxseed or evening primrose oil so your body works more efficiently and has less inflammation. We will come back to this later.

THE BRAIN AND HEALTHY FATS

Let's see how the brain uses fats to maintain optimal functioning. We said before that cell membranes, synapses (chemical connections between cells) all use oils.

All cells in our body have a thin double layer of fatty acid molecules. Brain cells connect to each other via synapses – bridges between 2 brain cells or nerves, where brain chemicals flow across to send messages. These also need cholesterol to function efficiently. Nerves have a protective sheath around them like a plastic covering on an electrical wire. This is 70% fat and 30% protein. Most of this is mono-saturated oleic acid which is the most abundant fatty acid in human breast milk. It's also common in olive oil, almonds, macadamias and avocados.

DHA (Omega 3) is essential to our brain and to the normal development of an infant's brain and eyes. If you are short of DHA it can result in deterioration of the brain cell membrane and the cells integrity and function. Depression can result from low DHA levels as well as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

We need a balance of 1:1 Omega 6 to 3 but most western diets have 20:1. So we need to reduce the amount of inflammatory Omega 6 and replace it with calming Omega 3 and 6.

Humans originated from the sea where Omega 3 was plentiful. Then humans started eating plants and seeds rich in Omega 6. Archaeologists discovered that ancient humans who ate seafood developed bigger brains than those who didn't eat seafood, as they had access to lots of DHA – found in seaweed and shellfish. Human species that lived inland and had no access to Omega 3 did not develop as large brains.

Finally trans fatty acids weaken the brain's structure- they make the cell wall more rigid and less flexible. They are rarely found in nature as you might imagine. You need to avoid trans fats as these can be utilised by the brain when DHA is in short supply – trans fats are found in margarines and cooking oils, supermarket salad dressings, non-dairy creamers as well as baked goods and pies. Further down the page, you'll find out which fats and oils are healthy and you can eat freely.

SO I NEED FATS AND OILS FOR MY LIBIDO, RIGHT?

This chapter has been quite long and covers a lot of science about cholesterol and fat in the diet. The reason for this is to give you all the background you need and the case for including healthy oils in your diet to help boost your libido. We had to look at the evidence about whether fat is good or bad for different parts of your body, so you get a clear picture of the current opinion on fats in the diet.

We need cholesterol for memory, thinking and mood. We know we need it to make sex hormones, and there are a few studies out there showing that reducing cholesterol with statin drugs leads to a reduction in testosterone and other sex hormones. And there are other studies that

show reducing cholesterol increases the risk of erectile dysfunction. I bet most of you didn't realise that little nugget. Reduction of testosterone happens in women as well as men. We know that women make small amounts of testosterone too and low testosterone in women can result in a flagging libido just as much as men. We heard earlier about oxytocin being the love drug which results in bonding after sex and feelings of love. Well oxytocin needs cholesterol in those cell walls again to gain entry into its target cells. So reducing your cholesterol too low can make oxytocin ineffective – now you know why your hubby is less affectionate – it's his medication. Check out a book called *A Near-Perfect Sexual Crime: Statins Against Cholesterol* by Dr Michel de Lorgeril MD to find out more about how statins interfere with your sex life.

So I hope from the above discussion you can see that including healthy fats and oils in your diet is vitally important to maintaining your sex hormones but also to other parts of your body like your brain. It's unlikely that you'll have a great sex drive whenever your brain is short of the right oils – and your memory is shot. Similarly your romantic holiday away might be hampered by infections that cholesterol was waiting around to stamp out. Good libido derives from a great functioning body, not just great sex hormones.

SO WHAT FATS ARE OK TO EAT THEN?

Healthy Sources of Fat. Vegetable oils like extra virgin olive oil, coconut oil and palm oil, and nut oils like macadamia nut oil, almond oil and walnut oil are sources of healthy fat as well as avocados. Animal sources of healthy fat include organic butter and ghee from healthy, organic grass-fed cows.

However, make sure your oil is not genetically modified, refined or highly processed. These processes change the quality of the oil and remove some of their health-giving properties.

Using Oil for Cooking. What's important about cooking with oil is at what point it reaches its smoke point. In cooking, the smoke point of an oil or fat is the temperature at which it begins to break down to glycerol and free fatty acids. At that time it produces bluish smoke. The glycerol is then further broken down to acrolein, which is the part of the smoke that irritates our eyes. The smoke point also marks the point at which the flavour and the healthiness of the fat deteriorates. Therefore it's really important to choose the oil you cook with carefully.

In practice, olive oil is not great for cooking as its smoke point is quite low. Industrial refinement also changes the smoke point of several oils, so try to use the most natural version you can find. Use other oils like coconut oil, butter or nut oils for cooking. I use a mixture of olive oil and coconut oil for cooking, and it works really well. The coconut oil prevents the olive oil from reaching its smoke point and the combination give a great flavour.

Plant Sterols. Plants often contain chemicals like cholesterol, but in a different form called plant sterols. Olive oil contains some good plant sterols. According to research, adding plant sterols to your diet seems to reduce bad cholesterol (LDL) and increase good cholesterol (HDL). So food manufacturers have been adding these oils (like olive oil) to margarines in an attempt to make them sound more healthy.

However, the amount that is added to these spreads is probably very small and so the benefit that you get from them is also very small, not like the price which is often much more than regular margarine. Better to use olive oil itself as a spread, or organic butter, or mashed avocado. Remember that these margarine spreads are hydrogenated vegetable oil (transfats) so it's adding a small amount of something healthy to a really unhealthy product. The long-term benefit of this tiny amount of healthy plant sterol in your spread is likely going to be around a 1 percent improvement – doesn't really justify its price, does it?

UNHEALTHY FATS

- Oils and fats that are made from genetically modified crops such as corn, soy, canola, rapeseed and sunflower. These are highly processed – the refining process to produce these oils involves a lot of artificial chemicals. They also contain lots of pro-inflammatory Omega 6.
- Spreads made from hydrogenated vegetable oils – they contain transfats
- Fat from unhealthy animals – barn raised, grain fed, hormone and anti-biotic fed
- Trans fats in cookies, cakes and pies from supermarkets, especially those that have a long shelf life

HEALTHY FATS AND OILS

- Organic virgin cold pressed olive oil, and other nut oils such as macadamia and walnut. The oils should be cold-pressed so that heat does not destroy the structure of the oil
- Organic cold-pressed coconut oil
- Organic butter
- Organic flaxseed oil to make salad dressings

WHAT ABOUT VEGETARIAN SOURCES OF SATURATED FAT, ARE THEY HEALTHY?

Coconut and palm oil are commonly known vegetarian sources of saturated fat. Coconut oil, as we know, contains lots of lauric acid – a medi-

um-chain saturated fat. Because of the characteristics of its fat, it's very stable at room temperature and is therefore great for cooking. Many other vegetable oils have a low smoke point – the point at which heat starts to break them down into fatty acids – and produce toxic by-products. At this stage, any heart-friendly benefits are lost. However coconut oil has a very high smoke point so you can use it in cooking without it being altered by the heat. Other examples of healthy oils for cooking include organic ghee (clarified butter), macadamia and walnut oils.

As with all foods, the quality of coconut or nut oil depends very much on the production process. Organic, cold-pressed coconut oil is much better than a highly processed variety, which may have changed some of the fats into trans fats. When we use it, our bodies convert coconut oil into monolaurin – a chemical which has good anti-viral and anti-bacterial properties. It is also anti-inflammatory.

Virgin coconut oil contains polyphenols, which may also have beneficial effects on health. Studies have shown reductions in cholesterol with virgin coconut oil. Coconut oil intake also appears to raise HDL levels – good to prevent heart disease. The reason for this is that coconut oil is composed of medium-chain fatty acids, which are rapidly metabolized in the liver into energy, and do not participate in the biosynthesis and transport of cholesterol.

Studies on Pilipino and Pacific Islanders who have coconut as a staple food, shows that they have traditionally had a low incidence of cardiovascular diseases. Research on populations in Sri Lanka have shown that consumption of coconut does not cause heart disease. So you can be reassured that coconut oil is healthy and safe to use. Yes it's a saturated fat but it does not cause heart disease and is actually health-giving.

THE BOTTOM LINE

We need fats and oils to make our hormones, but we need healthy sources of them, such as vegetable oils like olive oil, nut oils and coconut oil. Animal fats can be OK if they come from healthy organic animals, or unhealthy if they come from stressed, unhealthy animals fed on processed food and artificial chemicals. It's important to eat the right kinds of fat and oils to keep our body functioning and our hormones working right. To make good sex hormones, we need cholesterol, healthy oils and the nutrients to keep the production of sex hormones going.

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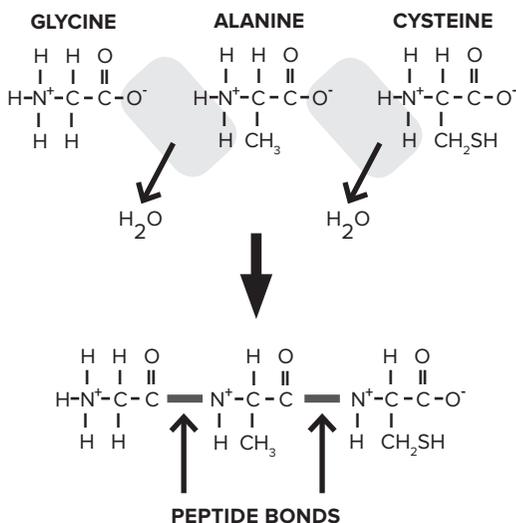
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GIMME SOME LOVIN' Healthy Foods to Boost Your Mojo

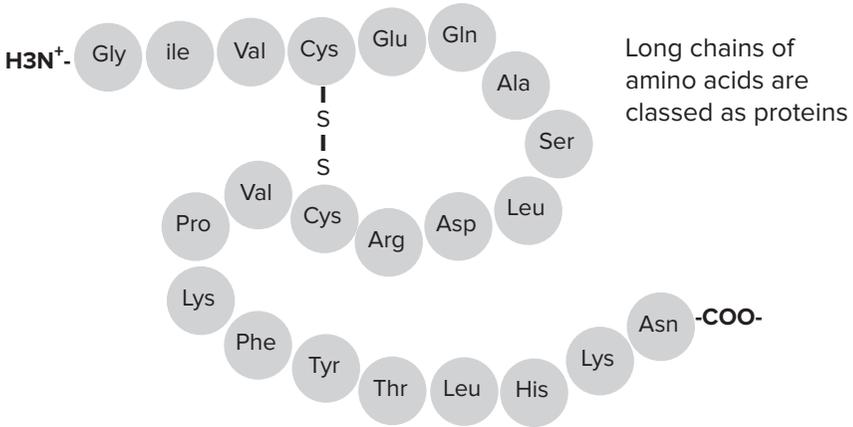
In this chapter, we're going to focus on the main other healthy food groups that you need to include in your diet. We'll talk about why they are healthy and when they're not. And we'll also cover how to cook and eat these foods.

PROTEIN

If you're having trouble with your libido, the first question to ask yourself is whether you're getting enough protein? Protein is made from chains of molecules called amino acids, held together with peptide bonds.



Medium sized chains, or amino acids, are called polypeptides.



We need the building blocks of proteins (amino acids) to make muscle, bone, tissue and skin. We also need amino acids to make enzymes, hormones and even our DNA. In fact, 16 percent of our body is made up of protein. We cannot make protein from carbs or fat, and we don't store a lot of protein for future use. So we must constantly replace protein by eating it in our diet.

If we don't have enough protein in our diet, we start to break down muscle to obtain it. A diet chronically low in protein will prevent you from being able to build up muscle, and therefore keep you from getting strong. Exercise will become harder, and you will feel weak and tired.

So we must eat protein in the form of meat, fish, eggs, cheese or vegetable sources, break it down into amino acids, then build it back up into the right kind of protein that we can use if we're going to stay healthy. As you can see, eating enough protein will also mean we have enough energy, for living and for our libido!

Many humans these days don't get enough protein in their diet, and get too many calories from sugar and carbs. Good quality protein is essential

for muscle and bone development, growth and a healthy body, so these people aren't getting the best results from the food they eat.

Data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey conducted in 2003-2004 showed that 7.7 percent of adolescent females and about 8 percent of older adult women weren't hitting the minimum recommended amount of protein. It's most likely the same with men and many obese people appear to be protein deficient with central obesity. This is also seen in poor countries, where abdominal swelling is a sign of protein deficiency. Along with protein deficiency, poor zinc intake can encourage central obesity. There is some evidence that poor protein intake is also related to osteoporosis.

Protein deficiency, therefore, leads to a host of problems. And poor protein intake and poor muscle growth leads to weakness and fatigue – both issues that might affect your libido. As we get older our muscle development gets less and less, so it's important to keep up an adequate protein intake and do exercise to keep the muscles strong and healthy – so you can still do acrobatics in the bedroom...

Sources of Protein – meat, both red and white, fish, cheese and eggs

Vegetarian Sources – legumes, beans, nuts, seeds, tofu, soy, vegetable protein such as pea and hemp

HOW MUCH PROTEIN SHOULD YOU EAT PER DAY?

Nutritionists recommend 0.8g of protein per kg of body weight. However requirements will increase if you take a lot of exercise. Meat, chicken, fish and cheese have around 25g of protein per 100g. It varies quite a bit depending on what cut and type of meat and whether it's raw or

cooked, so don't be surprised if you see several different values online. In other words, $\frac{1}{4}$ of the meat we eat is protein; the rest is water, fat and other compounds. That shows that meat is a very good source of healthy protein.

Eggs have 12g protein per 100g, or 1 large whole egg will have 6g of protein. Nuts and seeds and legumes have around 20g of protein per 100g, while beans have a bit less at 10g protein. Fruit and vegetables have only small amounts of protein except for peas.

Consider a 70-kg Adult

They need 0.8g protein per kg of body weight.

So $0.8 \times 70 = 56\text{g}$ per day

If 25 percent of our meat is protein, then they need 200g of meat to get 50g of protein.

I would recommend aiming for a little bit more, say 250 to 300g of meat or fish and the equivalent in eggs, cheese or vegetarian sources per day, to maintain healthy growth and body function.

To Repeat This Exercise in Pounds

An adult weighing 150 pounds would need $0.37 \times$ body weight in protein.

$0.37 \times 150 = 56\text{g}$ or 2 ounces of protein per day

Again, they would need about 8 ounces of meat to get 2 ounces of protein.

See the table below for estimated protein content of various foods.

Food (Raw)	Grams of Protein per 30g (1 ounce)	Grams of Protein per 100g
Beef	8.5	25 (18-36)
Chicken	8	23 (15-28)
Fish	7	20
Egg	4	12
Cottage cheese	4	12
Hard cheese (Parmesan)	11	35
Medium cheese (Cheddar)	7	24
Soft Cheese (Brie)	6	20
Yoghurt	2	5
Milk	1 (30 mls)	4
Tofu	4	12 (8-16)
Beans	3	10
Quinoa	5	14
Chia	5	16
Lentils	9	26
Peanuts	6.6	28
Almonds	7	21
Sunflower seeds	7	20
Bread	3.5	11
Pasta	3.5	11
Rice (raw)	2	7
Peas	2	5
Potatoes	0.7	2
Vegetables	0.1 - 1	1-3
Fruit	<0.1	0.5

<http://nutritiondata.self.com/> - Check this handy website for all nutrition data about common foods, not just about protein

Remember these are average figures and labels you read may vary. Some meats are injected with water to make them juicier, so the protein content may be less. If in doubt, go by the label on the specific food.

Now most of these foods have other nutrients as well as protein. Meat and dairy contain fats, and lentils, beans and legumes contain carbohydrate as well as protein. Red meat is also a good source of zinc, iron and vitamin B12- all necessary for good health.

