

Creating a Nutritional Foundation for Life and Work

TRANSCRIPT

So welcome to creating a Nutritional Foundation for Life and Work. For those of you who don't know, I'm Louise Westra, and I'm the creator of Your Health and Well-Being Hub. So a couple of things I just want you to know is all the content in this presentation is evidence based. So I do all the boring part of reading through the scientific research, and then hopefully, I'm presenting that to you in a way that's really accessible and practical for your day to day life. So let me share my screen and we'll start going through the important bits.

0:56

Okay. So creating a nutritional foundation for life and work, the first thing I like to ask is, you know, why? Why do we actually need to do that? What is the point of creating a nutritional foundation? And the first thing I love to share with people is that there are 37,000 billion things going on in the body. That's not every day, it is not every hour, that's actually every second, so 37 to the power of 21 things going on every single second. And all of those are fueled largely by the nutrients that we get from our food. So what we put into our bodies, food wise, really, really matters, it's going to determine how well those 37,000 billion biological processes are running. So if we give our bodies quality food, and if we break that food down, well, then we've got a better chance of those 37,000 billion things running well or even optimally. But like with a car, if we put in the wrong fuel for our engine, if we don't change the oil once in a while, then we may start backfiring. And that's usually not a particularly comfortable experience in our bodies. So if you want to wake up and feel refreshed if you want to have great energy levels all day, every day, if you want to avoid the common ailments, and infections that people tend to take for granted. If you want to perform at your best whether you're at your work or you know in in your wider life, then having a bit of a plan is a really great place to start. So talking about plan, we're going to go through a seven step guide to healthy eating to help you ensure that you're confident in your choices to have that energy to build a robust immune system to be hormonal || balanced and to avoid some of the short term and longer term health issues that come with you know, eating too much crap.

3:30

As with any type of, you know, health initiative, if you're unsure whether or not you should be following those steps, then please do check with your own personal doctor or health practitioner.

So here's a quick overview of the seven steps we're going to go through we're going to look at eating your veggies because that's an area that people sometimes find more difficult than than eating fruit, we're going to have a look at healthy fats, fats tend to have a little bit of a bad reputation, but all fats are not equal. We're going to look at hydration, we're going to look at you know, making it easy to cook homemade meals and being conscious around our choices. We'll look at introducing a non meat day I'm not talking about you going vegan or even vegetarian. But one of the common things that happens in Western society as people tend to over eat meat, we are going to have a look at breakfast and lunch and reinventing those a little bit. And then lastly, we're going to look at how to avoid hidden ingredients. So

eating your veges and you know your fruit too. We all know that vegetables are good for us. But how do we ensure that we eat enough the five servings a day that is recommended by a government is arguably not enough in the Blue Zones of the world where there are more people not only living longer, but also having an increased health span. So they are staying well and functional and independent members of society for longer. The people in those areas of the world are eating on a consistent basis more than 10 servings of fruit and vegetables every single day.

5:22

So, you know, that does include fruit. So that might mean six to seven servings of vegetables a day. For those of you who aren't sure a serving of veggies is five to six broccoli florets, it's 12 to 14, sugarsnap mange tout peas.

5:42

We can disguise vegetables in dishes if we're if we're not a fan. But we also want or I want to encourage you to not write vegetables off that you've historically not liked. So take cauliflower, for instance, many of us growing up in the 70s, perhaps you know, in the 60s even were presented cauliflower that was overcooked, covered in white sores, and was frankly disgusting. But if we roast that cauliflower, if we use it in a variety of other ways, we might find that we can learn to hate it less, or to even enjoy it as part of a meal.

6:30

I also want you to think about eating the rainbow. If you consider the different colours of the spectrum, and which ones you're already eating plenty of and which colours you might not be including in your diet, that can be a way to plan your meals. So if you look in the hub, for those of you that have already been in there, you will have seen that each month, the three recipes and the snack is built around one of those colours, so that you will have a repertoire of recipes that allow you to really start ensuring that you are eating the red eating the orange eating yellow, eating the green eating the purple and so on. And, and this is the thing about the colours is they indicate a richness of different naturally occurring phytonutrients. So if you take a nutrient called beta carotene, that is converted to vitamin A in the body, what you need to know about that is that vitamin A ensures that the linings of our of our body, our digestive system, our respiratory system are strong and robust. And the the green vegetables, for instance, are rich in iron. Of course, women need iron, they are more of risk of iron deficiency than men because they have menstrual cycles for much of their life. But vegans are also vulnerable to deficiencies.

