

How to Customize Diet and Lifestyle for Common Health Conditions: Case Assignments – Part 2 (Answers)

CASE #1: HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

Answer:

Suggest following lower carbohydrate Mediterranean Paleo diet. This will often spontaneously reduce calorie intake. Recommended macronutrient percentages:

- Protein: 20 to 25 percent
- Carbohydrates: 15 to 20 percent
- Fat: 55 to 65 percent

Encourage consumption of fatty fish like salmon, tuna, and sardines four to five times per week, no tilapia or flounder. Prioritize healthier fats like olive oil, coconut oil, and grass-fed butter. Non-starchy vegetables should take up at least half of his plate at each meal. Best veggies to include are dark leafy greens, cruciferous vegetables like broccoli and cabbage, or stalks like fennel, leek, and celery. Add in fresh cooked or juiced beets once per day if possible. Switch to eggs and veggies at breakfast instead of oatmeal. Carbohydrates should be root vegetables like potatoes and sweet potatoes primarily. Fruit as a snack is fine. Cut coffee consumption in half or alternate with decaf. Can switch to hibiscus, hawthorn, gotu kola, or green or oolong tea instead. Switch to red or white wine instead of beer, and limit consumption to two glasses per evening max. Use full-fat dairy, especially hard cheeses and yogurts, and use grass-fed products as often as possible. Suggest meditation practice for 10 minutes every morning before work, can use app like Headspace to guide process. Use motivational interviewing to discuss how patient might incorporate exercise into his daily routine, for example, he has a treadmill and can use that before or after work for 15 to 20 minutes, or he can start doing bodyweight exercises a few times a week. Add CoQ10, garlic, and magnesium to supplement routine and remove fish oil.

CASE #2: GERD, IBS, IBD

Answer:

Recommend that the patient get the following testing: SIBO breath test, Cyrex testing (as finances allow), and potentially stool testing if needed. If SIBO testing comes back positive, treat for that (as well as any dysbiosis if stool testing shows it) and take out any food sensitivities. If the patient does not want to do Cyrex testing (or can't afford to), do a strict Paleo elimination diet (exclude dairy and grains) to see if this fully or partially resolves the symptoms. May want to try digestive enzymes and/or HCl. Another option would be a low-FODMAP diet to help manage symptoms. However, low-FODMAP diets may have undesirable effects on the gut microbiota over the long term, so caution is warranted and any underlying conditions should be identified and addressed. Educate the patient on the relationship between the gut and the brain and have him implement a stress management program. Make sure the patient isn't eating on the run and is sitting down to eat. Encourage the patient to take a minute before eating to take a few deep, soothing breaths to make sure he is in "rest and digest" mode and his body is ready for food.

CASE #3: ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, AND COGNITIVE DISORDER

Answer:

Recommend increasing carbohydrates to 25 to 35 percent of calories, can increase slowly if initial carb tolerance is poor. Check to make sure he is eating enough calories and protein (minimum 15 percent of calories) as well. Continue focusing on Paleo and/or gluten-free carbohydrates, and consider adding in non-Paleo foods like white rice and buckwheat for additional carbohydrate sources. Add in glycine source, such as bone broth or collagen/gelatin powder. Eliminate caffeine and Bulletproof coffee, can cut back slowly to avoid withdrawal symptoms. Recommend carb-containing snack before bed if still having trouble sleeping. Change B-complex to one that contains methylfolate and hydroxy/adenosylcobalamin (can test for MTHFR mutations or methylation imbalances if necessary). Recommend using light box/sunlamp at work and getting outside at lunch every day if possible. Use orange goggles at night when using electronics, and cease electronic use past 9 p.m. as much as possible. Consider supplementing with zinc and vitamin A if eating liver and shellfish is not possible. (Vitamin D status is fine.) Recommend daily meditation practice or other stress management practice of choice (yoga, deep breathing, coloring books, puzzles, etc.) and consider additional therapy such as neurofeedback or CBT if necessary.