Eggs have had bad press in the past because the yolk contains cholesterol. But remember research has shown that eating cholesterol itself does not raise your blood cholesterol levels, so it's safe to eat the whole egg. In fact eating healthy fat helps to curb your appetite.

THE QUALITY OF OUR FOOD

What's most important, as we've seen, is the quality of the food source. Our food has been so altered by intensive farming methods that foods that were quite acceptable sources of good protein in the past have been changed to contain more harmful chemicals and fewer nutrients than ever before. Much research has been done on the harmful effects of red meat on the incidence of heart disease and cancers. No-one however has looked at whether it's the quality of the meat that's causing the problem. My experience is that people who eat no red meat at all, especially Caucasians, often develop zinc and iron deficiency. For those patients I recommend a small amount of healthy organic free range lamb twice per week.

When you think about it, cows have evolved from wild buffalo that roamed over vast areas, eating nothing but grass. Now they stand idle in fields (if they are lucky enough to be outside), are fed grain and fish meal (not their natural foods), and then injected with growth hormone

and antibiotics to increase their weight. They are high in fat – much like us – and the meat sits deteriorating in supermarkets for long periods wrapped in plastic before we eat it. No wonder it's bad for us.

WHY DO THEY NEED ANTIBIOTICS AND GROWTH HORMONE?

Meat and animals are sold by weight. Therefore, farmers want their animals to gain weight so that they get a better price per animal. Anything that improves weight, like growth hormones or food that encourages weight gain, will improve the profitability of the herd. The farmers don't necessarily care what it does to the meat from those animals- they have to make a living.

Furthermore, animals that are kept together in close quarters often get infections. Antibiotics get rid of the infections, and also prevent future infections. And they improve weight gain. So most farmers are keen to use them.

When it comes to poultry, it's appalling the way chickens are being reared now. They are kept in overcrowded conditions in large barns, never seeing the outdoors or being able to run around. They have only one source of food – grain – and are fed hormones and antibiotics again.

Previously, chickens had a varied diet of insects and other small creatures as well as grain, and ran around the yard all day. No wonder they are becoming higher in fat, and their meat is lacking in nutrients. If you want to find out more about the meat industry and how meat is grown and handled, then watch the wonderful DVD – 'Food Inc'. At the same time another DVD 'Food Matters' also explains why we need to eat fresh, ripe food for our health. These DVDs are mostly available in local video stores. Spend a bit of time educating yourself about your food and how it's produced for you.

WHAT TO DO

Try to eat lean sources of good quality meat, and cut fat off before cooking. Any toxins that the animal has absorbed such as pesticides etc will be stored in the fat. A small amount of good quality meat is much better than a larger amount of cheap meat like mince or ground beef which will often have pink slime added as a filler. This is made from trimmings off the cow, like cartilage and connective tissue and is often injected with ammonia to kill bacteria – not the healthiest of products. Ground beef can have up to 15 or 25% pink slime added depending on which country you live in. Sausages often contain similar pink slime and other fillers such as soy, rice or grain. Get your sausage from a local organic butcher and ask what filler they use.

Try to buy free range, organic meat as much as possible. Source local organic farmers in your area, and get together with friends or family to buy in bulk to reduce costs. Buy a whole piece of beef and make your own ground beef for hamburger patties. That way you know exactly what went into it. I see many clients who only eat chicken and they often have a low zinc and iron. So I recommend small amounts of healthy organic red meat such as lamb or wild sources like venison, kangaroo, ostrich. These meats, because they exercise a lot running wild or on farms, have higher levels of Omega 3 than intensively reared animals such as chickens.

MEAT

- Lean
- Good quality cuts
- Free range
- Organic
- No additives or toxins

Fish are a great source of protein, and the oily fish – tuna and salmon – are also great sources of Omega 3, which is good for brain power. Wild salmon is better than farmed if you can get it. Many farmed fish are fed on grain rather than their natural diet which is other small fish. Salmon and tuna are very high in Omega 3. The reason for this being that they are close to the top of the marine food chain. This chain starts with algae which produce Omega 3. Algae are eaten by small fish such as krill, and then the small fish are eaten by larger fish, which are in turn eaten by even larger fish. Each time, the Omega 3 is concentrated in the bigger fish. Plus fish swim all the time so are constantly exercising. Their muscle then contains lots of Omega 3 in the same way wild animals do. Near the top of the food chain, salmon and tuna have concentrated the Omega 3 from many small fish until they have the highest concentration of all fish.

However as they are concentrating Omega 3, they are also concentrating contaminants such as mercury. If you are in doubt about mercury levels in the tuna, then leave it out of your diet. Fish oil capsules have to come from somewhere and tuna is where most of them are sourced. So the canned tuna you buy will often be soaked in vegetable oil or brine as the fish oil has already been extracted. This kind of tuna with vegetable oil, will have inflammatory Omega 6 rather than as much Omega 3 as it should. So choose brine tuna and brands that check for mercury levels.

HOW SHOULD YOU COOK MEAT AND FISH?

Try to lightly grill, roast or bake meat without using extra oil or using healthy oils. There is enough oil in most meat to keep it moist during cooking without adding much extra. Eat meat as rare as possible to minimise destroying the nutrients with heat.

BBQing Meat: We have to take care with bbqing meat. Meat that is barbequed contains carcinogens from the heat and smoke.

Barbequed or fried meat contains harmful chemicals like:

1) Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) come from the smoke, and can be removed by scraping off the burnt sections.

2) Heterocyclic amines (HCAs) are produced by a chemical reaction in the meat from the heat, and cannot be removed.

Marinating the meat first seems to reduce levels of these chemicals.

The way to safely barbecue then is:

- choose good quality meat, especially sausages from an organic butcher
- marinade steaks, chops etc for 2 hours in an organic home-made sauce before cooking

Eat a variety of good quality meat, including chicken, red meat and fish. Source free-range organic chicken. Battery chickens, while cheap, have a very unhealthy stressful life and less Omega-3. Avoid processed meats as much as possible.

Eggs are another great source of protein, and a great way to start the day. Don't worry about the cholesterol in the yolk. As I said, you can't put up your blood levels of cholesterol just by eating cholesterol. Try to get free-range organic eggs – they have a much better flavour, and if you can get

them without artificial yolk colouring it's even better. Recent research shows that eggs laid by chickens that are free to roam outside and eat a varied diet of insects and other foods have higher levels of nutrients than from chickens that just sit in a cage and eat nothing but grain.

CHEESE AND DAIRY

Cheese is a good source of protein and fat, both of which are filling and satisfy appetite. Try a small amount of goat or sheep cheese rather than using cow's milk cheese. These have much less casein (the protein in milk which many people cannot tolerate), and seem to cause less intolerance. Many people who are sensitive to dairy are lactose intolerant rather than protein intolerant, which means they don't have the enzyme which breaks down the lactose sugar in cow's milk.

Luckily, there are plenty of milk alternatives today, like goat and sheep milk and cheese, plus nut milks such as almond and others such as rice and oat milk. Get organic if you can as well as unsweetened. Sheep and goats don't respond well to intensive farming, so they are less likely to suffer the effects of lack of exercise, growth hormones and antibiotics. Sheep need to eat grass and roam over a wide area, which means they're almost inevitably raised on the range.

Again the milk used to make cheese needs to be from a healthy source. Intensively reared dairy cows, kept indoors, fed grain and antibiotics and forced to produce milk all year round aren't the best sources of healthy milk and cheese. I've also heard reliable stories that some cows are fed sugar to keep them producing milk during the winter. So to eat healthy cheese, support local organic cheese makers who use animals out in pasture, don't intensively milk them and take time to make exquisite local cheese in the old fashioned ways. It's a much healthier product. Use cheese as a special occasion food rather than an everyday item.

One cup of yogurt has 8gs of protein, but watch the sugar, artificial sweeteners and cream, which are often added to flavoured or set yogurts. Try natural yogurt and add some chopped fresh fruit of your own. Whizz in the blender if necessary. It's easy to make natural yogurt at home as well, which will give you plenty of healthy probiotics for digestion.

WHERE DO I GET MY CALCIUM?

Calcium is also found in many vegetables, like leafy greens such as broccoli, spinach and carrots. Fish like sardines and salmon that contain the bones are good sources of calcium. Nuts, seeds and soy also contain calcium. We have been brainwashed into thinking that we can only get enough calcium from dairy. But taking calcium from vegetarian sources also provides magnesium at the same time. Magnesium is an essential nutrient for good bones too so it's a great way to get both together. Try to vary your sources of calcium from these other foods, rather than relying on dairy for all your calcium needs.

VEGETABLE SOURCES OF PROTEIN

There are many people today surviving as healthy vegetarians. It is quite possible to get all your nutrients from vegetarian sources but you must eat a balanced diet to include the whole range of nutrients. There is no point living on toast and cereal and calling yourself a vegetarian because you don't eat red meat. I see many vegetarian clients in my clinic who eat very few vegetables but fill up with pasta and cheese. This will lead to ill health and a weak immune system.

Some vegetarian sources of protein are short on some of the essential

amino acids, so people living on only one type of food may run into protein deficiency. By combining protein from different vegetarian sources the whole range of essential amino acids can be found. For example combining legumes or nuts with grains, tofu or dairy all the amino acid bases will be covered. This does not necessarily need to be at each meal but over a period of 24 hours is fine.

Beans are great, as they contain plenty of fibre and are a cheap source of protein. They are excellent in soups and casseroles as well; use kidney beans, cassiolet beans, black eyed peas and pinto beans to reduce the amount of meat in a stew. This is a great way to make a small piece of good quality meat go a bit further to feed a family. Or make a vegetarian stew using only veggies and beans. Try making chilli with a smaller amount of good quality low-fat ground beef and twice as many kidney beans as usual. It costs less too!

Legumes: Lentils are also a good vegetarian source of protein, as well as peas, and can be added to soups and casseroles. Chickpeas are another type of bean, which you find in humus, a Middle Eastern dip. These can also be added to casseroles to add healthy vegetarian protein, as well as put in salads and dips.

Soy and tofu contain high levels of protein, but some forms have a lot of natural oestrogens and phytic acid, depending on the quality of the source – and may also contain harmful chemicals formed during processing.

Also, a lot of soy and tofu are highly processed or genetically modified (over 90 percent of soy is now genetically modified). Source out organic soy milk and tofu to ensure that you're not getting extra chemicals and use fermented soy products such as miso.

Other plant proteins: Quinoa, chia, pea and hemp are great sources of vegetarian protein. They have a wider range of amino acids so they contain all the amino acids you need as well as some healthy Omega 3 oils.

NUTS AND SEEDS

Nuts are good sources of protein, so a daily serving of nuts is a healthy snack. However they are high in calories, so portions need to be controlled if you need to watch your weight.

Each nut has a different proportion of vitamins, so a variety of nuts is a good choice. For example, most nuts contain magnesium, calcium and potassium, as well as good protein. Walnuts are full of omega 3, and Brazil nuts are a great source of selenium. Pumpkin seeds have the highest level of zinc of any nut or seed.

Avoid peanuts or groundnuts if you're seeking to satisfy your nut craving, as they're not a true nut but a legume. Peanuts are high in that inflammatory Omega 6 – arachadonic acid – so don't eat too many of them. Almonds, walnuts, Brazil nuts, sunflower and pumpkin seeds are healthier than peanuts.

Try to source organic *raw* nuts and seeds, rather than eating those roasted in oil. Roasting destroys most of the nutrients, and the oil is often inflammatory Omega 6 and refined with chemicals.

OTHER FOODS TO BOOST LIBIDO

The ideal situation is to have your body running at peak performance, getting every nutrient required to have your engine running smoothly and efficiently. That way your brain will be in tip top form to get you through the work day and looking forward to meeting someone new or having a little down time with your current squeeze. Depression won't be an issue and your hormones will be firing on all cylinders. Your body will be fit and lithe and you'll be happy to flaunt it in front of anyone, no matter what your age.

FRUIT

Fruit is a great source of vitamins, especially vitamin C, but many fruits are high in sugar as well. Fruit also contains flavinoids, which are nutrients that contain high levels of anti-oxidants. We're going to go into more detail about the nutrients in these healthy foods in Chapter 10.

A good variety of fruit over the week gives a wide range of anti-oxidants, and an average of two pieces per day or two handfuls should be sufficient for any adult. Try to choose local fruit in season, which is generally cheaper, and remember that organic is great. Local fruit that has been picked very recently has a lot more nutrients than fruit which has been flown in from far away and picked a month or more ago.

VEGETABLES

This is the most important category. You should be getting at least five to nine portions of vegetables per day, which may be quite hard to achieve with our modern lifestyle. Many patients I see kid themselves that they are eating plenty of vegetables but realistically only eat them with one meal a day – and that's dinner. How many people eat vegetables at breakfast? There should be a good variety of different colours of vegetables, from red to orange, yellow and green between those 5 portions.

Green vegetables are vitally important for magnesium, folate, fibre, vitamin C and calcium. Green leafy vegetables should be eaten every day – cabbage, broccoli, brussel sprouts, spinach, bok choy, silverbeet, etc. Lettuce nowadays often has very little nutrients, so we can't rely on it to be our only leafy green. The best way to eat green leafies is raw, in a salad or coleslaw. If you have a food processor, then coleslaw is quick and easy to do. Cooking very quickly destroys green vegetables. Cooking spinach for more than sixty seconds, for example, starts to destroy the vitamins.

Herbs are also a great source of nutrients, and fresh herbs should be added to your family's daily diet. The easiest way to add fresh herbs is to grow them yourself. It's easy in your kitchen.

Spices contain many anti-oxidants, which mop up toxic chemicals in our bloodstream, so spices in curries like ginger, turmeric and chili are very healthy additions to your diet. Again we'll go into more detail in Chapter 10.

WATER

Water is vitally important – your body needs at least 1500mls per day just to survive. Many of our drinks contain water, but also contain caffeine. As well as giving us an energy boost, caffeine is a diuretic and makes us pass more urine, just like alcohol. So any drink that contains caffeine, whether it's coffee, tea, cola, energy drink or even green tea, will make us get rid of water. Although we are drinking fluids, we are actually getting more dehydrated, as anyone with a hangover can verify. So we have to replace the water the caffeine gets rid of.

Many people don't drink much water, and rely on tea and coffee for their fluids. They don't realise that these drinks are counterproductive – providing fluid and then flushing it out in extra urine.

HOW MUCH WATER SHOULD I DRINK?

Adults should be aiming for at least 3 to 4 litres of water per day. If the weather is hot, we lose significant water in evaporation from our skin, even if we do not sweat. And people working outside need even more

water. So the total daily fluid intake needs to be adjusted to cope with weather and activities.

HOW CAN I TELL IF I'M GETTING ENOUGH WATER?

Our thirst mechanism tells us when we need more water, but it doesn't work well at the extremes. In other words, when we get very dehydrated, we lose our thirst. So we need to pay attention to some other signs and the amount of water we drink during the day.

The easiest way to tell if you have enough water is your urine. If you are producing lots of pale urine, then you are getting enough fluid. However, if you drink tea, coffee, sodas or alcohol, the urine is not reliable. The caffeine or alcohol makes you produce lots of urine, but you are getting more and more dehydrated with each drink. Some people deliberately don't drink much fluid to avoid going to the toilet frequently, especially when travelling. This is counterproductive as the urine becomes more concentrated and tends to burn the lining of the bladder. A urine infection soon results which can be more afflicting than the reason for not drinking in the first place.

Other Signs that You may Be Dehydrated:

- Urine is a dark colour and small in amount
- Headaches
- You don't feel hungry
- You can't digest your food – there's not enough fluid to make good gastric juice
- Dizziness – especially when you stand up
- Fatigue – the commonest cause of headaches and fatigue is dehydration
- Aches and pains, sore feet

We lose more water when we exercise. So it's important to pre-load with water *before* the exercise. Many athletes will pre-load with water the night before an event to make sure it spreads to all their muscles well before the event.

