



## **Eating for Health**

There is increasing evidence of the benefit of a healthy diet in helping people feel well with long term conditions such as pain.

Gut bacteria/organisms are central to health, extracting the nutrients from our food, and can lead to health or illness. A large variety of good bacteria is associated with health and wellbeing.

Choosing a good diet can help how you feel by:

- Reducing inflammation in the body
- Improving the number of 'good' bacteria in the gut

This can reduce many of the problems that patients who have pain struggle with:

- Tiredness & Fatigue
- Weight gain
- Gut problems
- Headaches
- Pain
- Mood difficulties
- Disturbed sleep

There is a tendency for people to reach for 'comfort' or convenience foods – usually high fat, high sugar, processed foods. These increase inflammation and damage the gut bacteria balance (dysbiosis).

**The key aims are to**

- 1. Improve the number and variety of good bacteria (variety of plants, fasting and fermented foods)**
- 2. Increase antioxidants (found in highly coloured plant foods)**
- 3. Increase fibre content (found in whole plant foods)**

### **WHEN to eat**

Fasting (such as time restricted feeding) reduces inflammation, insulin levels and allows the cells of the body time to clean up. Improves blood pressure, blood sugar, energy levels, brain fog. Longer fasts can help with weight loss.

It can take a bit of time for the weight to start reducing, but keep with it. Once your body alters its metabolism it gets much easier.

### **Time Restricted Feeding**

- Eat all your food in a 6 -10 hour 'eating window'
- The rest of the time is the 'fasting window'
- During the fast drink lots of water and only black/ green tea or coffee (no sugar or milk)
- Use an app such as Zero to track fasting times.



## WHAT to eat

- ✓ Predominantly plant derived foods
- ✓ A lot of plant variety – aim for
  - 30 different plants a week
  - & EAT THE RAINBOW daily!! – a variety of highly coloured plants = high antioxidants
- ✓ Whole foods
- ✓ Low in processed foods and sugar/artificial sweeteners
- ✓ High in good fats – nuts and seeds (also high in fibre and antioxidants)
- ✓ Fermented foods

Brightly coloured veg (particularly in the skin so don't peel)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| • Spinach, kale, watercress, fennel            | • Grains such as buckwheat, wild rice, quinoa,                      |
| • Broccoli, red cabbage, brussels, cauliflower | • Oats  |
| • Celery                                       | • Berries   |
| • Red onions, shallots, leek, garlic           | • Whole fruit   |
| • Carrots, parsnips, sweet potatoes, beetroot  | • Nuts (& nut butters/cheese): walnuts, hazelnuts, almonds, brazils |
| • Squash, courgettes                           | • Seeds: chia, flax, pumpkin, sunflower                             |
| • Olives                                       | • Olive oil, coconut oil  |
| • Legumes: lentils, chickpeas, beans, peas     | • Dark chocolate and coffee/tea                                     |
| • Wholegrains – eg brown rice, pasta, bread    | • Herbs eg rosemary, thyme, peppermint, parsley                     |
|  | • Spices esp Turmeric (with pepper)                                 |

**Fermented foods** such as live sauerkraut, kefir, miso, kombucha, live plain yoghurt (fruit yoghurt will have added sugar so avoid this – add real fruit and nuts/seeds to plain yoghurt). These rapidly improve the balance of bacteria in the gut but need to be introduced gradually.

Introduce all new foods slowly especially high in fibre – you need to grow the bacteria to process them, or you may develop an increase in gut symptoms.

Supplements:

- if you don't eat any animal products you will need Vit B12
- Vit D supplement important in the UK

## Take home message

Choosing a healthy diet can really help how you are feeling. Make positive steps to:

- Increase vegetables and beans/lentils
- Increase good fats – nuts, seeds,
- Increase wholegrains
- Reduce 'junk food' – ready meals, crisps, cakes, biscuits.
- Reduce sugar and sweeteners
- Reduce meat, fish, dairy, eggs



### Podcasts/YouTube videos:

#### Pain specific:

- **Deepak Ravindran/Footsteps Festival** – lots of pain related resources in this festival. 2x90min talks on relevance of **nutrition in pain** specifically.
- **Ian Taverner** – pain expert by experience –cooking when in pain – Cookfulness website.
- <https://footsteps-festival.co.uk/festival/main-stage/pain-less-nutrition-can-food-change-your-pain/>

#### The science:

- **Zoe Science and nutrition podcasts/youtube videos:**
  - Episodes: Your gut is full of bugs – why this is good news.
  - Inflammation Ageing and disease.
- **Dr John Cryan.** Eg 'Feed Your Microbes'  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKxomLM7SVc>

#### General wellbeing, health and lifestyle:

- **Dr Rupy Aujla:** The Doctor's Kitchen: Covers the ways in which diet and lifestyle can help you achieve your healthiest life. See book above
- **Dr Rangan Chatterjee:** Feel Better, Live More (for example Episode 87 is an interview with patient with fibromyalgia). Interview with Tim Spector is podcast 131

#### Intermittent Fasting

- **Jason Fung** on. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VlhrYjVhOk>
- **Lucy Ward** Eating for Health <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zwj95RtLNgM>

### Books:

- **Painfree Mindset** by Dr Deepak Ravindran – specific to pain and more than just nutrition
- **Food for Life:** Tim Spector
- **The Diabetes Code:** Dr Jason Fung prevent and reverse type 2 diabetes naturally.

### Websites:

- Plant based health online – lots of helpful resources -  
<https://plantbasedhealthonline.com/resources#articles>
- Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine <https://www.pcrm.org/health-topics>
- **Other authors:** Dean Ornish (heart disease specialist), David Perlmutter (neurologist), Felice Jacka (mental health)

### Recipes and cooking idea websites:

- **Cookfulness** Personal experience of cooking with a physical and mental disability
- **Made in Hackney** - community cookery school including International Cuisine. Fermenting recipes
- **Bosh** - plant based recipes <https://www.bosh.tv/>



**Top tips:**

Batch cook and freeze portions so you have your own ready meals (ask family/friends to help)

EG: soup with multiple different vegetables beans and lentils, herbs and spices eg turmeric,  
veg stews/chilli/curries (use beans or finely chopped mushrooms instead of meat)

Use pre-prepared frozen fruit and vegetables (eg chopped onions/mediterranean vegetables),  
or tinned veg.

**Raspberry chia jam:**

1 bag frozen raspberries – defrost (can speed up by heating on the hob)

add 3-4 tablespoons of Chia seeds and stir.

After some time it will take on a jam-like consistency and can be eaten with a spoon like  
pudding (delicious with some squares of dark chocolate!) or spread on bread/toast in place of  
jam (tasty with nut butter.)

**Roast Vegetables:**

Root veg – eg carrots, sweet potatoes, beetroot, parsnip, swede. Drizzle with extra  
virgin olive oil, salt and pepper, spices and roast at 180 deg – time depends on the size  
of the pieces

Cauliflower and broccoli also work well in this way but take less time to cook.

Tomatoes, courgette, aubergine, onion pieces.

**Salad dressing or drizzle for roast vegetables:**

Juice of a lemon or lime, equal volume of extra virgin olive oil, half a teaspoon of miso,  
salt and pepper, possibly some walnuts. Blend together - a food processor/stick  
blender/smoothie maker will make a smooth thick almost mayonnaise-like sauce especially  
with the nuts.

You could add garlic, mustard, herbs, turmeric to increase the number of plants!