8:01

And, and so you know, having that wide variety is really, really important. The way that we store vegetables is also important because the longer we store them for the less nutritional density that they have. As soon as a vegetable is pulled out of the ground, as soon as a fruit is picked from the tree, then that nutrient level starts to drop. So wherever possible, we want homegrown or at least seasonal food. We want to find a local source if we can, we want to eat the batch and the fruit coming into the house as quickly as possible because often they've been stored for us for a period of time anyway, we want to, you know, for convenience, look at other options. So frozen vegetables tend to be the best choice if we're not getting fresh, because usually they're snap frozen within hours of being picked and they will last for up to 12 months in the freezer. Most importantly, when it comes to, you know, starting your adventure or

reorganising an adventure with vegetables is important to remain curious and stay open to the possibilities rather than just having this blanket approach of No, I don't like this. I don't like that because you may find that you can tolerate small amounts in different recipes. And again, when you look in the hub, you know, last month was red. If you're not a big fan of red peppers, which was the featured vegetable, then look at reducing the amount but start putting in small amounts of things that historically you haven't eaten before to widen your nutrient intake.

9:45

So eating healthy fats, as I mentioned, fat tends to have a bad reputation through no fault of its own. But the right ones are absolutely essential as a source of energy as a nutrient for our nervous system as a source of our SAP fat soluble vitamins vitamins A, vitamin D and vitamin E. Good four sources are oily fish that can be eaten one to two times a week these days is the recommendation to that's salmon, macro herring, sardines, treat smoked salmon as a treat, because the chemicals produced in in you know as part of the farming process aren't really helpful to the bodies function. And so you don't want to ingest them too frequently, however much you love that food. Avocado is another great source of unsaturated fats as our nuts, but avoid roasted nuts. As a general rule, you can have them as a treat. You have them as a treat, but not as a snack.

10:59

Because when we heat when we heat nuts, and we roast them that tends to change the fats and can make them rancid and of course, again, keep salty ones as a treat. When it comes to cholesterol, this is often an area where people worry about you know, taking in too much fat 80% of our cholesterol in our body is made by our liver has very little to do with dietary cholesterol in most ways.

11:28

And what's more important is that rancidity of the fats, so when we consider using oils in cooking, don't cook with extra virgin olive oil should only be used in salad dressings. And in you know, cold dishes that haven't been heated. oils that are better to cook with include rapeseed sunflower, and peanut, they're more stable up to about 230 degrees C. But be careful not to overheat. You can always throw in a splash of water just to cool things down. You don't want to bring your oils up to that smoking point because again, they become rancid and that's not helpful for the body.

12:10

Staying hydrated. Number three. Why do we even need to hydrate? Well, firstly, every system of our body needs fluids. And, you know, hydration our hydration levels influences things like our temperature regulation, the movement of hormones and nutrients around the body and our ability to eliminate through our large intestine.

Also, we lose fluids in a variety of ways on a day to day basis through breathing through sweating, through urination through defecation. And as a rough guide, we want to ingest between one and a half to two litres of fluid or water a day. So that includes water we drink, we will get some fluid from raw particularly raw fruit and vegetables. We can use fresh fruit and vegetable juices and herbal teas. There's a little bit of a debate around the whole we'll do coffee and tea count.

13:15

Yes and No, they do count but at the same time, tea in particular is very drying because of the tannin in it. So in for some people, you know the drying effect, which can make it harder for us to then hydrate over the long term. So don't overdo tea and coffee is my advice. If you don't like the flavour of your water, I hear that quite a lot. Chlorine doesn't smell great. So if you can put water into a jug and allow some of that chlorine to off gas, or if you can get a water filter that makes the water more palatable that will usually encourage you to drink more.

13:57

You could also use a good quality cardio to encourage yourself to drink not all the time, but you know now and again, dilute real fruit juices, not fruit drinks, and use things like cucumber slices, fresh ginger slices, lime, mint, and various Herbes from the garden to make things more interesting. If you are somebody who has, you know, dental issues if you know that your denting tends to break down more quickly than other people's then you know you want to keep fruit at a minimum in water because that that can you know, that can be an issue for some people.

14:38

Number four by unconsciously being conscious and cooking homemade meals. So when we're eating and I know some of you are eating today because of the timing. We ideally want to avoid doing other things. We certainly want to avoid TV, screens and devices as a general rule and so when we're at home if we can avoid having phones at the table, if we can consider giving thanks to have to be a grace in a religious sense, but if we can have a moment where we extend our gratitude practice to the food that is on our table, if we can actively smell our food before eating, that helps the digestive system to be primed for eating, and if we can chew, particularly if we are on the hop, so like today, eating while watching the session.

