

Targeting Wellness Newsletter  
January 2023

## *Good News for Good Health!*

### Theme for 2023: One Lifestyle Change Can Change Your Life

Every quarter I'll focus on one area of lifestyle  
that you might target for overall well-being.

#### First Quarter - Nutrition



#### *Fats*

- Types of Cooking Oils
- How to Use Them
- Why we might want to avoid oils.



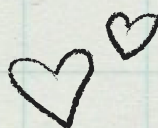
#### *Carbohydrates*

- Simple vs. Complex
- Impact on fighting disease
- Let's Talk Fiber
- Calorie Density



#### *Processed Foods*

- Regular vs Ultra Processed
- Top Ultra Processed Foods



Debby Schiffer, Targeting Wellness, LLC

856-322-1220

[debby\\_schiffer@targetingwellness.com](mailto:debby_schiffer@targetingwellness.com)



## Fats - Types of Oil



You may or may not know this about me but I follow a whole food plant-based lifestyle. It was a choice I made when faced with the decision to either go on medication for my cholesterol or make some changes to my "thought-to-be-healthy" diet. In reevaluating my food choices based on many research studies, I have since eliminated oils from my cooking or food products purchases. However that was MY choice and I totally respect - without judgment- your choice to use oil. I am only here to share some guidelines on selecting the right cooking oil for your needs.

### **Key points about Fat:**

- Work with your doctor to set guidelines based on your body's needs.
- Fat is necessary for proper body function yet fat is also very rich in calories (9 calories per gram). Most oils are 120 calories and 14 grams of fat per tablespoon.
- Calories in oil is 100% from fat.
- Not all fats are created equal with some being healthier than others.
- Each oil has a unique chemical makeup that impacts its ability to "hold up" to heat when used for cooking (this is referred to as its smoke point).

### Types of Oil

*Safflower oil*

*Peanut oil*

*Sesame oil*

*Almond oil*

*Grapeseed oil*

*Avocado oil*

*Coconut oil*

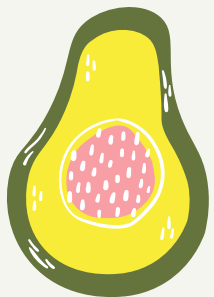
*Canola oil*

*Walnut oil*

*Soybean oil*

*Flax seed oil*

*Palm oil*



Smoke point is important because harmful free radicals are produced when oil starts to break down (smoke) when heated.

To get more information on each type of oil and it's smoke point, go to: [verywellfit.com/smoke-points-of-cooking-oils-4781972](https://www.verywellfit.com/smoke-points-of-cooking-oils-4781972)

# *Too Much Oil Is Harmful*

If you have read anything on a whole food plant based diet, you might have questioned why oils is avoided, after all, we know our body needs fats. We probably have also read how some oils, especially olive oil, can actually be "heart healthy". One problem that lies with following a standard American diet, is that there is way **too much** oil! According to Dr. Caldwell Esselstyn, all oils injure the endothelium which is the innermost lining of our arteries. Every time oil is consumed, this lining gets injured, and that injury is the gateway to vascular disease. It has been shown that even after one fatty meal, the impact on your arteries can be great...most Americans have multiple fatty meals. It adds up. To find out more, check out this [article](#).

Dr. Esselstyn has been associated with the Cleveland Clinic for over 40 years. He was able to show how changing ones diet to a more whole food plant based one resulted not only in the prevention of heart disease but the reversal of blockages and injured arteries.

If you are interested in learning more about his findings, please check out <https://thankful2plants.com/salt-oil-sugar/no-oil-dr-esselstyn/>



*(14 mins, 2011) TEDx Talk*



An excellent talk! Jump to 7:19 in this video where Dr Esselstyn explains how 90% of heart attacks actually occur and how oils contribute to heart disease.

[Link to Tedx Talk](#)

[Here is another great read if interested.](#)

**Word of Caution -**  
**When eating fried foods at restaurants, they typically use partially hydrogenated oil which adds trans fat.**

**Any amount of trans fat is harmful to increasing risk of heart disease, diabetes, obesity, Alzheimer's and even depression.**



# Not All Carbohydrates Are Created Equal

There is conflicting information out there!

