Health and Wellness Briefs Podcast

Episode Three: Fueling Your Body with Healthy Eating

Transcript

00:00:02 Dr. Bernadette Melnyk

Welcome to the podcast entitled Health and Wellness Briefs, tactics for a better and healthier you. I'm Dr. Bernadette Melnyk, Vice President and Chief Officer for The Ohio State University. This podcast series is brought to you by my CWO Office and wonderful Buckeye Wellness team.

In order to provide you with evidence based micro learning modules to optimize your health and well-being. Our podcast start by taking a dose of vitamin G, given that vitamin G or gratitude is one of the simplest research-based strategies to improve mood, sleep and optimism and reduce stress and blood pressure. Please take a few seconds now to think about who or what you are grateful for today. Then, give a dose of vitamin G to someone today for even more benefit.

Today's topic is fueling your body with healthy eating. My special guest is Jenny Shrodes, she is a fabulous, registered dietitian and certified diabetes care and education specialist.

Welcome Jenny. I am delighted to have you with us today.

00:02:04 Jenny Shrodes

Thanks Bern. I am so excited to be here with you. Thank you so much for having me and I love this title fueling your body with healthy eating. There's a lot to unpack there.

00:02:17 Dr. Bernadette Melnyk

So, we're going to get started with your wonderful expertise. Jenny, what are the core principles of healthy eating? How does a balanced diet contribute to an individual's overall health and well-being?

00:02:39 Jenny Shrodes

Yeah, this is just the best question ever. You know, I think that healthy eating is based on patterns. What kind of pattern do you have or what kind of diet do you have? Following a healthy diet pattern at every stage in life. That means that we're customizing and enjoying nutrient dense food and beverages that reflect our personal preferences, our cultural traditions and our budgetary considerations. We want to focus on meeting all the food
groups. We want to focus on nutrient dense foods and beverages, and we want to keep those within calorie limits. Limiting foods and beverages higher in added sugar, saturated fat, sodium and maybe limiting alcoholic beverages. These are all guidelines from the dietary guidelines for Americans.

00:03:38 Dr. Bernadette Melnyk

That's great. Jenny, can you give people an example of nutrient dense foods?

00:03:46 Jenny Shrodes

Yes, I can. In my practice, we talk a lot about the major fuel for our body, which is carbohydrates. We talk about nutrient dense carbohydrates, which are going to be those that contain fiber. So dietary foods that haven't been messed with aren't processed, and so when we talk about carbohydrates, we're talking about nutrient dense foods that still have that fiber intact.

When we talk about protein, we're talking about proteins that haven't been processed that much. So beans, legumes and animal products as well: beef, fish, chicken.

Then, we're talking also about nutrient dense fats and choosing the best fats. So those liquid oils and oils that haven't been processed. So we're talking a lot about non processed food. Leaving foods the way they were intended to eat and the way they came from nature.

00:04:55 Dr. Bernadette Melnyk

There's so much consumption of processed foods, it's convenient. It's often the easier, but there's also a lot of common misconceptions about healthy eating. What advice would you give to navigate through some of those misunderstandings.

00:05:22 Jenny Shrodes

Yeah, I think the biggest misunderstanding is the cost of eating healthy. There have been analysis done that show us that eating healthy probably costs a little bit more. But I think it comes down to educating people on how to eat healthy, where to find your food, how to purchase food on a budget because it really can be done for just pennies more than taking advantage of those convenience and processed foods that you were talking about.

00:05:59 Dr. Bernadette Melnyk

I'm glad you bring that up because I hear that all over the place that it costs so much more to eat healthier. Are there any other big misconceptions about healthy eating?
I think that a lot of people don't think it tastes good. Most people I think are eating for taste and we want to enjoy the food that we're eating. I've met very few people in my practice that have said just give me a pill I don't need to taste my food. I don't need to enjoy it. We bring a lot of baggage with what we like about our food, what we learn to like about our food, what gives us comfort. There are lots of things to take into consideration, so healthy food can taste delicious, and that's actually the major focus of my practice is teaching people how to cook healthy and delicious food on a budget. It can be done and it can taste wonderful.

00:07:04 Dr. Bernadette Melnyk

Great. How important is meal planning and preparation in maintaining a healthy diet with practical tips or strategies for incorporating healthy eating habits. Do you have, especially for those of us that have really busy lifestyles.

00:07:31 Jenny Shrodes

Yeah, Bern, I bet you have meal planned, and the weeks that you have meal planned go way differently than the weeks that you don't meal plan. But meal planning can be this just enormous task that if you feel like you have to plan every breakfast, lunch and dinner. We're probably not going to be successful at that goal, so here's some practical tips.

Meal planning is super important. First of all, it is important to stay on track with our weight goals. Maintaining a healthy weight or losing weight, and it feeds into those dietary patterns I talked about that can keep you healthy for a lifetime.

So here are my practical tips: every week find time set aside to create a menu plan that includes 3 dinners, only three dinners. Make your shopping list. Get the food. Do all the prep that you can in one day. Keep things in Tupperware, in the refrigerator, ready to go. Now, those three meals you're going to make more than you need so that you can pick apart the pieces of that meal and make beautiful breakfasts and lunches to go.

00:08:44 Dr. Bernadette Melnyk

That's excellent advice that I hadn't heard about before, Jenny, so thank you for that, for sure. But I think if we just schedule it in because when we don't meal plan. I like your concept of three, so often people set goals that are way too high and then they fall off the wagon pretty quickly. Three is, I think, feasible. It's reasonable, so thank you for that.