DRINKING WATER WITH MEALS

When we drink water alone, it is absorbed quickly, within ½ to one hour. When we drink water with food, the gut interprets this all as food, and takes longer to absorb it with the nutrients that are digested. The water may take one to two hours to be absorbed. So if you're thirsty, it's much better to rehydrate before eating. The fluid is then absorbed quickly and utilised.

Some people recommend not drinking water with meals at all, as it dilutes the digestive juices, but I don't think a small amount of water to wash down your food is a problem.

I'm sure you've had times when you tried to eat when you were dehydrated. The food just sits in your stomach like a lead weight, not able to be digested. And you feel bloated for up to two hours afterwards. Definitely not good! So the message is to drink water first, then eat your meal with a small glass of water only.

CHARACTERISTICS OF WATER

Water is a very stable molecule of H₂O. It has unique properties as a liquid, due to the strong hydrogen-to-oxygen bond. Its high boiling point and freezing point also make it a great solvent.

Drinking water also has a variety of minerals dissolved in it, depending on what type of soil it has filtered through. This affects the taste, and water companies and bottled water companies adjust the amount and type of minerals to produce an acceptable flavour. But what minerals does water contain?

Calcium has a profound effect on water, and the more calcium (from chalk in the rock) the water contains, the 'harder' it is. Hard water is rougher, and makes it harder to froth with soap, etc. It also rinses soap off the body more quickly, but leaves a residue.

Water can be acidic, just like foods, and so ionised water helps to alkalise our bodies and help our body cycles work better (See Chapter 11 about acid/alkali balance).

Tap water also has plenty of other metals, which can be viewed as contaminants, such as copper from the copper pipes. So it's best to use a filter to remove unwanted particles.

FRUIT JUICES AND CORDIALS

Commercial fruit juices are often higher in sugar than raw fruit. As the sweetness of fruit varies with each harvest, food companies are allowed to add sugar up to a certain level and still put '*No added sugar*' on the packaging, to maintain a consistent level of sweetness. This is just one example of how we are deceived by food manufacturers.

Juices are also processed, so those lovely anti-oxidants will be getting lower and lower the longer the juice sits on the shelf. Vitamin C only lasts about two hours after you process a fruit, so many companies add Vitamin C to juices to maintain the right levels. How weird is that?

Even if you cut a piece of fruit in half, that exposed edge will start to deteriorate quickly and lose nutrients. It goes with the colour change you see. So the cut half of a lemon won't be as good the next day as the half you used the day before.

Fruit juices and cordials may also contain artificial colours, flavours, sweeteners and preservatives. Often you will see labels that say, '*No artificial colours or flavours*', but they neglect to mention the third or fourth ones – sweeteners and preservatives. Different companies may market a different combination of these four, but it is rare to find juice without all four. Think about what nutrients you want from the juice. For example freshly squeezed juice may have a sell-by date of three days from now. In other words it won't make you sick if you drink it within three days, but the vitamin C and anti-oxidants are long gone a few hours after it was processed.

A piece of fresh fruit with a glass of water is the best alternative. Fresh fruit and vegetable juices are a great way to increase your healthy nutrients. Be careful when buying at juice bars, and make sure that no sugar is added. I asked about adding sugar and the juice bar told me no sugar was added. But then I found out that they used a sorbet in the drink, which was undoubtedly made with sugar. Still, if you're going to the juice bar, a shot of spirulina or wheat grass is a great way to increase your green leafies and magnesium at the same time.

Here is a recipe for a handy, healthy veggie juice. Celery, apple, carrot, ginger, fresh turmeric, juiced with optional (dandelion greens, kale, spirulina, wheat grass)

Dandelion greens and kale are great liver detoxifiers, and ginger and turmeric are great anti-cancer spices. However, the greens and kale can be bitter to taste. So the apple and carrot add sweetness. Beetroot can be added too. This juice can be made at home, or you can ask for this to be made up in a juice bar.

Tea and green tea have lots of good anti-oxidants as well, so you can drink those along with other herbal teas, as long as you hydrate with water as well.

THE BOTTOM LINE

So the overall message is to eat adequate amounts of a wide variety of good quality protein from organic, free-range sources. That's the best way to ensure that you get enough protein.

Fresh veggies and fruit, nuts and seeds give you the minerals and vitamins you need to get your body revving and ready to go. Once you're taking in the right healthy nutrients, your body can start building the right hormones, and your energy (both sexual and otherwise!) will increase out of sight. In Chapter 9 we'll cover what foods you need to take out and why and Chapter 10 will give you a lot more detail about which nutrients you need and where to get them.

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9 _____ HEY FOOD, DON'T MAKE IT BAD

Banish the Bad and Let Your Body Live

THE HISTORY OF THE HUMAN DIET

Think back to one hundred years ago. What did your grandparents eat? Did they live on a farm and eat fresh produce every day? Even if they lived in the city, you can bet that they ate very little processed food and sugar, with more fruit and vegetables than we do today.

Now we like to think of the traditional Mediterranean diet as very healthy – lots of good quality protein from a variety of sources, fresh vegetables, lots of healthy olive oils, herbs, fruit and nuts. However, we have adopted a lot of the Mediterranean stodgy high-carb foods, like pizza and pasta, too, and those aren't so healthy. It's the traditional aspects of the diet that give a balanced nutrition from a wide variety of foods.

So let's go further back in time, to two thousand years ago – at that time most people lived in the country. They ate free-range fish and meat, i.e., herds of sheep and cattle that wandered around the hillsides rather than being stuck in a cage for most of their life. There was little processed sugar, with natural sugars like honey taking its place, and their bread was wholemeal – rough, full of fibre and low in gluten. They ate brown rice and lots of vegetables with a few root vegetables.

In short, they ate what was available –what they grew or what they could buy locally, and food that was in season. People walked miles every day, to the village to buy or sell food, or working on the farm, or even hunting.

Now let's go back even further to twenty thousand years ago. Cavemen roamed around, living a nomadic lifestyle. They fished or hunted animals, burning up loads of energy while they did so. When an animal was killed, it was eaten raw, and the whole animal was consumed. So the nutrients were fresh and still active. With the discovery of fire, cooking meat gradually took over. But these humans understood the value of maintaining a food source, and lived in harmony with their surroundings, knowing that would need to go back out hunting and gathering the next day.

The point is, humans were close to the animal that they ate. By that I mean that they saw the animal being killed, appreciated what happened, and savoured the meat it provided. Now most people just buy meat in the supermarket without thinking about where the meat came from and how the animal lived and died. We have become separated from the animal that provided the meat.

Becoming knowledgeable about how the animal was cared for, whether it was healthy and not stressed, what it was fed is important to know so that you can choose meat that is healthy and health giving through its nutrients. Some people refer to this as respecting the animal that gave its life so that we could eat. But even if you think about it from a purely nutritional point of view, an animal which is bred in an indoor confined space and fed a diet which is not natural to it is going to be unhealthy. Furthermore, we now know that stress affects the quality of meat produced. So an unhappy animal will yield less-nutritious meat. No wonder our meat makes us ill.

TO GET BACK TO THE CAVEMEN AND WOMEN...

We know that cavemen ate vegetables and roots as well as meat, but that they were mostly raw. They also ate nuts and honey. And they gathered fruit and berries. That's why we think girls like pink: the females would generally pick the berries, and so they were programmed to pick the ripest berries, which were a purple/pink colour. Unripened fruit would have been green, and not so attractive. Girls learned from an early age to recognize and appreciate the color of ripe berries, leading to a preference today for the colours pink and purple.

They didn't drink milk from other animals, though, and they didn't make bread. If they did eat wheat or rice, they would have picked wild seeds and shoots, and eaten them raw.

So there was plenty of good quality protein and oils, fresh vegetables, fruit, nuts and honey. They ate very little carbs and sugar, and incorporated exercise into their lifestyle. Sound familiar?

GRAINS AND DAIRY CONSUMPTION IN HUMAN HISTORY

Humans have been around for more than 3 million years, but we have only been farming for around twelve thousand years. And we have only been relying heavily on dairy and bread for the last three thousand years. Heavily refined wheat and processed milk have come into our diet in the last one hundred years. That means those sources of food are relatively new to us, and might not quite fit as well with our bodily functions and needs as we believe.

3.5. Million Years ago – Early Humans Timeline for Human Diet



Grains and dairy introduced	12,000 years ago
Heavy use	3,000 years ago
Heavy refinement	100 years ago
Processed white bread and pasteurised milk	50 years

Isn't it amazing that humans survived for so long without foods which we consider to be absolutely essential today?

CARBOHYDRATES

Much has been written about our need for carbohydrates, and the reason is really quite simple. Carbs are our quick energy source. Carbohydrates are long chain molecules which can be broken down into simple sugars like glucose. Glucose is our main body fuel, in fact glucose is the only fuel our brain cells recognise. Excess glucose is stored in the liver as glycogen for ready use whenever we need it to exercise or think. When we eat too many carbs, the body stores the excess as fat – our long term storage units.

So the amount of carbs you need depends on the amount of exercise you do. The more exercise you take, the more carbs you can use up. The less exercise you do the more excess carbs will be laid down as fat.

Examples of carbs include bread, pasta, rice, starchy vegetables like potato, sweet potato, pumpkin and corn. Sweets, candy and fizzy drinks all contain sugar – the simplest carb. Wheat and rice, when eaten whole, are good sources of B vitamins, but when they're processed all the healthy nutrition is removed with the outer husk, and you're only left with the sugary inside of the seed. This is why wheat glucose syrup is used in so many candy bars and lollies – wheat becomes very sugary and sweet when it's processed.

For this reason, wholemeal bread and brown rice are much better sources of carbs than processed white bread or baked goods. Pasta is basically processed wheat in a different form – think of it as white bread. Corn bread is quite sugary, just like white bread, so try to keep that for special occasions, rather than eating it every day.

Sweet potato and pumpkin are also good sources of carbohydrates, as they contain nutrients like Vitamin A and calcium. However, sweet potato has the same amount of carbs as white potato – about 50g per 100g. Pumpkin is lower, with 13g carbs per 100g.

So we've looked so far at the main components of our diet - fats, protein and carbohydrate. So how much of each should we eat? A good rule of thumb for a balanced meal is thirds: **1/3 protein, 1/3 healthy oils and 1/3 carbohydrate**

For weight loss, carbs could be restricted even more.

GLUTEN INTOLERANCE

Many people today feel they cannot tolerate gluten. We know that about one in one hundred people in the population do have gluten intolerance,

but many more people feel much better when they exclude it from their diet. The most common symptoms of gluten intolerance are fatigue and brain fog, as well as gut problems like irritable bowel syndrome, headaches, migraines and mouth ulcers. Most grains have gluten in them but the particular type of gluten in wheat seems to cause more problems than most. It's the protein in the wheat gluten called gliadin which many people react to. Other forms of gluten are usually OK such as rice gluten but we see more and more people also reacting to corn and soy as they are used so much in processed food.

Gluten intolerance can be difficult to diagnose as many people have normal blood antibody tests. I recommend excluding wheat gluten strictly for 1 month to allow the body to settle down and then challenging it with 3 days of heavy wheat intake like 6 slices of bread per day. The symptoms might be delayed for a few days, but if you get overwhelming tiredness for no reason, joint pains, irritable bowel, constipation, headaches, or mouth ulcers in the week after the wheat challenge, then wheat gluten is your problem. Luckily excluding it from your diet for 3-6 months will allow your immune system to settle down and you can often have a small amount of bread occasionally without getting into trouble.

Many grains like wheat, sit around for a long time before they are made into bread, so the vitamins are deteriorating every day it's being stored. At the same time, they are sprayed with pesticides and fungicides to reduce spoiling. So what you're getting in your bread is a simple carbohydrate with little other fresh nutrients along with the pesticide and fungicide residues.

Grains also contain high levels of natural chemicals called phytates. These are nature's pesticides, but can stop us absorbing zinc and iron from food. So if you rely on grains a lot in your diet you could be at a disadvantage getting enough zinc and iron from your food. Some people can't digest grains at all for this reason, while others just experience an

irritation. Reducing your dependence on grains, and bread in particular, can help you avoid this problem. You'll get better nutrients from healthier foods and you'll feel more alert and energetic.

OTHER GRAINS

As we have said *whole* grains like oats are healthy sources of protein and vitamins. For example, porridge is a great, healthy winter breakfast. Rye bread has less wheat than white bread and more fibre. Barley is a useful grain, and can be added to soups and casseroles.

There are many other types of grains, like buckwheat and spelt, that can be used as alternatives to wheat. Spelt is an older form of wheat that has less gluten than modern commercial species of wheat. Buckwheat is not actually wheat, but a member of the Smartweed family, and can be used as a replacement.

Quinoa and chia are great sources of grain, and do not contain gluten. They are from completely different plant families than the grasses of which wheat is a member. They have high levels of balanced amino acids and Omega 3s and so are great alternatives to wheat. They are quite versatile too, so can be used in porridge, cereals, casseroles and salads.

GLYCEMIC INDEX

The Glycemic Index is a way of describing how carbohydrate-containing food affects blood glucose levels. All carbohydrate foods are digested to produce glucose, but they do so at different rates, some slowly and some quickly.

Low GI = Slow, controlled stable release of glucose into the blood

High GI = Glucose is released into the blood quickly, which can cause peaks and drops in the blood sugar level

High GI foods

- White bread
- White rice
- Potatoes
- Breakfast cereals
- Baked goods
- Chips
- Corn
- Fruit juice, sports drinks
- Desserts, ice cream
- Sugar, high-fructose corn syrup
- Candy, lollies, sodas

Low GI foods

- Whole grains
- Brown rice
- Lentils
- Beans

SUGAR

Sugar is the simplest carbohydrate we see in nature. Table sugar, made from cane or beet, is called sucrose. Sucrose itself is made up of two sugar molecules joined together – glucose and fructose. Fructose is almost twice as sweet as glucose. Sucrose is found in many plants, including fruits like pineapples and apricots. In other fruits, such as grapes and pears, fructose is the main sugar. Some people are intolerant of fructose and get diarrhoea and bloating when they eat pears or onions (which can also be high in fructose).

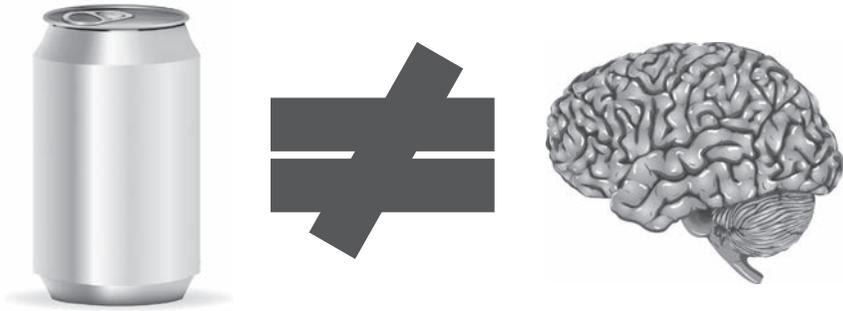
Now apart from fruit, we didn't eat much sugar as cavemen. We had berries and ripe fruit when they were in season and occasionally we had honey but there was no refined sugar until about 2 thousand years ago. At that time cultivation of sugar cane spread from India but it was very expensive and only the rich could afford to eat sweetened food. Now we have cheap sugar everywhere and our consumption has soared in the last 50 years. Even worse we can take the fructose part (the sweetest part) from sugar and make that into a syrup which is incredibly sweet and used in many, many different foods to sweeten them.

HIGH-FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP

This is made from corn, which is a cheap government-subsidised food. It is highly processed. As we said before, sugar from corn usually has glucose and fructose but the sweeter fructose (twice as sweet actually) is syphoned off and made into syrup for use in sodas, fizzy drinks – all kinds of food.