I can't tell you how many times I hear someone say "I have to cut my carbs because they are making me fat." Or "I have diabetes and eating carbs will spike my blood sugar". Studies have shown that low-carb diets can result in weight loss and eating meats do not "spike" blood glucose. However, carbohydrates are one of the primary macro nutrients and are the key source of energy our body and brain needs for proper functioning. But not all "carbs" are created equal.



The "carbs" that should be eliminated or greatly reduced from ones diet are the "simple carbs". They lack any nutritional value, are typically processed with added sugar, low in fiber and are primarily empty calories. Examples include: candy, sugary drinks, white flours, baked goods, many cereals, and fruit juice concentrate.

Complex carbohydrates, however, break down slowly and are a better choice for sustainable energy. They have actually been linked to weight loss due to their level of fiber which not only helps to maintain satiety but slows the body's absorption of sugar. Fiber is naturally found in plant-based foods.

**Complex carbohydrates such as whole-grain foods can reduce the risk of several chronic health conditions such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and several forms of cancer.**

**They do this by producing/feeding the good bacteria in our gut which helps fight off inflammation that causes many of the chronic conditions.**



# *Let's Talk Fiber*

There is no lack of evidence linking fiber to a longer and healthier life. Yet "only 5% of men and 9% of women are getting the recommended daily amount of dietary fiber" (ASN, 2021). This could be a result of the obsession with getting more protein and the fear of eating carbohydrates. Fiber is typically associated with supporting regular bowel movements, and unfortunately many Americans are suffering with constipation. But fiber carries so many more benefits than just that. For instance, it helps to lower cholesterol, blood pressure and inflammation, all key components that influence heart disease and diabetes.

The typical women should aim for 25 grams while men should aim for 38 grams. This requires a good mix of fruits, vegetables, legumes/beans, and whole grains. There is no fiber find in animal products (a.k.a meat and dairy).

## **For a longer life and a healthier gut, add more fiber to your day!**

### **Some tips on adding fuel to your day:**

- All fruits and vegetables are your friend. Think about adding in one at every meal.
- Eat what's in season. Frozen or fresh fruit is fine. Try to avoid canned fruit with added sugar.
- Avoid processed foods that don't have whole grains. Look at the grams of fiber (shut for >5g per serving).
- Don't forget beans, peas and lentils...all great sources of fiber, protein and calcium!
- Start your day with a fiber rich breakfast (oatmeal, fruit, whole grain/sprouted breads & cereals).

If you typically don't eat a lot of fiber, go slow in adding it in. If interested in finding additional information, check out this free program called Full Plate Living. It will help you incorporate more fiber onto your plate, one meal at a time!

**Insufficient amount of fiber is shown to lead to higher risk of heart disease and diabetes, two of the most common diseases in the US.**