15:36

You know, chewing helps the digestive system to realise what is happening because it gives the body a little bit of time to get the message from the mouth. And most food most foods will need to be chewed upwards of 30 to 40 mouthfuls of 40 times for each mouthful. The food going into our stomach really should be as close to a liquid as possible for the gut to then do its job well and ensure that the nutrition from that food is going out into our system could also take small amount falls, you know, cut your food a little bit smaller and and don't pick up the knife and fork until everything has been swallowed.

16:22

So that's the being conscious aspect. When it comes to serving sizes, a lot of people are confused about this kind of thing. So I wanted to give you some ballpark figures. And you know, I don't want to necessarily encourage you to weigh your food because that can be a bit boring. But if you can visualise some of those serving sizes that can be really, really helpful. So a serving of potatoes is the size of your computer mouse. a serving of lean meats is a deck of cards. a serving of pasta, or rice is the size of a tennis ball. Cheese is a matchbox and crisps is a mug.

17:08

And one of the things that's happened over the years is that our portion sizes have increased upwards of 20% since certainly since the last century, so a standard dinner plate is now 28 centimetres, when in the 1950s it was between 22 and 25 centimetres depending on where you get the figures. Ready meals have also ballooned in size over the last 20 or so years. So chicken pies have increased in size by about 49% and an average ready made shepherd's pie has gone from just over 200 grammes to 210 grammes to 400 grammes in a pack. So it's very, very easy for us to overeat. And the more we overeat, the more we tend to overeat.

17:59

But you know, the really good news is that you can prep quick, tasty and nutrient dense meals in less than 30 minutes. And again, if you've been in the hub, you will see those recipes that are already there, the recipes that are going to be uploaded for July, which we done on Friday this week. They are all less than 30 minutes. And that's the point is to help you guys to prepare these easy meals in a timeframe that is manageable most of the time, so that you don't have time as an obstacle to eating well.

18:39

When it comes to home cooking again, you know, it's about staying curious. It's about staying open to the possibilities. If you think that vegetables and salads are boring and you tend to avoid them. Then learning to make you know a range of tasty nutrient dense dressings is a game changer. I sent an email about that I think last week or the week before, you can also make food much sexier with things like Herbes, spices, flavoured oils, different vinegars.

19:11

And again, that is one of the you know reasonings behind those recipes for you. And lastly when you do need or want a little bit of convenience because I'm a pragmatic person, I love a takeaway with the best of them. If you are buying things that you are ready make check those labels because the chances are if you know that your grandmother wouldn't understand that the list of ingredients, then that product or food probably has no business going into your body.

19:46

So number five, having a non meat day I'm not suggesting that you become a vegan or even vegetarian if you're not inclined to do so. But many people do overeat meat. So having one day off a week is likely going to be a good thing to do. So what are your options if you're usually a meat eater, there's so many now you've got philatelists that's a chick pea based food they can be bought ready made. various brands are, you know, good quality in all your major supermarkets just check the label, it really should be no more than probably six or eight ingredients. You could use legumes, so that's things like lentils, beans, they're great sources of minerals, and they contribute to your protein intake, they can be used in soups, salads as a main or a side dish. Eggs, you know, if you don't want to go to lagoons if that's a bit too far for you to start with, then you know, eggs are a versatile option, rich in iron rich and some of the B vitamins. And you know, you don't have to save extra breakfast, nuts, the unsalted on unroasted variety, great as a snack can also be made into a meal, you know or not low, for instance, at a lower temperatures that you're not overheating them or added to a stir fry once that stir fry is on the table.

21:19

So number six reinventing your breakfast and your lunch. You know breakfast doesn't actually have to be different to the other meals of the day despite what the cereal companies may have led you to believe. So, firstly, I recommend that if you tend to eat cereal or bread as a breakfast option and a sandwich for lunch, start looking at some options that don't include bread. So for example, you know, the first option might be going to eggs. But there's no reason why an easy lunch or dinner recipe can't also be used at breakfast time. So again, I know I keep going on about the hub, but it's there for you guys to use as a resource. What I'm endeavouring to do is ensure that as many of those recipes as possible can be used across breakfast, lunch, and dinner. And that includes, you know, the option of making an extra serving at dinner time. So Breakfast is ready to go the next morning, if you're someone who, you know, doesn't wake up full of the joys of spring and doesn't, you know, you know, isn't inclined to do much in usually just, you know, pop some toast down in the toaster.

