

DR. MICOZZI'S

***INSIDERS'* CURES**

The “Top of the Food Chain” Cure for Obesity

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What the bear knows...

One thing the bear knows...it’s lonely at the top (of the food chain).

There’s a remarkable thing about nature: In all the various environments, or ecological niches, animals sort themselves out in a kind of “pyramid scheme”...with the biggest animal species at the top of the food chain.

In the ocean, the big fish eat the little fish, and the little fish eat the littler fish, and the littler fish eat...the plankton. But keep in mind that the biggest fish (actually a mammal returned to sea, probably related to the hippopotamus), the whale, actually feeds on plankton by straining tons of water through baleen (or whalebone) instead of teeth. How can tiny plankton cells feed the largest creature on the planet? The secret is volume and continuous feeding.

On land, the “top dogs,” or the biggest animals at the top of the food chain pyramid, are fierce creatures like bears in North America and Europe, or lions in Africa, or tigers in India and Malaya. These animals, because of their large size, tend to eat alone and over relatively large areas... it takes a lot of food sources over a lot of territory to feed them. They are omnivores (eating everything) or carnivores (eating meat—the most concentrated source of food with plenty of essential fatty acids, bioavailable minerals and nutrients, calories and total nutrient density).

The exceptions to the solitary rule for animals at the top of the food chain are wolves and humans, who like to hunt and eat in groups. This may account for the unique affinity between the dog descendants of wolves and humans. However, while humans are like canines in eating together, we are like bears in eating everything, omnivorously.

A bit like the whale in the ocean, the bear feeds by taking in lots of little things—pounds and pounds of nuts, berries and other foods, including fish and meat when available in season. When some bears want to get their feet wet, they go jump in the river (in season) and are able to feed on salmon making their return runs to spawn—

thereby getting plenty of meat, fats, and essential fatty acids (the omega-threes and sixes). But normally, the only way to get enough nuts, berries, and other foods to feed a bear is to cover a lot of territory and keep other bears and predators away.

And herein lies the secret...

The “top of the food chain” cure for obesity: Eating like a bear

After trying various fad diets that most young women fall victim to these days...I decided to stop and take a cue from Nature. I guess somewhere along the line I picked up a good deal of knowledge about science and biology from my father. And after taking a few advanced courses in biology myself...I came to follow what I call simply “The Bear Diet.”

It was the healthiest and most effective diet I’ve ever tried for losing weight. It included plenty of nuts, berries, vegetables, fruits, and some meat when available. In addition to the high nutritional value of fruits, nuts, and vegetables, eating the bear diet, like the bear, requires “frequent, small feedings throughout the day.” This provides plenty of bioavailable nutrients and essential fatty acids, leaving the dieter satisfied but thinner.

This diet also avoids health-sapping processed sugars and fats, and provides basically the same approach that works in controlling diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, and other chronic health concerns.

The proof is in the past—our hunter-gatherer history

If you consider our prehistoric past, you’ll find this approach makes perfect sense. Just don’t get hung up on the misleading traditional picture of “Stone Age” humans that we’ve all been taught: “Man the Hunter.” For the reality is actually closer to “Woman the Gatherer.”

In fact, we have had the fortunate opportunity in modern times to observe actual human populations today that are essentially living in the “Stone Age” (*Neolithic*) in terms of the stone tools they use. Populations like the Tasaday of Mindanao, Philippines, the Bushmen of the Kalahari Desert,

or even the traditional Inuit of the sub-Arctic. And in these “Stone Age” cultures, we observe that, mostly, it is the women who *gather* a lot of plants, nuts, berries, and small animals. And while the men may go away “hunting” large game, they mostly end up fooling around and getting into trouble.

A remarkable thing about wild game hunted and gathered is that the meat has only about 5% fat content—as opposed to the up to 50% fat content of artificially manipulated modern livestock raised for food. The USDA actually still considers that higher fat, “grade A” meat to be the better grades. But up until 100 years ago, cattle grazed on the western plains were still relatively lean—they had to be driven by cowboys (the original long-distance truckers) hundreds of miles to railheads for transport on trains to the stockyards in Chicago and elsewhere. Like the cowboys themselves, the cattle arrived pretty lean.