The increase in fructose consumption has paralleled the rise in obesity worldwide and it's believed that a high fructose diet increases weight gain and diabetes. The appetite centre in our brain responds to foods

like sugar, protein and oils – switching off normally when we've had enough food. However when we eat fructose, we get less response and our appetite hormones are not switched off. Fructose is also readily converted to fat in the liver, so it's very easy to put on weight if you're eating fructose. Americans consume approximately 35 pounds of high fructose corn syrup per person each year! Research also shows that fructose can interfere with learning and memory. It also increases heart disease risk factors especially in adolescents.



Drinking a can of soda can knock out the satiety centre for over twenty-four hours, so drinking a few sodas over a week will keep the appetite going almost continuously.

PROCESSED FOOD

Any food that has been prepared in advance and presented to you as a frozen or dried meal has a lot of preservatives, and has had most of the nutrients destroyed by processing. Normally, food decays pretty quickly – if you leave a piece of meat out of the fridge, it will be rancid in a couple of days. So how do you think the supermarkets manage to supply food that has to travel long distances and sit on shelves and in transporters for a long time? They process the food and add lots of preservatives.

That way the food will keep for a long time, and can sit on shelves for weeks before it expires. That's not to mention the way the main ingredients are processed, too.

Flour and vegetable matter also deteriorates quickly, and can harbour pests. So pesticides and anti-fungals are added to reduce spoiling. Foods are also irradiated or stored in gas to make them last longer.

So when you buy baked goods, pies, cookies, etc., realize that they are high in transfat, salt and sugar, with few useful nutrients. Chicken tenders or nuggets are the cheap leftovers and chicken carcasses, which are processed and shaped into nuggets, coated in batter and deep fried.

As we have said before, these kinds of foods provide no useful nutrition, apart from a high level of empty calories. So your well-designed 'Porsche' body gets a bunch of cheap, low-quality fuel, which lowers efficiency (you feel tired) and wears out your body quicker (you get disease).

EMPTY CALORIES

When we talk about empty calories, we mean that food has been so processed that the protein, vitamins and minerals have been destroyed. So while the food might contain a lot of calories in terms of fat and sugar, there are no nutrients that our bodies can use to build muscle, repair damaged tissue or make hormones and enzymes. Those are empty – or useless – calories.

If you have a high daily sugar intake from candy, sweets and chocolate, these are also empty calories. These foods are high in calories and very low in nutrition, so do no good when it comes to helping your body to work well.

Anything that is pre-cooked will be high in preservatives, and may also have a lot of artificial flavourings and colours. Many children cannot tolerate these artificial chemicals, and they can lead to behaviour problems like tantrums and poor sleep. They also aren't very good for adults either.

FAST FOOD

We all know that fast food is bad for us – too much inflamed fat, salt and sugar, especially in those up-sized drinks. A friend of mine went on a hike with her son. After the walk, they both ditched their backpacks in the cloakroom and forgot about them. After about a month, the mom found the backpacks. In hers was a decayed and rotten apple, in her son's a perfectly preserved hamburger – no deterioration at all. Now that should tell you something – that hamburger was chock full of preservatives!

At the same time, fast food is very cheap, and some families can only afford to eat at these cheap places. But you have to ask yourself – how can they make the food so cheaply?

Well, they use cheap ingredients.

Foods that are cheap to grow and process tend to be the high-fat and sugar foods with little nutrients. Don't be fooled by cheap salad ingredients, either. Iceberg lettuce has 1/10 the nutrients of darker leaf varieties like romaine lettuce. So a few shreds of iceberg on a burger are not going to improve your health much, especially when it's doused with processed mayonnaise. If you're making a salad, choose dark, leafy greens like baby spinach – a great source of magnesium, vitamin C, calcium, folate, iron and zinc. That vegetable is bursting with nutrients, and will make your salad even healthier.

When you look at how mass-produced hamburgers and chicken are prepared, you'll see that the meat is boiled until it has no flavour. Then artificial flavours, salt, texturisers, etc. are added to get the consistent taste and texture people recognise. It's no wonder that meat isn't good for you – all the nutrition has been processed out.

And fast food restaurants' other offerings are just as bad. Hot chips or French fries are high in carbs and inflammatory Omega 6, and have MSG in the chicken salt. This makes you thirsty, and causes you to crave more MSG. Many people are intolerant of MSG, and there is evidence that it can be harmful to your brain. Pizza is also very high in carbs, processed white flour and fat, depending on how it is cooked. Not much better.

HEALTHY FAST FOOD

Thai or Vietnamese food is a balanced meal and contains fresh vegetables lightly cooked, so is high in nutrients. It's a good alternative if you have no time to cook.

BE AWARE OF WHERE YOUR FOOD HAS COME FROM AND HOW LONG AGO

Imagine a freshly picked flower. You know that as soon as that flower is picked, it is starting to die. Within a few days it's wilting, and a week later you have to throw it away.

Plants and animals are living things, constantly exchanging nutrients with the environment to maintain optimal function. They react in the

same way as the flower. As soon as a plant is harvested or an animal killed, that exchange with nature stops. The nutrients that need to be upgraded over time are no longer available, and the level of nutrients starts to decline. By prolonging the shelf life of fruit, vegetables and meat, the food is available all year round but by the time we get around to eating it, the level of nutrients may be very low. They've all been eliminated, and nothing has been replaced. So the food fills us up, but does not supply us with the nutrients we need.

We should be allowing food to develop to maturity naturally, so that its nutrients are at a maximum. Then pick and eat it, as close to the time when it was living as possible. That way we take in all the nutrition, rather than eating empty calories.

ALCOHOL

Alcohol acts like a carbohydrate, in fact it makes the same metabolites as fructose in your body. It also makes you dehydrated, makes you more acidic, and drains minerals from your body. So reducing alcohol intake reduces your carb intake, and will help with weight loss. Current recommendations are to have at least two alcohol free-days per week.

However, there is evidence that red wine has some healthy nutrients, such as resveratrol, which may be anti-aging. One glass per day appears to reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease.

SWEETENED DRINKS – SWEET POISON

Water is absolutely essential for us to live. An adult needs about 1500mls or 3 pints every day just to keep alive. In a hot climate, or when you

sweat from exercise or work, you need even more. Unfortunately, not all fluids are as good for us as water. Sodas or fizzy drinks with lots of sugar upset our blood sugar regulation. This can lead to diabetes in many cases – our pancreas gets worn out producing insulin to deal with the sugar.

When we eat sugar, it is absorbed very quickly into our blood stream, as it's a small simple molecule. In response, our pancreas makes insulin to process the sugar. This makes the blood sugar go down. When this happens, we might feel dizzy and weak. We also feel hungry, especially for sugary foods. So we take in more sugar. At this time, the insulin's just been switched off after the pancreas having to work hard on the previous sugar intake. So our blood sugar goes up, and then insulin production kicks in again. The blood sugar goes down again and we feel hungry. So we have this cycle of the blood sugar going up and down and the insulin production also see-sawing up and down. This sets up a cycle of being constantly hungry, especially for sugary foods. Our poor pancreas is put under a lot of strain, starting and stopping insulin, so it starts to wear out. After a while the pancreas gets tired and insulin production is eventually decreased, and we get diabetes.

Sodas or canned fizzy drinks are very acidic, which is not good for teeth enamel. The sugar content doesn't help teeth either. They also contain a lot of phosphoric acid, which strips calcium, magnesium and zinc from the body – those minerals which are so necessary for good bone growth.

Many drinks contain sugar, so it pays to be aware of how much sugar is in each drink. The best way to decide is to check the food label on the bottle. Check the total amount of carbs for the bottle and how much of that is sugar. When you check labels and understand what you're putting in your mouth, you're in a good position to cut down on the carbs and sugar to maintain a healthier life.

NOW HERE IS AN EASY WAY TO LOOK AT SUGAR IN DRINKS

Vitamin waters often contain an ounce of sugar – around 30gms in 500mls. That's around 6 teaspoons, depending on the size of your teaspoon. It's also 120 calories (or 500 kilojoules).

Measure out 6 teaspoons of sugar into a cup and try to eat it. I guarantee that you'll feel sick before you finish the sugar. But in a drink, it's diluted with water, so you don't taste it as being too sweet. When you drink these drinks, you're consuming a lot more sugar than your body actually wants.

Flavoured waters also have about the same amount of sugar, so a 500ml bottle of flavoured water contains about 6 teaspoons of sugar. A 250ml serving of unsweetened fruit juice also contains 27g or 5 ½ teaspoons of sugar!

Moving on to sodas, most sodas contain about 38 to 39gms of sugar in a 12oz can (330mls). That's nearly 8 teaspoons of sugar! The only reason you can drink it is because of the phosphoric acid, which counteracts the sweetness, meanwhile draining you or your child's essential minerals from their body (as well as rotting their teeth).

Sports drinks are another problem. A 20oz bottle of sport drink has around 14 to 18g of sugar, as well as sodium. Unless you're a competitive athlete or work outside for long periods, you do not need a sport drink to replace your sodium – merely water is good enough.

It's therefore essential that children learn to drink water and not just get all their fluids from sodas, fruit juices, cordials and sports drinks, which can harm their bodies and their growth.

FOOD ADDITIVES

You've probably heard that food additives and preservatives are bad for you, but you're not sure why, or even what they are. We're going to explain a little bit about food additives so you know what we're talking about and how they can be harmful to the body.

What is a Food Additive?

A food additive is a substance that is added to food in order to preserve its flavour, enhance its taste, or improve its appearance. Simple, natural food additives include salt and vinegar, such as salting meats to preserve them or pickling peppers with vinegar.

However, starting in the second half of the 20th century, the science of chemistry really came into its own and the ability to make thousands of artificial chemicals became a reality. Laboratories began creating synthetic additives – some an off-shoot of natural products, some completely artificial. These new additives included food dyes, artificial sweeteners, artificial flavours, chemical preservatives, chemicals to improve the texture of food and mouth feel to name but a few. Today there are over 2000 artificial food additives available to food production companies.

What are E numbers?

These are numbers given to food additives by the European Food Safety Authority when they have passed through various basic testing and safety checks. E100 is colours, E200 Preservatives, E300 Antioxidants, E400 miscellaneous.

What is a Preservative?

Before we had refrigeration, food didn't last very long. Most people made their own food and used traditional methods of preserving foods such as salting, drying and smoking to preserve meats, and fermentation and pickling to preserve other foods through the long winter. When people started moving away from farms and cities became larger, ways of preserving food so it could be shipped from the country and stored in the cities to feed the population became an urgent task. Experiments with home canning weren't always successful but as our understanding of chemistry improved and industrial food production got under way, everyone felt that preserving food with newly invented chemicals was a great step forward. Unfortunately no-one realised that our bodies weren't equipped to deal with foreign chemicals and side-effects; reactions and allergies were on the cards as well as possibly some chronic diseases.

Of course, food producers not only want to preserve food but they also wanted to play around with flavours, food textures and other qualities. Creating artificial flavours also allowed companies to add cheap bulk foods such as wheat, corn and soy and flavour them up with chemicals so that they were a cheap imitation of the real thing. Here are some of the chemicals used in food production today:

- Colours
- Flavours
- Preservatives
- Sweeteners
- Emulsifiers – prevent water and oil from separating in food such as mayonnaises and salad dressings, homogenised milk, ice-creams and desserts
- Gelling agents – make sauces, syrups thicker
- Humectants – prevent foods from drying up

- Glazing agents – give food a shiny coating
- Anti-caking agents – stop foods from sticking together
- Acidulants
- Antioxidants
- Colour retention agents – what is says on the label – keeps the colour in food stable

These are direct food additives used to enhance flavour, texture or preserve the food from spoilage. There are also indirect food additives from pesticide and fertilisers that come from the food production. These additives do not provide any nutrients but can cause health problems such as ADHD, allergies and intolerances, obesity, heart disease and cancer.

Here are some resources where you can read up more about food additives and their safety.

- <http://www.understandingfoodadditives.org/index.htm> for an easy understanding of food additives
- http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/_srcfiles/Additives%20alpha.pdf for a list of food additives
- <http://naturalhealthezine.com/the-dangers-of-food-additives-and-preservatives/>
- *The Power of Self Healing: Unlock Your Natural healing Potential in 21 Days.* Dr Fabrizio Mancini (Hay House UK, 2012)
- <http://www.foodadditivesbook.com/>
- *Food Additives A Shopper's guide to What's Safe & What's Not* Dr Christine H Farlow, DC

Now as more and more of us live in large cities and towns and rely on someone else to provide food for us, the need for these chemicals has increased exponentially. In other words, more and more chemicals have been invented and more and more processed food has become available. A quick look around any supermarket will tell you that most of our food is artificially processed and full of preservatives. Just check the amount of floor space given to fresh food in your local supermarket compared with processed foods. And while you're there just check some of those expiry dates on products lining the shelves. Now a real food couldn't sit on a supermarket shelf for 18 months – not unless it was packed chock full of preservatives.

The reality is that since the 1950s, we have increased our intake of food additives such as food dyes by as much as 6 times. The average American is thought to consume about 5 pounds or 2 kgs of food additives per year. Many countries are waking up to the fact that we are suffering from the effects of all these chemicals, and are banning them from the food supply.

WHICH PRESERVATIVES ARE THE MOST DANGEROUS?

The following preservatives are the ones that cause the most reactions. You should try to reduce your intake of these ones by increasing your intake of fresh food:

- **Sodium benzoate:** Sodium benzoate prevents the growth of bacteria and fungi and may be used in ground beef, salad dressings, fizzy drinks, fruit juices and jams. When sodium benzoate is mixed with Vitamin C or ascorbic acid, it forms a compound called benzene, which is a known carcinogen. It may also react with food colourings to produce hyperactivity in children.

- Sodium nitrite or sodium nitrate: Used as a preservative in deli meats such as bacon, ham, sausages, hotdogs and salami. These nitrates/ nitrites are associated with the risk of cancer, particularly the liver and pancreas.
- Sulfites: Some wines and fruits contain sulfites to prevent bacterial growth and fermentation but they can cause allergies and intolerances. Check for organic sulphite-free wines, fresh organic fruit and preservative-free dried fruit.
- Sulphur dioxide: a preservative in beer, wine, soft drinks, dried fruit, fruit juices and cordials. Can cause allergies and anaphylactic reactions.
- BHA and BHT: these are used as preservatives in potato chips, cereals, rice, lards and shortenings. They prevent food from changing colour or going off. These become oxidants with the potential for cancer and also affect brain behaviour.
- Calcium propionate or Preservative 282. Calcium propionate and the other propionates (280-283) are antibacterial and anti-mould and are commonly added to bread and baked goods as a preservative. Many children and adults react to 282 so choose 282 free bread if possible. Some bakery chains maintain their bread is 282 free.

HOW DO I KNOW IF A FOOD ADDITIVE IS CAUSING A REACTION?

If you get regular headaches, migraines, stomach problems such as irritable bowel, stomach cramps, rashes such as eczema, palpitations, muscle cramps, blocked nose or runny nose, frequent urine infections then you might be reacting to one of these chemicals. Depression, irritability, memory loss, tiredness are also common as well as tinnitus and noise sensitivity. In children they can have behavioural problems, lack of concentration, ADHD, ADD, tantrums, crying and nightmares.

The only way to check is to take all processed foods out of the diet for a month and then gradually try one food additive at a time. This can be tricky as most foodstuffs have more than one additive included. A new food additive or food type can be added every 2 weeks. Remember it may be a few days before you feel the side-effects of the food additive. Usually you will feel much better with a clean diet and over time, you should be able to work out which types of food give you the worst reactions and avoid them.

WHICH OTHER FOOD ADDITIVES ARE THE MOST DANGEROUS?

