
Nutritional Psychiatry: Case Study

Some time ago I was very driven and interested in health and wellness, I read many books regarding healthy diets and food combinations, I took a lot of time and effort preparing meals and making sure to incorporate fruits and vegetables in my diet, and I was active, I made sure to work out every single day, even when I didn't feel like it. Somewhere along the line I slowly drifted away from that and haven't been the healthiest, in terms of what I choose to eat, and have been way less physically active. Honestly, I don't care for fast foods or fried foods, my main problem is my addiction to sugar. I can eat salads, vegetables and proteins all day, but when it comes to sweets I have absolutely zero self-control.

My Mother is Greek and I have been raised on a predominately Mediterranean diet, my Mother is probably one of the most health conscious women that I know, she has always taken great care of herself and eats extremely healthy, that being said, the concept of a healthy diet has never been a stranger to me.

I actually loved reading this article, it was like a super in depth version of things you somewhat already know but it really put it into perspective, I am definitely motivated to find as many ways to reduce oxidative stress and to fulfill all my bodies vitamin needs. I found that at the time in my life when I felt the very best, I would eat or drink fruits only on an empty stomach in the morning and eat a diet filled with vegetables and healthy meats, I remember feeling on top of the world, I was focused and had mental clarity.

Here is a list of the most common meals I eat during the week.

- Baked chicken
- Salmon or rainbow trout
- Spinach – one of my favourites I could eat that everyday
- We love pasta at home, so I buy the smart pasta which has added fibre
- Ground turkey – either I'll make a sauce or turkey meat balls
- Liver and onions – yes we love that in my house
- Extra virgin Greek olive oil
- Chickpeas
- Various vegetables like: cauliflower, tomatoes, cucumber, zucchini, eggplant, peppers
- Avocado
- Cream
- Eggs
- Almonds and almond butter
- Apples
- Papaya
- Muffins – lately at school
- Ice cream
- Nutella
- Cheese and crackers
- Deli meats like prosciutto
- Pizza – little ceasers has been my best friend on the nights where I'm too busy to cook

Over the past two months these are the main types of food I have consumed. I'm not a big fan of red meat so my protein of choice is normally chicken, fish or beans. Using data from the article the foods that put my health at risk are in red. My plan to reduce those foods is to not allow them into my house. I will change my grocery shopping habits and refrain from purchasing any sugary treats. There are many alternatives I can substitute my sweet tooth for, like natural sugars in fruits and less refined sugar like coconut sugar. When I am too busy to cook I will make a healthier choice of delivery. My two life styles changes will be cutting sugar, incorporating more fruit and vegetables in my diet and exercising. I know that is three but I believe they come hand in hand.

Cutting sugar and eating better

Processed sugars have been linked to obesity, many types of inflammatory diseases like diabetes and Alzheimer's, different types of cancers, liver toxicity and other chronic ailments. Glucose has been found to be the cause of all those things also oxidative stress, damage, and death in neurological cells. In today's society sugar is hidden in practically all processed foods, if you are conscious about what you're buying and eating, always carefully read the nutrition label. The negative effects of sugar on mental health have been emerging more than ever. The list of negative effects seems never ending, sugar intake is linked to cognitive decline in relation to mental health issues, and depression, and increases the risk of stroke and dementia. Studies have shown that the neurons that make up our brain are sensitive too and not modeled to deal with high levels of sugar in our blood. Instead of abusing sugar I will make a conscious effort to eat more fruits and vegetables, that ultimately will increase my vitamin A, C and E intake and provide me with powerful antioxidants to fight away free radicals.

Exercising

Not only is exercise good for your body by increasing blood circulation to your brain, and keeping you in shape, research continues to show how exercising reduces anxiety and depression, and improves your overall mood. That being said I want to make a huge effort to work out every day.

References

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