22:56

So this is actually a huge topic, avoiding hidden ingredients is a huge topic all of its own. But if you do start to make more of your own food, or if you already do that, it's likely going to be less of a concern anyway. But I want you to also have a look at the foods that you're buying as snacks. Often those snacks are ultra processed. And although they're marketed as a snack food, ie a daily event for all the family, in actual fact, they're best avoided on a regular basis, or at least kept for treats. So I wanted to give you a little overview of food processing so you can understand what the difference is between, you know, the normal processing that goes on and there's ultra processing. So, you know, by definition, a processed food is simply one that's been altered from its original form. So that means heating pasteurising and drying all the things that are done to ensure that food is safe through the supply chain.

Some definitions even include refrigeration, I think so, you know, these days, the vast majority of our foods are processed unless we are you know, we have an apple tree in our back garden or a cherry tree or, you know, we're picking a fruit directly off a tree or we have you know, some vegetables at home or, you know, we have an allotment then the vast majority of the foods that we are technically processed in some way and that's okay because basic preparation, basic preservation techniques, they certainly don't turn a wholesome food like a whole grain or frozen vegetables, you know that they're not junk.

It's more important though, in fact, it's imperative now that we consider these ultra processed foods and this is a relatively new term. It was first used in 2016 by researchers who started to break foods down into a new classification system. And on the one end of this spectrum, this classification system, we have the unprocessed or minimally processed foods, which are things like your fresh fruits, your vegetables, your eggs, your you know, your meat, foods that you might consider to be a healthy or a whole food diet. On the other end are these ultra processed foods. So as you can see here, the first stage is ensuring that the food is safe to eat. And that is edible.

25:41

The second step is making a more complex finished product. So that includes cooking food, freezing it, canning it and so on. But this is this third stage, which is a relatively new stage in processing, which is where the manufacturers start to add, you know, flavours, they could be natural flavours, they could be, you know, less, that's less of an issue, but there could be synthetic flavours, they add sugar, they add salt, they add, you know, often, you know, trans fats, which are the opposite of, you know, what, what the body wants to have, when it comes to fats, and they add chemical preservatives. And it's important to be aware of that, because the more of these types of foods that we ingest, the more potentially detrimental

an impact we're having on our bodies. And certainly, when we eat these on a regular basis, that's an issue. And the reason I flagged them so much for you guys and for all my clients is because as I've already mentioned, they are heavily marketed as snacks much of the time, when in actual fact, as I say they should be, you know, perhaps not entirely eliminated, but certainly, you know, viewed as a treat.

27:07

So just thinking of even, you know, healthy options, and I fell into this trap a number of weeks ago, I saw a healthy kind of legume based treat, and you know, the treats for us, but I was like, oh, that could be a nice snack for my children. And then when I got it in the home, and I popped into my Sainsbury's shop, and when I got home and I looked at it a bit more closely, that packaging was gorgeous, it looked you know, earthy, and you know, healthy and all that stuff. And then when I looked at it, in the ingredients, I saw that it was predominantly potato starch. And potato starch has an extremely elevating impact on our blood sugar. So when it comes to things like crisps, for example, for those of you that maybe have children, you've seen the palm bears, you've probably seen them advertised, do not give do not eat them yourselves. Pringles are the adult version upon bears, they are potato snap, potato starch, really, really detrimental to our blood sugar. Much better to have a handful of crisps. And you know, now if you didn't know before, what a serving size of crisps is anyway. So you know, this is really, really food for thought.

28:28

Okay, so just to recap for those of you that joined us through, but as I say the recording will be available. The seven steps we've gone through are looking at eating your vegetables, or more vegetables, eating healthy fats, staying hydrated, buying and being more conscious around our choices, and looking at ways we can cook in the home, introducing a non meat day reinventing our breakfast and lunch to some degree rather than just you know, pouring out the cereal or having toast every morning, and avoiding those hidden ingredients that are often in convenience and certainly in those ultra processed foods.

29:10

And lastly, I want you to think about a little bit of a change of mindset around eating. So instead of saying I'm hungry, what can I eat? If we can start thinking about when we get those signals. This is my body telling me it needs to be nourished, what will provide that. And that can be a real shift in terms of the choices that we're making and what we're putting into our bodies.

29:39

If you want to unmute yourself and ask a question, then now is a good time if you need to drop off, you know, then by all means do if you want to stay and ask me a question after I stopped recording, that's absolutely fine too.