Here is a short list of common food additives that are the most harmful

1. Food colourings or dyes

Some of these have been banned as they cause behaviour problems in children as well as ADD and ADHD. Avoid these ones especially

- Yellow 5 and 6
- Red 3 and 40
- Blue 1 and 2
- Green 3
- Orange B

2. Artificial sweeteners

- Saccharin: Although approved by many governments, there may be associations with cancer.
- Aspartame: this is made from methanol holding 2 amino acids together. When heated, methanol breaks down to formic acid and formaldehyde (a chemical used as embalming fluid). Formaldehyde is a well-known toxin which affects nerves and the eye

and is associated with birth defects. It affects the nervous system in children and so is linked to ADHD and ADD. One of the amino acids is phenylalanine or PKU. Many people cannot tolerate PKU and its brain effects.

Aspartame is commonly used in low fat products to sweeten the taste so check for it in yoghurts, cordials and diet drinks. To make healthy yogurt buy organic natural yogurt and blend with organic fresh fruit.

3. Artificial flavours

- Monosodium glutamate, or MSG: This is a commonly used chemical in savoury foods for its meaty flavour. It's added to Chinese food, chips and dips, snack foods and seasonings, and can be addictive. Many people are allergic to it, getting headaches and palpitations. It interferes with feelings of fullness – hence the 'moreish' feeling that you get to keep eating it. It can be disguised as the following ingredients
 - Calcium caseinate
 - Gelatin
 - Autolyzed yeast and other yeast products
 - Monopotassium glutamate
 - Glutamate
 - Glutamic acid
 - Textured protein
 - Sodium caseinate
- High-fructose corn syrup (HFCS): This is corn syrup that has some of its glucose removed so that the fructose level is up to 60%. Normal sugar is made of sucrose – a combination of glucose and fructose. It's very sweet, concentrated and cheap to make. There are many concerns around this product and links to obesity. Certainly there is evidence that it reacts in the brain

differently from glucose and is metabolised in the liver. It may knock off the appetite centre in the brain leading to continual hunger and over-eating.

- **Bisphenol A or BPA:** BPA is used to make a hard, clear plastic known as polycarbonate, which has been used in many consumer products, including reusable water bottles. BPA is also used to line food cans and aluminium drinks cans. It has been removed from plastic baby bottles due to concerns about it affecting infant's brains. Try to use glass or ceramic drinking bottles rather than plastic to avoid this chemical in your water and use as few cans as possible.

PLASTIC BOTTLE LABELLING

Most plastic containers have numbers written inside a triangle on the underside. This indicates the type of plastic and which ones are safe to use for food. Numbers 2, 4 and 5 should be safe to use as they transmit no known chemicals into your food. Number 1 contains PET but should be ok if you don't reuse it as they absorb flavours and bacteria which are hard to clean.

WHAT NOT TO USE

Number 3 (PVC) is often used to cling wrap meat. It contains phthalates that interfere with hormones and releases dioxin when burnt. Number 6 is Styrofoam, used in take-out containers and cups and plastic cutlery. These can leach styrene into food.

Some Number 7 containers contain Bisphenol A and are used for large water containers and water coolers. BPA is toxic, being linked to hormones and obesity and possibly cancer.

The above plastics can leach harmful chemicals especially when heated, so check the number before keeping food in these containers and never microwave plastic containers. Transfer food to ceramic bowls for microwaving if you need to, but the extreme energy of a microwave destroys nutrients so avoid using it unless absolutely necessary.

OBESOGENS

An obesogen is a natural or synthetic chemical that is an endocrine-disruptor. These chemicals disrupt the function of hormonal systems and metabolism, leading to weight gain. Obesogens enter our bodies in different ways.

- Natural hormones found in soy
- Hormones given to animals
- Plastics in food and drink packaging
- Chemicals added to processed food
- Pesticides sprayed on fruit, vegetables etc.

We are exposed to ten to thirteen different pesticides every day, and many of them contain obesogens. Several examples of substances that could be classified as obesogens include tributyltin (used in wood preserving), bisphenol A (used in plastics and cans, and banned from baby bottles), diethylhexylphthalate (used in PVC, acts like a feminiser hormone), and perfluorooctanoate (used in carpets and non-stick cookware).

How Obesogens Work:

- Mimic human hormones such as oestrogen
- Interfere with normal sex hormone production
- Interfere with normal appetite and satiety
- Mis-program stem cells to be fat cells. This can happen pre-natally.

The following foods tend to be high in pesticides, so you should buy organic where possible if you can't afford to go fully organic. For example supermarket broccoli contains 33 different pesticides (found by the USDA Pesticide Data Program). 5 are possible carcinogens, 6 are neurotoxins and 19 disrupt hormones. Apples contain 42 pesticide residues; 7 known or probable carcinogens, 19 suspected hormone disrupters, 10 neurotoxins and 6 reproductive toxins. It also contains 17 honeybee toxins. Honey bees are an essential part of the food cycle. They help to pollinate plants

<http://www.whatsonmyfood.org/food.jsp?food=BR>. Accessed April 2013.

Vegetables	Fruit
Celery	Strawberries
Peppers	Apples
Spinach	Blueberries
Kale	Nectarines
Broccoli	Cherries
Potatoes	Grapes
	Peaches

CARCINOGENS

Many chemicals we find around the house have the potential to cause us harm if we are exposed to large doses, for example formaldehyde which is used in wooden furniture products. It pays to reduce your chemical use around the home where possible. Try using bicarbonate as a cleaning product for example rather than chemical cleaners.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) releases reports on various hazards that cause cancer and you can read this document at this web address: <http://ntp.niehs.nih.gov/go/roc12>

TOXICITY

We store toxins in our fat, so when we are exposed to chemical toxins like plastics and heavy metals, we send them to the fat cells to prevent them from harming us. It's much the same as when your computer gets a virus and the anti-virus software quarantines it. When our bodies are still toxic, we make more fat cells to store the toxins. Our liver is responsible for processing those toxins and sending them to the fat stores. In this way, needing to store artificial chemicals encourages the body to increase fat stores and damages the liver. An unhealthy diet full of artificial flavourings, colourings, preservatives, pesticides and fertilisers – all toxins to our bodies – increases our fat stores just to keep us from being toxic. And we grow obese in a process of self-preservation.

Rapidly trying to detox with pharmacy bought detox products can release these chemicals quickly into the bloodstream and cause side-effects such as headache and nausea. So a slow process of avoiding these chemicals and gentle detoxing with healthy fresh organic foods over a longer period of time, like a month, will avoid this happening. Make it a life choice to minimise your family's exposure to artificial chemicals as much as possible.

THE BOTTOM LINE

If you have a highly processed diet, you will benefit from a detoxing program. This may be done with an infra-red sauna or by detoxing with vegetable juices and healthy liver nutrients. The most important step is to remove the toxins in your diet. Twenty-four-hour detoxes from the pharmacy are unlikely to change much in your body. You may lose a bit of fluid and give yourself a headache, but there will be no long-lasting effects unless you detox on a regular basis over a period of a few months. Here's how:

- Eat organic fruit, vegetables, nuts and meat when possible
- Eat simple, fresh food rather than processed
- Think about where your food has come from and how old it is
- Detox regularly with juices, vegetable soups and infra-red saunas

If you want to do a great detox, sign up for my real healthy chocolate thirty-day detox program. You don't have to like chocolate, just follow this simple eating plan for thirty days – it's so easy to follow that everyone tells me they could do it for longer. In fact, people say, 'I can keep this going forever, I'm never going back to my old eating habits, I feel fantastic!'

www.chocolateloversdetox.com

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10

GET DOWN ON IT

Getting Down to the Nitty Gritty

The first point about healthy eating is that food should be raw *as much as possible* to give you as many nutrients as possible. Cooking or heating food above 41 degrees centigrade (105 degrees Fahrenheit) destroys nutrients. It's estimated that if 80 percent of our food is *cooked*, we suffer from nutrient deficiencies, while if 51 percent of our food is *uncooked*, we are able to get more nutrients, vitamins, minerals and enzymes from food. Food contains live enzymes that help start digestion. When we eat cooked foods those enzymes are destroyed by the heat, so our body has to work harder to digest food and absorb nutrients. So it makes sense to take the strain off your own body systems as much as possible. Water should be filtered to remove chemical residues.

It's also much healthier to get the nutrients we need from whole food rather than supplements. We have evolved to absorb nutrients in the right proportions and types, from the food around us. Supplements may not replace that balance of nutrients, and absorption and utilisation may be reduced.

However, the amount of nutrients we gain from food has reduced drastically over the last fifty years. Fruit and vegetables are grown in water with minimal nutrients from soil; or in poor soil where the minerals are depleted. They are picked before they are ripe, and specifically bred for

their looks and resistance to spoiling rather than nutrient levels. For example, here are some of the reductions in nutrients in certain foods:

Apples:	Vitamin A is down 41 percent
Sweet peppers:	Vitamin C is down 31 percent
Watercress:	Iron is down 88 percent
Broccoli:	Calcium and Vitamin A are down 50 percent
Cauliflower:	Vitamin C is down 45 percent
	Vitamin B1 is down 48 percent
	Vitamin B2 is down 47 percent

So it's more important than ever that we eat a healthy diet, full of fresh, raw, properly grown and ripened foods.

VITAMINS

Vitamins are compounds that are essential to life and cannot be made by the body, and therefore must be ingested in food. They are organic compounds that occur in small amounts in food. They serve vital functions in almost all bodily processes (immune, hormonal and nervous systems) and are best obtained from food or supplements (with the exception of vitamin D, which is made in the skin with exposure to sunlight. Bacteria in the large intestine are also responsible for making vitamin K.). There are thirteen vitamins, classified as either water soluble (C and B complex) or fat soluble (A, D, E and K).

One vitamin cannot replace another. The lack (or deficiency) of one vitamin can interfere with the function of another, and consumption of excessive amounts of one vitamin can lead to vitamin imbalances.

Healthy individuals usually meet their vitamin requirements by eating a varied diet. However, many foods are now depleted of nutrients by the way they are grown, and fruit and vegetables being picked before they are ripe. Recent research indicates that genetic differences mean that different people may have different abilities to absorb and process vitamins, so individual needs may vary as well.

FUNCTIONS OF VITAMINS

Co-Enzymes. An enzyme is a protein molecule that increases the rate of a chemical reaction. Many of the body's chemical reactions are controlled by enzymes. Each living cell has up to three thousand enzymes, which are produced in the cell and control all its biochemical reactions.

Co-enzymes act as regulators in the action of enzymes. This is the most common role of vitamins, and includes all the B group vitamins, and Vitamins C and K. It means they control the rate of protein synthesis, energy production, fat breakdown, etc. If you are short of a few vitamins, it means that energy production will slow down, fat breakdown may slow down, and protein for muscles and organs may not be synthesised.

Antioxidants. Vitamins C and E are the prime antioxidants, and mop up free radicals in the body. Free radicals are harmful chemicals formed as by-products in the cells' chemical reactions. These are a normal part of our bodies functioning but can cause problems when they build up. (For a fuller explanation see oxidative stress).

B group vitamins. Vitamins B1, 2 and 3 are important in energy production. Folic acid, B6 and B12 are involved with the synthesis of protein. B5 and biotin are involved in lipid metabolism.

Vitamin C. Humans, primates and guinea pigs are some of the few mammals that can't synthesise their own vitamin C, so we must take it in from food sources. This vitamin's enzyme reactions include the dopamine pathway, hormone production, repair of collagen and energy production. Vitamin C also protects DNA, proteins and fats against oxidative damage.

FAT-SOLUBLE VITAMINS AND THEIR ROLE IN THE BODY

Fat-soluble vitamins are absorbed, together with fat or oils from the intestine, into the blood stream. Any disease or disorder that affects the absorption of fat could lead to a deficiency of these vitamins. Once absorbed into circulation, these vitamins are carried to the liver where they are stored.

Vitamins A, D, E and K make up the fat-soluble vitamins. Vitamins A, D and K are stored in the liver, and vitamin E is distributed throughout the body's fatty tissues. Each vitamin has a different function.

Vitamin A is important for vision, healthy hair and skin, and normal bone formation. It's present in food in two main forms: preformed vitamin A and carotenes/carotenoids. Vitamin A is naturally found in dark green and yellow vegetables and yellow fruits, such as broccoli, spinach, turnip greens, carrots, squash, sweet potatoes, pumpkin and apricots, and in animal sources such as liver, milk, butter, cheese and whole eggs. Deficiency can lead to night blindness and dry hard skin, which is more prone to infection.

Vitamin D is important for strong bones, muscles and overall health because it helps the body absorb calcium. The sun's ultraviolet (UV) light is the best natural source of vitamin D, though there are very small amounts of vitamin D in some foods and drinks. It's difficult to obtain

enough vitamin D from diet alone. Only a few foods (such as fish and eggs) naturally contain the vitamin. Vitamin D is now added to some other foods, like milk. Low Vitamin D levels are associated with depression, heart disease, dementia and Alzheimer's and in children may result in rickets.

SAD

Seasonal affective disorder, or SAD, occurs in cold countries during the winter, when low levels of sunlight and short days cause significant Vitamin D deficiency. Levels of depression and suicide spike at this time. In many countries, people now sit in front of light boxes to improve vitamin D levels and keep themselves from experiencing SAD.

Sunlight

To maintain good vitamin D levels, the average human needs thirty minutes of sunlight per day, with most of their clothes off. It's important to expose the fat stores where most of the Vitamin D is made, so abdomen and buttocks should be bare. The exposure should not be early or late in the day, when UVB levels are low. In other words, going out around lunchtime and getting your shirt off for half an hour will really boost your vitamin D levels without burning you or giving you skin cancer. This time outside helps the human body in many ways. High Vitamin D levels help prevent cancer, as well as improving memory, mood and brain function.

Vitamin E is an antioxidant that helps protect the body's cells, including red blood cells, against damage. Vitamin E is found in vegetable oils, nuts and seeds. It's important in the prevention of oxidation of fats, particularly in cell membranes, and is therefore important in preventing heart disease, arthritis and malignancy, and supporting the immune system.

Vitamin K can be found in green plants, and it can also be made by the bacteria in the intestines. Around half of the required Vitamin K can be made by the body's own bacteria. Vitamin K is involved in the blood clotting process. Deficiency is rare, but could result in decreased blood clotting time.

WATER-SOLUBLE VITAMINS AND THEIR ROLE IN THE BODY

Water-soluble vitamins are not stored in the body. So it's important to continually restore the body's supply of water-soluble vitamins by eating a range of healthy foods.

The water-soluble vitamins are:

- Vitamin B1 (thiamine)
- Vitamin B2 (riboflavin)
- Vitamin B3 (niacin)
- Vitamin B5 (pantothenic acid)
- Vitamin B6 (pyridoxine)
- Vitamin B12 (cobalamin)
- Folate or folic acid
- Biotin
- Vitamin C

Vitamins contain no useful energy for the body, but they do control a number of reactions that release energy within the food we consume. We therefore have recommended dietary intakes of vitamins, or RDI. The recommended daily intake (RDI) for men, women and children has

been identified by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

There are different recommended dietary intakes for most vitamins. These give a guide as to the amounts of vitamins people need to eat each day, but only at the basic level needed to prevent disease, not at the optimal level to promote good health.

MINERALS

Minerals are also essential to the body to maintain health and everyday functioning. Within the body, they are involved in:

- Cell growth and repair
- Metabolism
- Nerve and muscle function

Often people exclude certain foods from their diet, which means they can miss out on some vital minerals particularly vegetarians, vegans and fruitarians. These people might not be getting the nutrition they need when it comes to vitamins and minerals. But all it requires is to eat a wide variety of foods and make sure you take in foods that provide the most common nutrients missing – vitamin B12, iron and zinc. For example molasses is a good vegetarian source of iron and pumpkin seeds a great source of zinc. So it's important for people of all ages to eat a variety of healthy foods, to provide enough minerals for their health. It is best to get minerals needed by the body from food rather than supplements. Taking large doses of one mineral can have a negative effect on health, so it's better to maintain a balanced plan of foods or supplements.