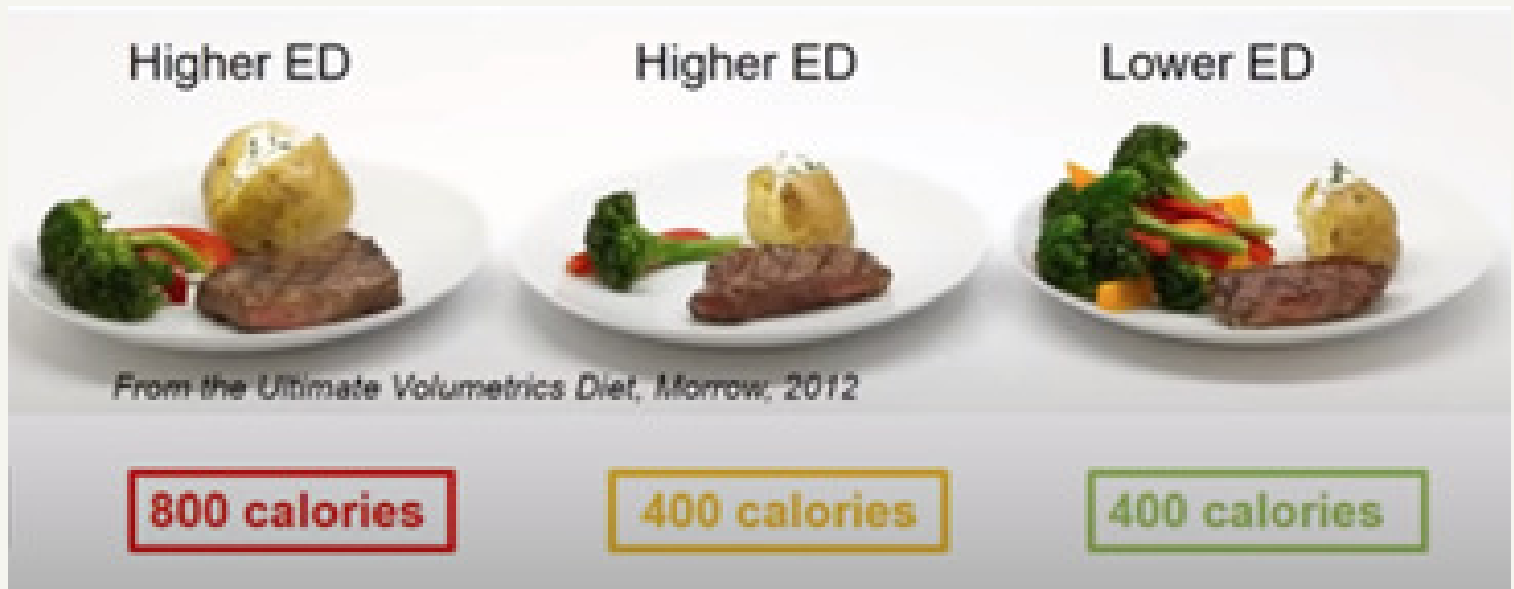
To read more on carbohydrates, their relationship to chronic disease & gut health as well as their reduction of inflammation and blood sugar, check out:

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/318615#health-benefits-of-complex-carbs->

# Approach Weight Loss With A Whole New Mindset!



Typically, diets will have you count, restrict, measure and weigh everything you eat or drink. What may “measure up” to be high in calories and within the “recommended” portion size, leaves most feeling hungry, unsatisfied and deprived. Take the example below.



If you cut the 800 calorie plate in half, you can see the center plate is half empty which will have you rummaging for a snack sooner than later.

However, if you fill it with more LOW CALORIE DENSE foods such as vegetables or fruit like the last plate, you can eat a larger volume of food but with no added calories. This will leave you feeling fuller and more satisfied primarily from the added fiber.

Generally it's easier to loss weight, however, keeping it off is the real challenge because living with all those restrictions isn't fun nor sustainable (not to mention often unhealthy and sometimes dangerous). No wonder there are so many diets because when one does not work they come up with another to promote. That is why upwards of 90% of the weight lost will creep back within the year, sometimes accompanied by more pounds than ones initial weight!

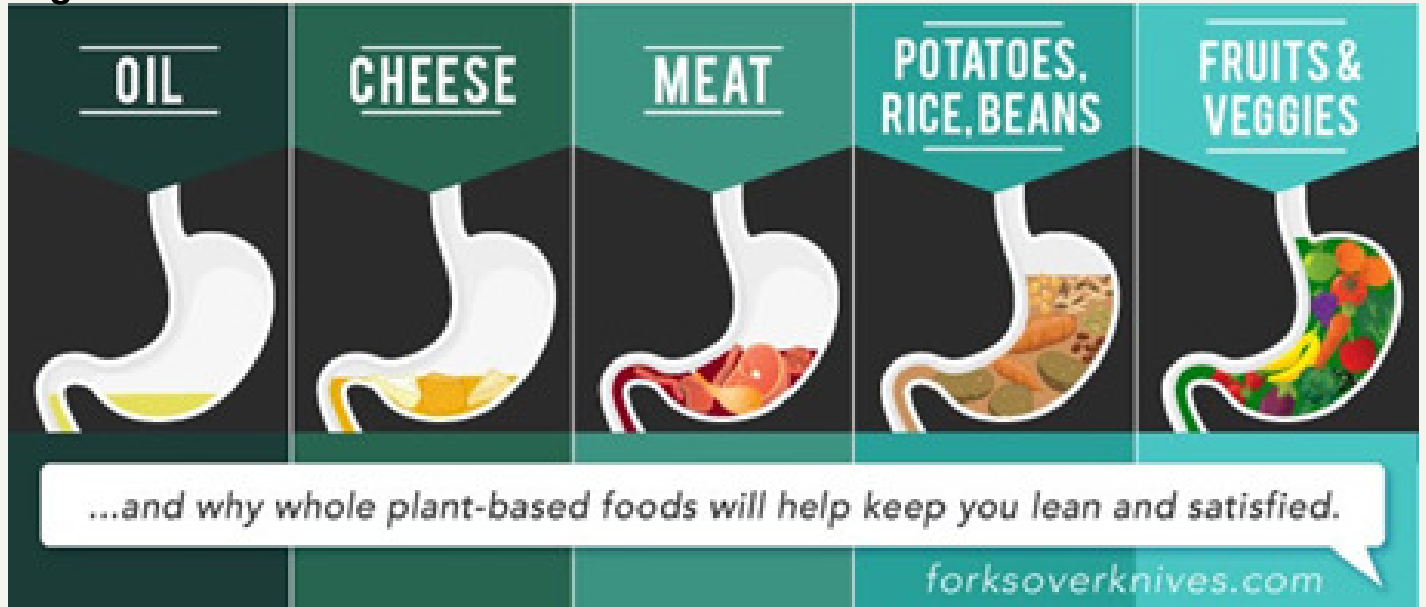
**Calorie density (CD) or energy density (ED) is simply the number of calories per gram/weight of food.**