00:09:23 Jenny Shrodes

You're welcome. I try not to suggest anything that's too hard for me to do.

00:09:29 Dr. Bernadette Melnyk
Excellent. How can somebody strike a balance? You know, I often teach the 80/20 rule 80% healthy foods, 20% “want” foods. You know, those foods that we so enjoy, because if we cut everything we love; we just crave it more.

So, from your expertise, how can somebody strike a balance between enjoying those occasional treats, while maintaining a predominantly healthy diet.

00:10:12 Jenny Shrodes

This is probably my favorite question. I'm someone who really enjoys food. I love the taste of it. I love cooking it. I love sitting down. I love being with people. I love breaking bread with people. So, you're absolutely right. We are going to crave things that we deny ourselves, so making sure that we do enjoy little indulgences here and there and we keep in mind how often we're doing that and when we do that, how much of it so portion control. It's all about balance. It's all about setting up a pattern for yourself. You could set up goals for yourself too.

I used to work with a gentleman who said I realized that I was eating dessert every single day and he understood that over consumption of sugar was something that puts you at higher risk for certain conditions like cardiovascular disease, and so he set a goal for himself that he was only going to eat one dessert per month. And he said really 12 in a year, that's pretty OK. And he decided that whatever that dessert was, he was going to eat whatever he wanted to.

He did that and he ended up losing some weight. So I think setting up goals for yourself around those things is really important.

00:11:34 Dr. Bernadette Melnyk

Great research support that when we write those goals down and put them where we can see them every day helps us to reach those goals.

00:11:48 Jenny Shrodes

Absolutely. I'm a big fan of sticky notes and words of affirmation. I showed you my water bottle and it has a sticker vitamin G, gratitude. So, these little keywords that are around you and that you place maybe in your planner or on your screen on your monitor are really going to help you stick to those goals.

I also wanted to add, it's important for people to understand that our brains are really wired to find pleasure from sugar, salt and fat. So, these cravings are not made-up. If you deny your body those things, for instance, if you deny your body sugar, your body is going to want
Sugar. Sugar is the most available form of energy that your body can get, and so then, if you're hungry, your brain is going to change that into what do I really like and want right now? That might be something that's not healthy for you. So, understanding that we're wired that way and then applying the education we have about food and nutrition can help us make really good choices.

00:13:00 Dr. Bernadette Melnyk

Absolutely. So Jenny, I read a lot at national studies about what happened to people during the COVID-19 pandemic and some of the studies I've read that studied weight gain during the pandemic that of people who did gain weight during the pandemic, the average weight gain was 29 pounds. Now I think a lot of that was emotional eating due to stress, anxiety, depression. So how does mindful eating contribute to overall health, and what strategies can people use to cultivate more mindful eating habits in their daily lives?

00:13:56 Jenny Shrodes

I wouldn't call myself a mindfulness expert, but I have gone through the exercises of applying mindfulness to my own life, and we've brought in speakers in my practice who are experts in that, and I believe that it's this mind body connection.

Just like when you're exercising and you're lifting a weight, maybe doing a bicep curl, you have to think about how that muscle is working to engage it, to make it stronger, you have to think about the food that's going into your mouth.

Long ago I did this great quick exercise and what you do is you get an orange, and you smell the orange and you think about all the emotions you have attached to smelling that orange. You cut the orange and you smell it again. You think about how that has changed you wanting to eat the orange, you think about how that urge to eat the orange, and then finally you take a bite of the orange, just one bite. You think about how that tastes on your tongue and then you think about how that makes you feel.

Then you wait before you eat anymore, right? You think about this and maybe even close your eyes. You can do this with lots of different things. It could be any food you love. But actually sitting down and thinking about how it makes you feel, thinking about the smell, thinking about the taste and then thinking about how satisfied you are.

Mindfulness can engage that mind and body connection. It can make you think about what you're doing so often. Times we sit down or we don't even sit down. We inhale our food because we're trying to get to the next thing. We don't sit down. We don't think about what we're doing and that causes us to over consume.
Our mind doesn't know our stomach is full for 15 or 20 minutes, so slowing things down and enjoying the smell and the taste and the feeling, and if anything is wrong about that, stop doing what you're doing.

Dr. Bernadette Melnyk

That is great advice. One last question, could you talk about the importance of hydration in our patterns of drinking and eating and why it's so important?

Jenny Shrodes

Yeah, you know, the recommendation that I always hear is six to eight-ounce cups of water a day. If you're an exerciser, then you're going to want to drink more, because of course you're sweating and you're losing that fluid.

I think the best advice is to keep some kind of vessel full of water and making sure that you keep track of your water. How much are you getting? Some days you might only need 4 cups. Some days you might need 8. Some days you might need 12, but having that vessel near you as a reminder is really important.

We know that hydration makes everything work in the body, our organs, our blood. We're not healthy if we don't have a hydrated body. Medications don't work well and dehydrate the body and we also know that blood sugar can rise in a dehydrated body and we definitely don't want that. So drinking water also helps your skin and your nails and your hair and your eyes to be clear, it makes everything run properly and keeps a balance.

Dr. Bernadette Melnyk

You bet. And it also contributes in your dehydration to fatigue and headaches. So, thank you for being with me today for our podcast listeners. Thank you for joining us. We just received great advice from Jenny Shrodes that you can put into action rapidly.

Tune into our podcasts in this series, to learn more evidence-based tips for a healthier and better you!