Minerals essential to good health include:

- Calcium
- Iron
- Magnesium
- Phosphorus
- Potassium
- Sodium
- Iodine
- Zinc

ESSENTIAL MINERALS

These minerals are the most essential for our proper function. There are trace elements, which we need small amounts of as well, but the only main minerals will be mentioned here.

Magnesium. Magnesium is the 8th most common element in the world. It is the main mineral in chlorophyll – it's what makes plants green. So it is logical that humans have developed and evolved while ingesting large quantities. Our bodies obviously became dependant on it, as we use magnesium in over three hundred biochemical processes. It's the 4th most common mineral in the body, and 50 percent of our magnesium is found in our bones. It helps maintain normal muscle and nerve function, keeps heart rhythm steady, supports a healthy immune system and keeps bones strong. Magnesium also helps regulate blood sugar levels, promotes normal blood pressure, and is known to be involved in energy metabolism and protein synthesis. Magnesium is necessary for good bone development, as calcium and magnesium metabolism are both linked to bone growth.

Now with our reduced vegetable intake, we see plenty of magnesium deficiency. It can cause muscle cramps, headaches and be a factor in high blood pressure, heart disease and heart rate arrhythmias. Cravings for chocolate can be a sign of magnesium deficiency. Think about it; there is a good reason why we like looking at green fields and rainforests. To our ancestors, green meant a reliable source of food. We have a hereditary love of green plants. Sources of magnesium include organic green leafy vegetables and nuts, almonds, cashews, wholemeal grains and beans.

Zinc. Zinc is an essential element found in almost every cell. It stimulates the activity of around one hundred enzymes, and helps make DNA. Zinc is needed for a healthy immune system and normal senses of taste and smell, as well as wound healing and normal growth. Alcohol decreases the absorption of zinc, and vegetarians may need to supplement their intake. Good sources of zinc include animal protein, oysters, beans, nuts and seeds such as pumpkin.

Chromium. Chromium enhances the action of insulin, and is involved in the metabolism of carbohydrate, fat and protein. It is found in minute amounts in many foods, and luckily we need only small amounts. Vitamin C and B enhance absorption of chromium. Diets high in sugar contain very little of this mineral, and actually increase chromium excretion in the urine. Therefore, people with a high-sugar diet can become deficient in chromium, which then decreases their ability to handle sugar through the insulin process. Chromium supplements can be useful for sugar cravings.

Iodine. Iodine is required for the synthesis of thyroid hormones, and for gastric mucosa and the immune system. Sources include sea food, kelp, iodized salt and eggs. Iodine deficiency is becoming more common these days, and studies show that most of our population is short of iodine. Is it because we are eating less seafood or because chlorine and fluoride in the water displace our iodine? Whatever the cause, it's especially important for pregnant and breastfeeding women to get adequate

levels of iodine in their diet, as low iodine in the baby can hinder brain development.

Selenium. Selenium is a trace element nutrient that functions as a co-factor for antioxidants. It appears to help reduce cancer, probably by its antioxidant function. However, it can be toxic in high levels, so people should not take more than the recommended dose. Brazil nuts have the highest level of natural selenium.

Phytonutrients. Phytonutrients are non-nutritive plant chemicals that contain protective, disease-preventing compounds. Their role in plants is to protect plants from disease, injuries, insects, drought, excessive heat, ultraviolet rays and poisons or pollutants in the air or soil. They form part of the plant's immune system.

There are over ten thousand of them, and they are antioxidants, boost the immune system, have anti-inflammatory, anti-viral and anti-bacterial properties and help repair cells. Highly coloured vegetables and fruits tend to be highest in these chemicals, but tea, chocolate, nuts, flax seeds and olive oil are all excellent sources as well.

Although phytochemicals are not yet classified as nutrients – substances necessary for sustaining life – they have been identified as containing properties for aiding in disease prevention. Phytochemicals are associated with the prevention and/or treatment of at least four of the leading causes of death in Western countries – cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and hypertension. They are involved in many processes, including ones that help prevent cell damage, prevent cancer cell replication and decrease cholesterol levels.

Phytonutrients serve as antioxidants, enhance the immune response, enhance cell-to-cell communication, convert beta carotene to vitamin A, repair DNA damage caused by smoking and other toxic exposures, and

detoxify carcinogens. There are nine major classes of them. The two main groups include:

- **Carotenoids** – these are the red, orange and yellow pigments in fruits and vegetables. Fruits that are high in carotenoids appear to protect humans against certain cancers and heart disease.
- **Polyphenols** – Polyphenols are natural compounds in a wide variety of plants. Fruits rich in polyphenols are purple grapes, bilberries and cranberries. Polyphenols can be classified as non-flavonoids and flavonoids.

FLAVONOIDS

Flavonoids are water-soluble polyphenol molecules, and are widely distributed in plants. They fulfil many functions. They give plants, fruits and vegetables their wonderful variety of colours, like red, yellow, orange and blue. These bright colours attract insects which are necessary for pollination and spread of seeds for the next generation of plants.

Studies show that flavonoids have anti-allergic, anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial and anti-cancer activities. So the more we eat, the more benefits we reap from these healthy chemicals.

Flavonoids are found in most plant material. The most important dietary sources are fruit and vegetables. Green and black tea contains about 25 percent flavonoids. Other important sources of flavonoids are apples (quercetin) and citrus fruits (rutin and hesperidin), berries (anthocyanidins).

Quercetin. This is an example of a flavonoid. Foods rich in quercetin include black and green tea, apples, onions, red grapes, tomatoes, broccoli, leafy green vegetables, raspberries, cranberries and prickly pear. It has an-

ti-inflammatory properties, and may assist in cancer prevention. Studies are not conclusive yet, but it's renowned for its anti-allergy properties.

Reservatrol. This is a natural phenol produced by several plants to defend them when they're attacked by bacteria or fungi. It's found in the skin of red grapes and also in red wine. Research shows some anti-inflammatory and anti-diabetic effects, as well as cardio-protective and anti-viral effects. Anti-cancer properties have not yet been proven, though they're suspected.

Health Benefits

All flavonoids have antioxidant activity. Some of the activities attributed to flavonoids include anti-allergic, anti-cancer, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and anti-viral activities.

Epidemiological studies have illustrated that heart disease is also inversely related to flavonoid intake. In other words, there's more heart disease in people who don't eat much flavonoids. These studies have shown that flavonoids prevent the oxidation of low-density lipoprotein, thereby reducing the risk for the development of atherosclerosis. The contribution of flavonoids with the total antioxidant activity of components in food can be very high.

Red wine contains high levels of flavonoids, mainly quercetin and rutin. The high intake of red wine (and flavonoids) by the French might explain why they suffer from less coronary heart disease than other Europeans, although their consumption of cholesterol-rich foods is higher (the French paradox). Many studies have confirmed that one or two glasses of red wine every day can protect against heart disease.

Tea flavonoids also have many health benefits. They reduce the oxidation of low-density lipoprotein, and lower the blood levels of cholesterol and triglycerides.

HERBS AND SPICES TO BOOST YOUR METABOLISM AND LIBIDO

Herbs and spices have been used for centuries to enhance the flavour and nutrition of foods, in addition to supplying medicinal benefits.

You can really enhance the flavour of food such as sauces, marinades, dressings and soups, casseroles, stir-frys- in fact any dish can be improved with the addition of spices or herbs. And I'm not just talking about hot spices, there are many spices which are not 'hot', which you can add to food to enrich the flavour and add healthy flavonoids to your food.

Herbs usually come from the leaves of plants while spices come from different parts of the plant, for example berries – peppercorn; buds- cloves; seeds – cumin; bark - cinnamon; roots – ginger.

Most spices and herbs provide calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, sodium, zinc, copper, manganese and selenium, in addition to Vitamins C, A, E and B group vitamins such as thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, pantothenic acid, B-6 and folate. The phytochemicals in herbs and spices have many health giving properties. For example they are powerful anti-oxidants and reduce inflammation and free radicals. They help fight bacterial infections too. For example curcumin in turmeric and capsaicin in chili are powerful anticancer chemicals. Allin in garlic reduces blood pressure. Many herbs and spices are used in traditional remedies to help treat all sorts of disorders from nausea to infections to gout.

To get the full benefit of herbs, you should eat them fresh. The easiest and cheapest way is to grow your own herbs in the kitchen, garden or balcony. Seeds should be bought from organic seed growers rather than hardware chains, as these seedlings come with growth hormone added and possibly GM strains.

When you cut fresh herbs and pop them straight into a casserole or salad, you get the full benefit of the nutrients. Compare that to a jar of dried herbs, which has been in the cupboard for a year and probably has very few nutrients left. Possibly the worst thing to have happened to herbs is the supermarket giving them a two-year sell-by date. This means that they've been sitting there losing their nutrients for a very long time.

Again, fresh herbs added raw to salads and garnishing cooked food, i.e. not cooked themselves, means that you're getting 100 percent of the nutrients, phytochemicals and flavinoids. If you are adding herbs to cooked dishes, try to add them at the end so that the heat doesn't destroy the flavonoids. The same thing is true of spices: fresh spices have more nutrients than old jars of ground spices. Try to buy fresh from organic suppliers or grow your own.

SUPERFOODS

All raw foods are equally healthy, right? Not so, some are so packed with vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, essential fatty acids and other beneficial substances that they've been deemed "superfoods". Superfoods have incredible health benefits against cancer and heart disease, they protect the organs from toxins and improve digestive health.

Everyone has their own list of superfoods, but there are some which are considered superfoods by almost everyone. As new superfoods are

found, they get added to the list, so we are constantly updating our knowledge about what foods can do for you. I have included below my own list of superfoods:

Acai. Sourced from the Amazon, this purple berry contains a very high concentration of anti-oxidants helping to prevent heart disease and cancer. It contains flavonoids such as anthocyanins (the word comes from blue plant). They contain Omega 3, 6 and 9, vitamin C, B group vitamins and 19 different amino acids. Weight for weight, it's hard to find a food that packs more of a nutrient punch than this superfood.

Blueberries. Another blue fruit containing antioxidants that has been proven in laboratory research to slow the growth of some cancerous tumours. Blueberries with their anti-inflammatory action, help stop bacteria from attaching to gut and bladder walls and so help fight infections. They contain fibre, minerals and vitamins as well as a range of flavinoids such as anthocyanins.

Broccoli. This is packed with Vitamin C, folic acid and carotenoids, again working to reduce oxidative stress and inflammation. This is also one of the sulphur-containing vegetables that we need to make our most powerful anti-oxidant – glutathione. It is also said to help prevent a number of cancers, particularly cancers of the lung, colon, rectum and stomach. Broccoli is best eaten raw as even mild cooking can destroy nutrients. Chop some on top of a salad for a great crunchy health kick.

Goji berries. Said to contain more vitamin C by weight than oranges and more beta carotene than carrots these salty berries from China carry a range of vitamins and minerals including 18 essential amino acids. The fatty acids linoleic and alpha linoleic acids are present too, contributing to Omega 3 as well as the anti-oxidants.

Kale. This is another super nutritious member of the cruciferous family of green leafy vegetables. It's high in calcium and magnesium together,

so great for bones. It also has high levels of vitamin B6, vitamin A and vitamin C. Apart from its high anti-oxidant levels, it's full of flavonoids which benefit eye health and it reduces your risk of heart disease with folate and iron. Raw kale can be added to juices and salads.

Spirulina. Spirulina is an algae that contains rich vegetable protein and has all of the essential amino acids we need to make our own protein. Spirulina contains a wide range of minerals (including iron, potassium, magnesium sodium, phosphorus, calcium, etc.), a high volume of beta carotene, which protects cells. It is rich in healthy oils such as gamma-linolenic acid (GLA), ALA, EPA and DHA – great for our bodies and our brain. Further, Spirulina contains many phytonutrients which are useful for their anti-inflammatory and anti-aging properties. Add it to juices and smoothies to alkalise the body.

Quinoa and Chia. Both these grains have been used by ancient cultures to provide nutrients and energy. Quinoa is a complete protein with all the essential amino acids. It also contains vitamin B2, magnesium, iron and copper, and anti-oxidants. Chia seeds contain high levels of omega 3, calcium and potassium. They are great alternatives to wheat and can be added to salads and soups. Quinoa can also be made into porridge.

Cacao. Chocolate, long thought of as an aphrodisiac, contains over three hundred healthy chemicals. It's a great source of minerals such as magnesium and zinc, and is good for your brain hormones.

Unfortunately, chocolate is viewed by many people as a forbidden food. Why is this? Well it depends on what it's made into. Most chocolate bars don't contain much chocolate! They are around 50 percent sugar. The nut from the cacao tree is roasted and ground into cacao powder. Cacao butter is added to bind it together. Then, soy lecithin is added to stop these two from separating. Soy lecithin is an oily substance produced from mostly genetically modified soy beans. This is very cheap, as soy is a subsidized crop. Other preservatives and chemicals will be added

as flavourers and a strange characteristic called ‘mouth feel’, which refers to the texture of the chocolate when it melts in your mouth.

So how much cacao powder is there? Well when they have to label it 50 percent cacao or 70 percent, you know that regular chocolate is nowhere near that percentage. Imagine if you bought milk that said 50 percent milk! When cacao beans are roasted, all those great nutrients are destroyed by the heat, so what are you left with? A sugary, sticky mixture of sugar and chemicals with no nutritional value. Raw cacao has lots of great natural nutrients that will boost your libido. So why not go for the real thing?

CHOCOLATE – YOU SEXY THING

There are lots of reasons why chocolate or cacao improves our libido and love life, so it’s no surprise that we buy chocolate on Valentine’s Day. Here are some of the most important effects.

- Chocolate contains lots of tryptophan. This chemical is a pre-cursor of serotonin, our ‘happy hormone’. Serotonin gives us feelings of contentment, so the more tryptophan we have, the more serotonin we can make. When we feel depressed, we crave chocolate because of the tryptophan. This increases levels of endorphins and reduces stress.
- Phenylethelamine or PEA – the love drug. This works like an amphetamine. It increases blood sugar and blood pressure, plus gives you feelings of alertness to increase mood and decrease depression. So it makes you feel more alert and interested. We’re not sure how much reaches the brain, but it sure works on the rest of the body.
- Anandamide – resembles THC (tetrahydrocannabinol), a chem-

ical found in marijuana. This is actually the primary active chemical in cannabis. Both chocolate and cannabis activate the receptor that boosts dopamine and gives us a high. *Ananda* is a sanskrit word for bliss and delight, and provides the root of this word. Our natural levels of anandamide follow oestrogen levels, and peaks during ovulation. The chemical also seems to have a role in implantation of the embryo into the uterine wall. Now the interesting thing is that when we eat a high fat diet, we make more anandamide in our liver. So it gives us a natural high. Another good reason for getting plenty of good quality fat into our diet.

- Theobromine is a stimulant like caffeine, but weaker. It's commonly found in tea, and gives us mental and physical relaxation. In Greek it means 'Food of the Gods'. It acts like a heart stimulant, increases the pulse, opens up blood vessels and so lowers blood pressure. By opening up blood vessels in the pelvic area, it can increase blood flow to the sexual organs and make us feel more aware and aroused. It may also have health benefits in normalizing blood sugar. This bitter alkaloid is also found in tea, kola nut and guarana.
- Again, chocolate has lots of flavinoids and polyphenols, which are great antioxidants. Studies have indicated that these antioxidants can help reduce cardiovascular disease. A few squares of chocolate could reduce your risk of a heart attack by 50 percent, according to a Johns Hopkins researcher.
- Magnesium is involved in over three hundred body processes. In 100g of cacao, you get over 100 percent of your daily intake of magnesium. This is great for muscle cramps and high blood pressure.

So now that you know how good chocolate can be, you can have lots of chocolate guilt free. But it's got to be the right sort of chocolate- made

with raw cacao powder and with only healthy ingredients added. You can make your own – healthier – chocolate at home with this great recipe.