**Foods high in fats and/or sugar tend to be packed with more calories are would be considered a high calorie density product.**



# What 500 Calories Looks Like In Your Stomach

## High-calorie dense foods



One S.A.D. fact is that sixty percent of America's calories come from refined and processed foods including soft drinks and packaged snacks. Only twelve percent of the calories come from plant-based foods with six percent coming from health-promoting vegetables, fruits, whole grains, nuts and seeds and the other six percent, unfortunately, coming from French fries!

When eating a diet high in calorie dense foods, getting to 500 calories comes quickly on very little food. Looking at the image above, it only takes about 4 tablespoons of oil to get to 500 calories. Do you think someone would feel satisfied after that? It hardly fills a corner of the stomach. However, when consuming whole grains, beans, fruits and veggies, you can easily see the difference in the volume of food that can be eaten for those same 500 calories. The stomach is full leaving one feeling satiated, not to mention all the valuable nutrients obtained from that one meal.

**Filling your plate with more food  
from plants will leave you feeling  
fuller, provides many more  
nutrients and has less calories.  
Plus it supports healthy gut  
bacteria!**



# Processed vs. Ultra-Processed

As I indicated on the previous page, the average American's daily diet contains sixty percent processed foods yet what is more alarming is that those calories come mostly from "ultra-processed" foods. These foods also account for 90% of the sugar consumption. Many healthy foods are processed. However, it's the degree of processing that matters. Below shows a range of processing that takes place in the food we eat. A good habit to get into is to read the ingredient label. If there is more than 5 ingredients or things you can't pronounce...buyer beware.

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## Unprocessed or minimally processed

Unprocessed = This is the natural edible parts of plants and animals.

Minimally processed = Slightly altered to allow them to be longer storage and remain safe to eat, but does not significantly alter the nutritional content of the food.

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Cleaning, freezing, grinding, refrigeration, pasteurization, fermentation, and vacuum-packaging.

Fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, meats, and milk.

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## Processed culinary ingredients

Ingredients derived from a minimally processed food through pressing, refining, grinding, or milling. Usually not eaten on their own but used to prepare minimally processed foods.

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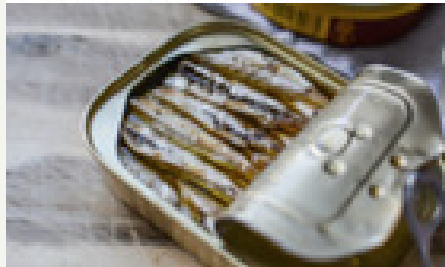
Examples include oils from plants, seeds, and nuts, or flour and pastas from whole grains.

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## Processed foods

Foods from the above two categories that have added salt, sugar, or fats. They are usually made from at least 2 or 3 ingredients and can be readily eaten without further preparation.