So while eating meat can be part of a healthy diet—watch out for what kind of meat. Natural, free-range livestock and wild game have the healthiest nutrient composition and are full of

Cholesterol in foods is not the enemy

There is an old fallacy about foods high in cholesterol. Any cholesterol naturally occurring in foods is completely broken down into harmless constituents when eaten and digested. It is the fat in foods that are converted to cholesterol in the blood. So high-cholesterol, low-fat foods, like shellfish and seafood in general, are healthy—and natural.

The same applies to the much maligned egg. Egg whites consist of the protein albumin which is a critical component of our own blood proteins—and an important but overlooked marker for good health. Egg yolks are higher calorie and contain essential fatty acids. Eggs are not strictly on the Bear Diet, but the occasional egg is ok. First thing in the morning, instead of eating carbohydrates, an egg is a much better way to start the day for most people. An egg can be combined with many of the healthy foods on the list on page 5 to make an appetizing omelet.

bioavailable minerals, vitamins, and other nutrients that are easy to digest and readily available to our metabolism. These lean, fresh meats will be free of the processed sugars and fats that are deadly causes of most modern ills.

And by the way, if anyone tries to tell you that humans should not eat meat...take a look at our teeth—do they look the teeth of a cow or horse?

On the vast American plains during the 19th century, Native Americans often suffered from what they called “rabbit hunger.” During the depths of winter they could not hunt the declining populations of bison and other large game, instead, they had to rely on small game, like rabbits, which have very little body fat—and are very low in essential fatty acids. Contrary to some popular belief, not only is a little fat good for you, it is literally “essential” to health and life (that’s why they are called *essential* fatty acids). Native Americans with “rabbit hunger” were starving from lack of essential fatty acids; when given just a spoonful of lard (rendered animal fat) they would return to normal health overnight.

In effect, getting the right amount of fat in the diet has always been a problem for people. Before the 20th century it was getting enough essential fatty acids, since they are rare in Nature, especially in plants. Today, we struggle from getting too much fat—and too many calories.

The Bear Diet provides just the proper balance. Plenty of bioavailable nutrients and essential fatty acids, which will leave you more satisfied...and thinner, too.

What to eat on the Bear Diet:

Note that you do not have to count, measure, weigh, or otherwise obsess over what you eat down to the gram. This is a critical error that many of today’s diet “gurus” and physicians make. Obsessive behavior around an activity of daily living, like eating, is not healthy and can be just another source of stress, which is counterproductive. When you follow the Bear Diet, how much you eat won’t matter. And what and when you eat will easily become second nature.

1. Eat all you want (like the bear), of the following vegetables. (Eat them raw or cooked, without butter, fat, or salad dressing.¹)

Artichoke
Asparagus
Bean sprouts
Beet greens
Broccoli
Cabbage (and pickled cabbage, or sauerkraut)
Cauliflower
Celery
Chinese cabbage (bok choy)
Cucumbers (and pickled cucumbers, sour or dill, not sweet)
Eggplant
Endive
Fennel (fenocchi)
Green beans
Endive
Escarole
Fiddle-head fern (in season)
Kale
Lettuce
Mushrooms
Mustard greens
Onions
Parsley
Peppers (red, green, yellow; hot or sweet)
Radishes
Rhubarb
Scallions
Spinach
String beans
Squash (green and yellow; zucchini)
Turnips
Watercress
Tomatoes

2. Eat no more than 3 servings of fresh fruits each day.

Apple
Apricot
Berries (any kind; one-half cup = 1 fruit serving)
Cantaloupe (one-half medium-sized = one fruit serving)

Grapefruit (one-half medium-sized = one fruit serving)
Honeydew melon (two-inch wedge = one fruit serving)
Orange
Peach
Pear
Pineapple (one-half medium-sized = one fruit serving)
Plum
Tangerine or tangelo

3. Spices and seasonings (all you want)

Bouillon
Herbs, including:
Basil
Chili
Dill
Garlic
Rosemary
Sage
Paprika
Pepper
Tarragon
Thyme
Cinnamon
Cloves
Ginger
Mint
Nutmeg
Horseradish, red or white
Lemon, lime
Mustard
Tomato juice or paste (in cooking)
Vinegar

4. Eat several handfuls of mixed nuts (unsalted, not honey roasted). Especially almonds, pecans, and walnuts. You can mix them with small amounts of dried fruits (careful, high in sugar). You can have handfuls from a zip-lock bag throughout the day. This will definitely keep you from feeling hunger between meals. (Protein bars and “meal replacement” bars are not a substitute for anything. You will never need them and they should not form part of a healthy, weight

¹ A little olive oil with the vegetables is ok if you must. While not strictly on the bear diet, a little olive oil, while adding some calories, has other health benefits as demonstrated by the Mediterranean Diet. You can sauté with olive oil; or for fresh, raw vegetables, make a dressing of a little olive oil with vinegar, or with lemon.

loss diet.)