Recipe

HOMEMADE CHOCOLATE BAR

Ingredients:

- ¼ cup raw organic cacao powder
- ¼ cup organic coconut oil
- 5 mls peppermint essence
- 5 mls raw honey

Mix ingredients in plastic container and freeze for thirty minutes. Break into bite-size pieces.

Snack on ½ to one bar daily for a healthy, nutritious, guilt-free snack that cuts sugar cravings.

Options:

- **Chocolate Orange:** Try orange essence instead of peppermint
- **Chocolate Nut Sensation:** Add a small handful of crushed raw almonds, walnuts or cashews for a chocolate and nut sensation.
- **Chili Surprise:** Add chili oil instead of peppermint for a hot shot of chocolate.

This recipe is so easy you can make it anytime. I keep a constant supply of chocolate in the fridge and snack throughout the day. Now it melts pretty quickly when you take it out of the fridge, so it's perfect for smearing all over someone special too.

For more delicious chocolate recipes go to www.chocolateloversdetox.com or www.foodcoachinstitute.com.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The foods in this chapter build on the basic food stuffs to improve your health and boost your libido. Eating more fresh superfoods will balance your hormones and help your liver detox. Herbs and spices are an essential source of health-giving flavonoids, yet so many people shy away from them. If you want to learn more about herbs and spices and how they get heat up your sex life, get a copy of our recipe book, *Get Rooted! Herbs, Roots and Shoots to Spice up Your Sex Life* at www.getrootedherb-spices.com

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11 — COME ON BABY LIGHT MY FIRE

Inflame Your Passion not Your Body

In this chapter we'll look at how inflammation, acidity and oxidative stress contribute to a poorly functioning body and low libido.

ACID AND ALKALINE BALANCE

Body acidity is very common today. Our internal environment is made up of thousands of chemical reactions, constantly breaking down toxic waste products and building up new molecules, hormones, cells and tissues. Like any chemical reaction, there is an ideal environment in regard to temperature, pressure, hydration and pH (the level of acidity in the chemical soup which is our bodies). The perfect acidity level for most of those vital chemical reactions is 7.0.

When we cannot maintain the right balance of acidity/alkalinity, we are more susceptible to disease. The more acidic we become, the more it affects our immune system functions. There are many things that make our bodies acidic such as bad food, some medications and stress.

The concept of acid alkaline imbalance as the cause of disease is not new.

In 1933, a New York doctor named William Howard Hay published a ground-breaking book, *A New Health Era*, in which he maintained that much disease is caused by autotoxication (or “self-poisoning”) due to the accumulation of acid in the body:

More recently, in his book *Alkalize or Die*, Dr. Theodore A. Baroody says the same thing: “The countless names of illnesses do not really matter. What does matter is that they all come from the same root cause...too much tissue acid waste in the body!” (Theodore A. Baroody, N.D., D.C., Ph.D.)

WHAT DOES PH MEAN?

pH (potential of hydrogen) is a measure of the acidity or alkalinity of a solution. It is measured on a scale of 0 to 14 – the lower the pH, the more acidic the solution, and the higher the pH, the more alkaline the solution. When a solution is neither acid nor alkaline, it has a pH of 7, which is neutral.

The body has an acid-alkaline ratio, called the pH, which is a balance between positively charged ions (acid-forming) and negatively charged ions (alkaline-forming.) The body continually strives to balance pH so that it’s neutral at 7.0.

When we cannot maintain this balance, illness and disease are more likely. Everything unhealthy in our environment today tends to push the body towards more acidity. In this state, the chemical reactions that we rely on to produce energy don’t work rapidly enough and then toxic by-products build up. Cell function becomes ineffective and energy production slows down. That leads to an acid imbalance, which means we’re inclined to illness and disease. Our genetic makeup determines which illness we get in response to acidity.

Now we're not talking about stomach acid, but the general acidity levels of our body cells and the fluid that surrounds them. The acid in the stomach fulfills a very special function. It provides a hostile environment for any bacteria in our food that might make us sick. Very few bacteria can survive in this acidic gastric juice, which is why we so rarely get gastroenteritis.

The body cells acid level is something very different. You can test your body for general acidity by testing your urine or saliva with test strips. If your urinary pH varies between 6.0 to 6.5 in the morning and between 6.5 and 7.0 in the evening, your body is functioning within a healthy range. Your body detoxifies during the night, so it tends to be more acidic in the morning when you first wake up. Then if you eat healthily, it becomes more alkaline as the day goes on.

If your saliva stays between 6.5 and 7.5 all day, your body is functioning within a healthy range. The best time to test your pH is about one hour before a meal or two hours after a meal. Test your pH two days a week.

If acid levels are too high, your body will either store the acid in body tissues or borrow minerals such as calcium, magnesium, sodium or potassium to neutralize acidity. These are called the "acid buffers" because they are used by the body to control the acidity level. These acid buffers finally end up in the urine and are lost to the body. If your urine and saliva readings are consistently acidic, then you need to work on your diet to restore your body to its more alkaline state, to keep your body from becoming depleted in these minerals. Some people need to work harder than others to maintain a good pH level of 7, and obviously genes play a big role in this.

Your body is able to assimilate minerals and nutrients properly only when its pH is balanced. It is therefore possible for you to be taking healthy nutrients and yet be unable to absorb or use them to your full advantage. At the same time, an acidic environment will tend to use up

important minerals like calcium and magnesium, which is so essential for good bones. It's easy to see how calcium and magnesium leaching out of bones due to acidity will result in osteoporosis.

WHAT CAUSES ME TO BE ACIDIC?

Our diet today is one of the main reasons our bodies are so acidic. Acid-forming foods like meat, eggs and dairy make up too much of our intake, and our diets are far too low in alkaline-producing foods like fresh vegetables. Additionally, we eat acid-producing processed foods like white flour and sugar and drink acid-producing beverages like coffee and soft drinks. Drugs and chemicals such as artificial sweeteners, preservatives, etc. all tend to make us more acidic. Smoking and alcohol are also acid forming, and stress is a huge promoter of acidity. Get rid of the stress or take action to reduce stress, and you will find it much easier to achieve good alkaline levels.

Mild acidosis can cause such problems as:

- Cardiovascular damage, including the constriction of blood vessels and the reduction of oxygen
- Weight gain, obesity and diabetes
- Bladder and kidney conditions, including kidney stones
- Immune deficiency
- Acceleration of free radical damage
- Premature aging
- Osteoporosis – weak, brittle bones, hip fractures and bone spurs
- Joint pain, aching muscles and lactic acid build up
- Low energy and chronic fatigue
- Cystitis or burning urine

A recent seven-year study conducted at the University of California, San Francisco on nine thousand women showed that those who have chronic acidosis are at greater risk for bone loss than those who have normal pH levels. The scientists who carried out this experiment believed that many of the hip fractures prevalent among middle-aged women are connected to high acidity, caused by a diet rich in animal foods and low in vegetables. Remember, this is because the body borrows calcium from the bones in order to balance pH.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR BODY MORE ALKALINE

Eat more fruit and vegetables. Reduce your meat and dairy intake. Reduce alcohol and stress. Daily juicing will also help, especially with green juices in the morning. A glass of lemon juice in warm water or apple cider vinegar also helps. Although these foods taste acidic, they act on your body to push its biochemistry toward alkaline which is great for our bodies healthy functioning. If all this fails then there are plenty of alkalising powders available in the market which can assist you. They're mostly made from green algae such as spirulina, chlorella or green leafy plants such as kale, barley greens etc.

GUT HEALTH

Over 90 percent of the cells in our body are bacteria but we usually live in balance with them. They're everywhere – on our skin, in our mouths and noses. The vast majority cause us no problem at all, but occasionally we can get a healthy bacterium which takes over and causes problems like a skin infection, or we can have a lack of healthy bacteria which allows bad bacteria to grow and multiply. Most of the bacteria live in our gut, so it's most important to have them in good balance. Antibiotics,

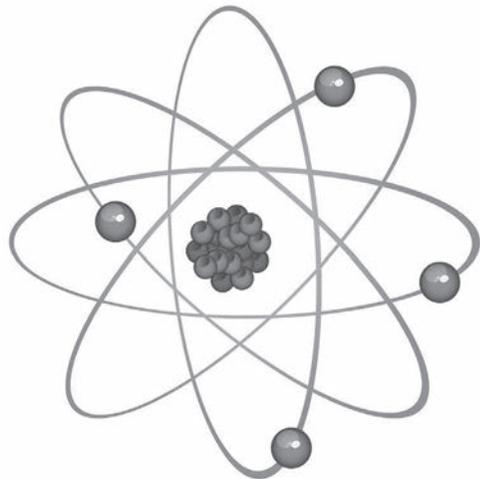
alcohol and other chemicals can kill healthy bacteria, leaving room for the bad types to multiply and take over. This then leads to an imbalance.

Taking probiotics can help us maintain sufficient numbers of the good bacteria, like *lacto-bacillus*, and keep the bad ones down. Yogurt is a great way to get those good bacteria. You can easily make your own yogurt at home, full of lactobacillus and other strains. Fermented foods such as sauerkraut also contain many healthy bacterial strains and they are making a come-back. This is a more natural approach than taking supplements all the time. Some commercial probiotic foods such as yogurt can contain a lot of sugar or artificial sweeteners, so why not make your own and save some money too? Starters for home-made yogurt can be found in health food shops, and there are many easy recipes for fermented foods online.

OXIDATIVE STRESS

How electrons work

Atoms are small particles which every chemical in our body is made up of. They are the basic building block of all matter. Inside the atom there are 3 main types of particle – protons, neutrons and electrons. Neutrons have no charge, protons have positive charge and electrons have negative charge. Protons and neutrons sit together in the centre of the atom or nucleus while



electrons spin around the outside. Electrons are tiny and make up about 1% of the atom. Some molecules get quite large with many protons, neutrons and electrons. In this case the electrons orbit around the nucleus in rings. The outer ring contains 2 electrons while the inner rings contain 8 each. The gravitational pull on these outer electrons is less and they can be knocked off the atom fairly easily.

To keep balance and equilibrium, each atom is balanced with an equal number of positive and negative particles. The number of particles an atom has determines which element it is e.g. hydrogen has one proton and 1 electron but no neutrons. Oxygen has 8 protons and 8 electrons but also has 8 neutrons.

When different atoms come together to form a molecule like oxygen and hydrogen coming together to form water, they may lose or exchange electrons so that the molecule is balanced with positive and negative charge.

Electrons moving between molecules is how electricity works. Some materials (like copper which is used for electrical wires) give up electrons easily so they flow around freely from molecule to molecule to conduct electricity, others hang tightly onto their electrons and so are not good conductors of electricity like wood and glass.

Oxidation

Our bodies are continually in contact with oxygen which is needed to produce fuel. Although we need oxygen to produce energy, it's quite a toxic chemical in high doses. Oxygen reacts with lots of other chemicals and changes them – a process known as oxidation. We see this all the time in nature, for example fat going off, a car rusting, an apple going brown.

At the same time as the oxygen is mixing with our body cells, electrons can be knocked off both it and other chemicals to create very unstable molecules which are very toxic to the body. These unstable molecules are called free radicals. Oxygen molecules which have lost electrons can be the most damaging to our bodies, particularly our DNA and our cells in general. Our cells thus become oxidized. For example, oxidised cholesterol sticks to lining of arteries and begins the process of inflammation. This is the start of endothelial dysfunction, the process where the inside of our arteries starts to get inflamed and damaged. There's no doubt that erectile dysfunction, or ED as we previously called it is related to endothelial dysfunction. When these molecules that are missing electrons or have extra electrons start to build up in the body, it's called oxidative stress.

Oxidative Stress

Oxidative stress occurs when there is an imbalance between production of toxic chemicals and their breakdown. During normal body cycles, oxidation occurs – chemicals receive extra electrons or lose electrons as part of our normal body biochemistry. These oxidised molecules, like hydrogen peroxide, are very toxic, and need to be quickly broken down into the next chemical in the cycle. An example of this is rusting, which is where exposed metal becomes oxidised and changes form. Apples and avocados turning brown when exposed to air is another example of oxidation.

Oxidation is normal, but sometimes the production of these chemicals with odd numbers of electrons overwhelms our ability to break them down. The harmful chemicals then build up and cause cell death, as well as activating genes that go on to produce inflammation. These can cause major cell damage, and deactivate proteins and enzymes by causing breaks in the DNA, and by damaging the lipids or oils in the cell membrane.

In normal situations, the toxic chemicals are constantly produced and broken down, and this is regulated by efficient antioxidants (vitamins, proteins and enzymes) to prevent excessive cell damage.

Antioxidants are chemicals that give up electrons very easily and are still very stable. They therefore neutralise the unstable chemicals and quench the oxidative stress. Vitamins C, A and E are strong antioxidants. The body makes its own antioxidants as well, the strongest being glutathione (GSH). This is a sulphur-based chemical, so we need its building blocks in the sulphur or cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli, brussel sprouts and cabbage for the body to produce it. Any vegetable that smells bad when cooking holds those sulphur molecules; as they break down, they release that smell. But it's actually better to eat them raw and miss out on the horrible cooking smell and get access to all the nutrients they have to offer.

Modern life however, confronts us with pollution, consumption of alcohol and medications, unbalanced physical activities such as extreme sport, smoking and antioxidant deficient diets, all of which lead to a weakening of our antioxidant defenses. Our antioxidant defense system also weakens with aging.

So if your diet is low on antioxidants, you are more likely to get a build-up of oxidative stress and inflammation. This results in:

- Early aging
- Inflammatory diseases such as heart disease, arthritis and cancer.

Low levels of antioxidants are associated with all these diseases. This is why we need to maintain good levels of antioxidants either by food or by supplementation. Getting all your nutrients from whole food is of course preferred; however some people do require extra supplements to counteract their genetics even when they eat a healthy diet. You know

some families have a lot of members suffering from various chronic diseases and also possibly cancer. Obviously the combination of genes in that family means they have difficulty neutralizing oxidative stress. So increase the antioxidants in your body by eating lots of fruit and veggies to prevent build-up of oxidative stress.

ANTI-OXIDANTS

The most common anti-oxidant we have is vitamin C. The reason that it is so successful as an anti-oxidant is its ability to give up electrons, again and again, to help stabilize these free radicals. Oxidative stress leading to inflammation is like a fire raging out of control. Our own immune system sends chemicals and fighting cells to the site of inflammation to fight it. However these chemicals can add fuel to the fire, promoting more inflammation. (Real fire needs oxygen and fuel to build up and get out of control too). Antioxidants can help put out the fire and allow healing to take place.

INFLAMMATION

Inflammation is the body's first defence against infection, but when it goes awry, it can lead to heart attacks, cancer, Alzheimer's, arthritis and a host of other diseases.

We always have *some* inflammation going on in our bodies, and that's a good thing – it helps us fight infections. When we come across a foreign bacteria or virus, it starts a cascade of pro-inflammatory chemicals being formed, to fight the infection by making the environment too hot for the bacteria to survive. Literally too hot – a temperature is our body's

natural defence to a bacteria or virus. They like a nice, even temperature to exist and multiply. The hot environment of a fever means they can't produce millions of replicas, and eventually they give up and die off. Other chemicals formed attack the foreign invaders in other ways, to interfere with their normal functioning. It's a great system. However, when it gets out of balance, we get a build-up of these inflammatory chemicals and then signs of inflammation. These include:

- Redness and Swelling
- Pain and fever
- Aches and discomfort

So it's a reaction by our immune system which helps heal up injuries and infections. At times it can get out of control and start over-reacting to chemicals and foods. These over-reactions then cause allergies. The immune system when it gets really heated up, can react with the body tissues itself. This results in auto-immune diseases and inflammatory diseases like arthritis, thyroid problems and inflammatory bowel disorders where the immune system starts to cause damage to normal body structures and tissues.