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Some canned fruits and vegetables, some cheeses, freshly made bread and canned fish are examples.

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## Ultra (or highly)–processed “foods”

Foods from the other categories that go beyond the adding of salt, sugar, or fats to adding artificial colors, flavors and preservatives. Shelf life is greatly extended with the goal is to increase palatability of the product. There are several processing steps that take place and are thought to be created primarily to induce cravings so people overeat them and purchase more! Usually ready to eat, low in fiber and low in nutrients.

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Sugary drinks, cookies, some crackers, chips, and most breakfast cereals, some frozen dinners, and luncheon meats.

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In today's demanding life, processed foods can certainly be a time-saver when preparing meals and some even offer the fortified nutrients important for health. Key to remember is the degree of processing as noted above and the percentage of one's diet containing them, it can be detrimental and is suspected to be a likely cause in the rise of obesity and other chronic diseases. Being aware of your choices is key for long-term health and well-being.



# 1-Pot Everyday Lentil Soup



Recipe from:  
Minimalist Baker

I haven't made this one yet, however, it is on my list now! This looks like a good "go-to" recipe that even a busy schedule would allow. It requires 10 basic ingredients, one pot and about 30 minutes to prepare. Oh, and I forgot the most important thing...it's healthy and loaded with flavor!

## Ingredients:

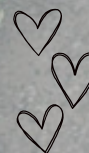
- 2 tbsp water
- 2 cloves garlic minced
- 2 small shallots or 1/2 white onion, diced
- 4 large carrots thinly sliced
- 4 stalks celery thinly sliced
- 1/4 tsp. each sea salt and black pepper, divided
- 3 cups yellow or red baby potatoes, roughly chopped into bite-size pieces
- 4 cups vegetable broth, homemade or look for low sodium versions
- 2-3 springs fresh rosemary and/or thyme (use 1 tsp if dried)
- 1 cup uncooked green or brown lentils, rinsed and drained
- 2 cups chopped sturdy greens (kale, collards, or spinach)

## Instructions:

1. Heat a large pot over medium heat. Once hot, add water (or oil), garlic, shallots/onion, carrots, and celery. Season with a bit of salt and pepper if desired and stir.
2. Saute' for 4-5 minutes or until slightly tender and golden brown. Turn heat down and add more water if they start to stick.
3. Add potatoes and season with a bit more salt and pepper. Stir and cook 2 more minutes.
4. Add vegetable broth and rosemary or thyme and increase heat to medium high. Bring to a rolling simmer. Add lentils and stir. Once simmering again, reduce heat to low and simmer uncovered for 15-20 minutes or until lentils and potatoes are tender.
5. Add your greens, stir, and cover. Cook for 3-4 minutes just to wilt. Taste and adjust flavor as needed. Add more broth if its too thick.
6. Enjoy as is or serve with rice, cauliflower rice, or a side of whole grain bread. A green salad would also go nicely.
7. Store leftovers (if there are any LOL) in refrigerator for up to 5 days or in the freezer for up to 1 month. Reheat on stove top and add more broth or water to re-hydrate as needed.



Debby Schiffer, Targeting Wellness, LLC  
856-322-I220  
debby\_schiffer@targetingwellness.com



# *A Peek Forward To February*

**February is Heart Health Month.** The first Friday of the month, is National Wear Red Day which is an opportunity to raise awareness to a disease that takes many lives. By wearing red, you acknowledge your support in reducing death and disability from cardiovascular disease. Women are especially vulnerable because many signs could be mistaken for other, non-serious conditions.

## **The Proof Is In The Numbers**

- 1 in 3 - the number of adults who suffer from high blood pressure
- 18.6 million - the number of people who died globally from heart disease
- About 697,000 people in US died from heart disease in 2020
- Heart disease is the leading cause of death for women in the US, killing 314,186 women in 2020 (about 1 in every 5 female deaths)

## *Wear Red Day - February 3rd*

### **What can you do within your municipality to spread this message?**

Perhaps encourage all employees to wear something red to show support for the women in their lives (their grandmothers, their moms, spouses, sisters, daughters, nieces, friends, etc.). Serve heart healthy snacks such as fruits and veggies. Or have employees bring in something they have prepared that is plant-strong. You might find some recipes [here](#) that you can post and share.