5. Once per day: Eat 4 to 6 ounces (about the size of the palm of your hand) of fresh grilled salmon or other fish, shellfish or seafood, squid (calamari; cuttlefish), or octopus (wild caught).

Grill fish with dill, natural yogurt, other fresh herbs, lemon-lime, cilantro, or onions to taste. Shellfish, while high in cholesterol, are low in fats. Eat mussels, clams, shrimp, lobster, or scallops cooked in their own broth, or sautéed in garlic and olive oil.

HOW to eat on the Bear Diet:

Start by completely eliminating carbohydrates from the diet for the first 2 to 3 weeks. No sugars, breads, starches; no corn, no potatoes, avoid “pulses” like beans (except green beans) and peas. This will help get your metabolism back on track and also provide some relatively rapid weight loss, which will be a source of motivation important to the psychology of dieting.

Start the day like a “hungry bear” coming out of hibernation. Try to start with the largest meal in the morning, since your metabolism will have all day to burn. However, if you are someone who just can’t eat in the morning, then go with what your body is telling you. Don’t eat when you aren’t hungry.

On this diet, there is nothing magical about breakfast, lunch, or dinner. The cultural tradition of “three meals per day” is not a metabolic reality. You can actually “snack” throughout the day, like the bear, with frequent, small feedings.

You can eat the recommended foods in any order at any time. If you could not finish dinner (stop eating when you no longer feel hungry—it takes the brain a few minutes to catch up with the “satiety” of the stomach) have the left-overs the next morning.

After 2 to 3 weeks, and observing some real weight loss, slowly add back some carbohydrates in the morning, like a slice of whole grain bread, or a cup of steel-cut oats (not rolled oats), or even a bowl of Cheerio’s (no- or low-sugar).

After another 2 to 3 weeks, as an occasional

“treat,” instead of snacking on the nuts and berries, you can have a small bag of pretzels, or other salty snacks, once in a while, but NOT sugary treats. You will find that nuts and berries take the place of all these sugary snacks and desserts.

Helpful Hint: Take a few minutes to prepare zip-lock bags the night before so you can accommodate work and school schedules during the day. Most teachers and “bosses” will not have a problem with your eating this way throughout the day. Prepare your mixes of nuts, and also cut up some fresh fruits. Pineapple chunks are particularly good foods on which to snack during the day.

By measuring out your snacks into zip-lock bags the night before, you will avoid “overdosing” on nuts. Many people don’t realize that many “seeds” in Nature (some of which we call nuts), like almonds and apple seeds, for example, contain minute amounts of cyanide. (Don’t tell that to the government bureaucrats in California—under their ridiculous “Proposition 65” they would have to ban almonds, grapes, and other agricultural products on which the economy of much of the state relies.) This trace amount of cyanide acts like a pesticide to keep the seeds from spoiling even after long periods in “storage” so they can eventually seed and sprout. It is theoretically possible to overdose on cyanide (though it would take many pounds of nuts and seeds per day).

If you are a “Mad Man” who just has to have a meal with clients once in awhile for business... after the first 2 to 3 weeks, go ahead and enjoy yourself. We can’t live like we are in the Spanish Inquisition, banning foods and condemning eating (we’ll leave that to the White House). All things in moderation (after the first 2 to 3 weeks).

Mix it up

A diverse diet is also important to gain a balance of different nutrients. Poor diets, and fad diets, that rely heavily on only one or few foods are inherently unhealthy and may lead to malnourishment. Europeans had a hard time achieving dietary diversity before their “discovery” of the Americas. There were only 16 different cultigens

(plants cultivated for foods) in Europe from ancient Rome until the introduction of foods from the Americans in the 1600’s. Tomato sauce did not appear on an Italian menu until late in the 1700’s.

Of course, the bear may not typically eat all of these foods (like eggs and olive oil), but you

can—and you will be very well nourished, keep your metabolism going, and be guaranteed to experience healthy weight loss. When you achieve your desired weight there are many other foods and food preparations you can add back to your diet to maintain your health and your weight.

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