We all experience acute inflammation whenever we injure ourselves like a twisted ankle and when we get sore throats and colds. We get swelling in the area and pain. This is a normal function and indicates that specialised cells are flooding the area to start the healing process.

Chronic inflammation is a different disease and is responsible for many of our chronic diseases such as obesity, arthritis, heart disease, Alzheimer's and cancer. Levels of inflammation can be measured in the body by blood tests such as C-reactive protein (CRP), cholesterol and LDL levels.

DISCO INFERNO – LIBIDO AND INFLAMMATION

Obviously some people need to work harder at keeping oxidative stress under control than others. But a healthy nutritious diet can go a long way to preventing these illnesses and boosting your libido as well. If your body is wracked with inflammation and oxidative stress, it's going to affect your sex hormones, your brain chemicals and hormones and your energy levels. Production of hormones and those love chemicals will reduce and the body's normal chemical reactions won't be very efficient. Not a great recipe for an amazing sex-life.

FOODS THAT ARE INFLAMMATORY

Wheat, dairy, sugar, alcohol, caffeine, red meat and processed foods are all inflammatory. No surprises there then.

CHILL WITH ANTI-INFLAMMATORY FOODS

Fats and Oils. Remember Omega-3 fatty acids are found in cold-water oily fish, flax seed oil and walnuts. Anti-inflammatory Omega-6s are found in olive oil, avocado and coconut oil. Eating plenty of these healthy oils will help calm inflammation.

Fruits and Vegetables. Whole fruits, berries and vegetables are rich in vitamins, minerals, fibre, antioxidants and phytochemicals. A variety of greens and different-coloured fruits and vegetables will contain many anti-inflammatory chemicals, which help quench the oxidative stress.

By reducing the inflammatory foods and increasing the anti-inflammatory foods, we can quite easily reduce the total amount of inflammation in the body. At the same time, we are alkalising the body and providing plenty of antioxidants to quench oxidative stress. In this way, a healthy diet contributes to healthy body processes, and reduces chronic diseases, obesity and early aging. All factors that contribute to a low libido.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Lots of us are suffering the ill effects of inflammation, oxidative stress and acidity. Don't let this be you. By taking control of your diet and eating healthy foods, you'll give your body the best chance of working healthily and resisting disease and aging. So you're fighting fit and ready for action! Without further ado, let's move onto the last chapter which shows you how to put a healthy diet together.

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12

YOU'RE THE FIRST, THE LAST, MY EVERYTHING

Sex life - Formula One

Now you know everything you need to put together a healthy way of eating that will boost your libido, boost your brain health and get you revving that engine: supercharge your life with superfoods that make your body work better, give you energy and lift your spirits. Above all, think about what you put in your mouth. Will this help you or make you sick? What's in it, where did it come from? How long ago?

Here's some handy ways to check how healthy your diet is:

HOW DOES YOUR DIET STACK UP?

This questionnaire has only ten questions, so should take thirty seconds to complete. You should be aiming for a score of 3+.

HEALTHY DIET QUESTIONNAIRE**POINTS**

		Yes
1	Do you eat enough daily protein ?	1
2	Do you eat enough fruit – two pieces per day?	1
3	Do you eat too much fruit?	0
4	Do you eat enough vegetables – five Portions?	1
5	Do you eat green vegetables every day?	1
6	Do you eat processed foods every day?	-1
7	Do you eat fast food more than once per week?	-1
8	Do you eat candy or lollies more than once per week?	-1
9	Do you drink sodas or fizzy drinks more than once per week?	-1
10	Do you drink water throughout the day, more than three litres?	1
	Total score	

Score:	5	Excellent diet
	3 or more	Reasonable diet
	0	Poor diet
	Less than 0	Very poor diet

THE ULTIMATE CHILL PILL - THE LOW STRESS DIET

To help you move to a much more rewarding diet, I've included this eating plan so you can put it all together easily and quickly. I would also recommend recipes from our accompanying cook book- *Get Rooted! Herbs, Roots and Shoots to Spice Up Your Sex Life.*

THE LOW STRESS DIET

Protein

- At least 50 -100g of good quality protein per day depending on your size and activity. This can be from 300g of lean chicken, fish or eggs – must be organic free range.
- Lean red meat once or twice per week.
- At least half should be vegetarian sources such as beans, legumes, nuts and seeds (You will need to eat more of these foods as the protein is less concentrated in some vegetarian sources. For example, 25g of protein can be got from 250g of beans.)

Oils, fats

- Reduce use of animal fats from unhealthy sources. Buy only organic free-range meat.
- Grill rather than fry
- Marinate meat if barbecuing
- Stop margarine use – switch to a small amount of organic butter or olive oil, or use avocado as a spread
- Use coconut oil/olive oil for cooking
- Eat avocados
- Make your own salad dressings from olive oil (cold pressed virgin, organic), flaxseed, walnut or macadamia nut oil
- Supplement essential fatty acids – flaxseed or krill

Vegetables

- Eat five handfuls per day, or as much as possible
- Buy organic
- Eat raw as much as possible
- Eat a wide range of veggies, including different colours, e.g. mushrooms, cauliflower, peppers, tomato, leeks, garlic, carrots ... as many different food groups as possible
- Green leafy veggies – eat a bowl every day.
- Choose from broccoli, cabbage, spinach, bok choy, sprouts. Modern lettuce can be grown on water and be low in nutrients Buy organic lettuce grown in soil. Stick to cos rather than iceberg which is mostly water.
- Potato, pumpkin, sweet potato are sources of high carbohydrate, so control intake unless you have a high exercise level

Fruit

- Have two pieces fruit per day
- Sample a good variety of fruits – berries, citrus, banana, stone fruit
- Buy only when in season
- Try to buy local ripe fruit at farmers markets; buy organic
- Eat little fruit at breakfast if trying to lose weight, a high protein and oil breakfast keeps you full for longer
- Only buy preservative-free dried fruit

Nuts, seeds

- Good source protein, vitamins – almonds, walnuts, Brazil nuts, flaxseeds, pumpkin seeds
- Eat raw, unsalted, organic
- Watch amount in weight loss – six nuts only for a snack

Carbohydrate

- Brown rice, pumpkin, sweet potato
- No sugar, no artificial sweeteners apart from raw bush honey
- Intake should match energy output, i.e. limit carbs if not exercising

Dairy

- Cows cheese and milk can be inflammatory (don't forget milk in coffee, tea)
- Reduce significantly or eliminate. Substitute with almond or oat milk, sheep or goat milk and cheese
- Substitute vegetarian sources of calcium – carrot juice, green leafy veggies (combines calcium with magnesium – better for bones)
- Plain yogurt with fresh fruit
- Coconut ice cream with fresh fruit
- Raw chocolate desserts

Wheat

- Highly inflammatory, many people are intolerant
- Eliminate or reduce in diet
- Eat only preservative-free bread (especially no 282), or gluten-free
- Try rye bread – make sure wheat free
- Rye crackers, plain rice crackers OK in small amounts
- Avoid wheat cereals, have quinoa porridge or eggs for breakfast
- It's too easy to have wheat and dairy at every meal, e.g., cereal and milk for breakfast, cappuccino and muffin, cheese sandwich at lunch, pasta at dinner, yogurt dessert
- Avoid cakes, biscuits, sandwiches, ice cream, sweets

Processed foods

- Avoid fizzy drinks, cordials, diet drinks- drink water only
- Avoid processed foods, meats, sauces, TV dinners, prepared meals
- Limit coffee and tea. Try fruit tea, green tea or herbal teas. Try having only 1 cup of coffee per day.

Fast food

- Avoid! High in fat, salt, sugar, preservatives, flavourings and colours
- Freshly cooked Thai OK, also sushi, Japanese, Vietnamese
- Watch Indian take-away – high in fat and cream. Chinese may have MSG

Eating out

- Fish and veggies good
- Steak or lamb and veggies OK
- Vegetarian options/vegan, raw options if available – try something new
- Chicken or avocado salad good for lunch, vegetarian salads
- Gluten-free cookie or pastry, only as a special treat

Alcohol

- Reduce to average 1 unit per day
- Try purest distilled, e.g. good quality vodka or gin
- Preservative-free organic wine, red wine
- Dilute wine with soda
- Make sangria with red wine, fruit, soda

Typical Healthy Eating Plan

Breakfast

- Egg poached, scrambled or boiled with rye toast, and spinach and salmon **or**
- Quinoa porridge **or**
- Green smoothie, coffee or tea
- Juiced lemon in warm water

Morning tea

- Handful of mixed raw organic nuts, green tea, fruit tea or herbal tea

Lunch

- Fresh veggie juice with ginger and spirulina, chicken salad with avocado, spinach, broccoli, celery, carrot etc olive oil, and apple cider vinegar dressing, fruit tea. Or vegetarian dish such as salad, nut loaf, moussaka

Snack

- Handful of nuts or piece of fruit, green tea, water

Dinner

- Grilled fish, green leafy salad, plus a variety of veggies raw or lightly steamed, one small potato or small piece pumpkin or sweet potato
- Alternate with lean red meat or chicken, only freshly cooked sauce with meat – no packets, jars or tins
- Small glass red wine or vodka and fresh orange juice
- Piece of fruit or two squares of dark, raw, organic chocolate
- Camomile tea before bed

Supplements

- Krill oil or flax seed, coconut oil
- Multivitamin with minerals, B complex

SHOPPING

Plan to shop at farmers markets as much as you can – buy fresh, local and in season. You never know, you might meet someone just like you at the market – it's a chance to make new friends and maybe even find a date.

But will it cost more? Well, it might, but it will save you a whole load of money later on, when you could be collecting pills and invoices from doctors.

Only go to the supermarket for things you can't get from local farmers. There are plenty of beef, lamb, chicken and pig farmers making a quality organic product which provides good nutrients, like protein and minerals, and tastes great. Source out your local ones and support them – without you they'll go out of business. Use your consumer power, because yes we have more power than we realise. If we all stopped buying bread tomorrow, the supermarkets and bakeries would sit up and take notice. *We can* change things by our buying habits.

COOKING

Everyone says that they don't have time to cook. But you know, making a simple meal doesn't have to take too much time. Throw a good quality lamb steak on the BBQ, and throw a few fresh veggies into a bowl. Drizzle over a dressing and voila! Your dinner is served. Wine for two and off you go. If you eat raw as much as possible, you remove that problem of cooking time and you get far more nutrients.

Get help, too. Cooking with your partner can be very sexy – just think of all the things you can do with some raw fruit and veggies. And eat in

different places. How about a late night picnic at a romantic lookout? Dinner on the roof? That will do nicely.

And if you have kids, get them cooking too. Give yourself a night off so you can relax with your partner. There is no law that says you have to do all the cooking. By teaching the kids, you give them skills they'll need in the future, they'll get more self-esteem, and you'll all take a share in the running of the household. We pile more work on ourselves by thinking that we have to do everything for our families while they veg out in front of the screen.

DETOX

If you want to try a great detox and weight loss program, go to our Chocolate Lovers Detox at www.chocolateloversdetox.com This is a 30 day healthy detox program that you'll just love. It's a gentle detox aimed at helping you make permanent changes to what you eat and how you cook.

TAKE YOUR TIME

Making these sort of changes to our lifestyle and diet takes time - to get to know new foods, and time to incorporate them regularly into our diet. Most people who eat healthily have been on a personal journey to health. It didn't happen overnight. So take your time, make only 1 change at a time, so you don't get overwhelmed and enjoy learning new recipes and ways of preparing food.

RELAX

Finally, make sure you're relaxed, well rested and indulge in lots of de-stressing activities.

We keep coming back to the same principle where our bodies are concerned, and that's balance – balancing foods we like with foods that help our bodies work well, balancing hormones, balancing inflammation and acidity. Sure, you can go to a party and drink and eat too much, but if you balance it with a healthy routine afterwards, you can still enjoy yourself *and* enjoy good health and a great sex life. Having fun along the way is what it's all about, and access to a great sex life and a healthy libido is an unalienable right of being human.

So have fun and enjoy life....

Remember, for a detailed eating plan that's going to make you feel happy healthy and sexy go to www.chocolateloversdetox.com.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Prof. Dr. Shirley Mcilvenny



Prof. Dr. Shirley Mcilvenny is a GP/Family Doctor who specialises in Nutritional Medicine. She believes that the best way to a healthy, functioning body is through great eating – it's the only way we get nutrients from nature. *'So many diseases could be prevented by getting the right nutrients, that this is the health imperative of the future. We cannot continue to put bad food in our mouths and hope that medication will fix the problem – apart from our own health, our health services are groaning under the strain of too much ill-health, stress and dissatisfaction.'* Although born and trained in Northern Ireland, UK, Dr. Shirley has worked around the world. She was Head of the Department of Family Medicine at Sultan Qaboos University, Oman and Professor of Education at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Bond University, Queensland, Australia. While working with patients in third world and developing countries, she developed an interest in traditional remedies and healthy alternatives to drugs and surgery. She currently lives in Australia with her family. Her mission is to show as many people as possible that a healthy diet can be fun, as well as quick and easy, and not cost the earth.

How to use this book

Readers might like to read this book from the beginning to get an idea of the basics of how libido works before delving into the specific problems. That way the whole topic makes sense, and it's easy to see how a problem arises and how logical the solution is. However, there's also no real issue with starting with your own libido issue and then reading around it. Take the time to read Part 2. Make gradual changes to your diet. Trying to change the habits of a lifetime overnight is often difficult and stressful, and can cause withdrawal symptoms. Sometimes people need to reduce their medication quite quickly when they change their diet, so if you are on medication, check in with your doctor regularly to monitor your progress. In fact, if you have any health issues, check with your doctor first to make sure you're fit to follow any of the changes.

Aim to make one change per week. That way you can make great progress over a period of six months, and take time to make changes that will be permanent and life changing. This book is not aimed at a quick fix, but healthy changes that will enhance your life for many years to come. At the same time, you can influence family and friends around you. But beware: once you start on the road to health, you become hooked. I know when I first started hearing about the issues around food, I felt the scales had been lifted from my eyes. So many things made sense. But rather than trying to change everyone around you, just cook healthy meals and see what reaction you get. They'll compliment you on the great flavour of your food and how easy it is to make. Then you can secretly smile, knowing that you've already made a difference to their health.

When people comment on how great your skin looks, or how fresh you look, or how active you've become, you can bet they'll ask you how you

did it. That's your chance to talk about how great you feel and how wonderful your libido is. It's a great journey you've begun, and you'll make many new friends along the way. Everyone has the right to a great sex life, so grab your opportunity and enjoy the benefits of feeding your body the right fuel. And above all...

Have fun!

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr Shirley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Shirley

Professor Dr Shirley Mcilvenny
MD, MBBCh, FRCGP (UK), FRACGP

Do you suffer from low libido? Do you struggle to maintain interest in your sex life? Or worse – does your partner complain about not getting enough or are you fed up with your partner’s lack of interest and attention?

Well, this is the book for you. Dr Shirley’s new book, *Eat Fat to Feel Sexy*, dispels all the myths about healthy eating and gets down to the nitty gritty - what foods help your hormones and what nutrients you need to boost your libido sky high.

If you could do something about your libido, using healthy natural foods wouldn’t you give it a fair go? In that case you need this book to help guide you through all the mis-information and confusion. You need to take action and do something about it yourself and this guide along with Dr Shirley’s recipe book ‘Get rooted – Herbs, roots and shoots to spice up your sex life’ will support you all the way. Don’t delay – your new libido is waiting. Get started today!

Professor, Dr. Shirley Mcilvenny, MBBCh, MD, FRCGP(UK), FRACGP

is a Family doctor and GP. She has nearly 30 years’ experience dealing with nutritional therapies for common diseases. Her passion is helping people heal or prevent illness by following a fun, clean eating plan.

Her message: *You are what you eat; Eat the best to be your best.*

www.eatfatfeelsexy.com

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