



# OPTIMAL HUMAN *Nutrition*

THE INS AND OUTS  
OF NUTRITION FOR  
HEALING &  
VIBRANT HEALTH

# WELCOME TO VITALITY

*Your Sneak Peak to my Comprehensive Healing Program*

Hey there!

From the bottom of my heart, I am glad you're here and that I have the opportunity to share my passion with you in this bundle! Maybe you're fully plant-based, maybe you're a junk food vegan, maybe you're just looking for ways to eat cleaner.

Maybe you're like me and you have a health condition that is diminishing your quality of life and you're tired of playing Russian Roulette with medication and you know in your soul that there is more to life and your body is capable of healing.

Whatever your reason, I am here to support **YOU**.

## **My story, in a nut shell.**

Long story short, I have had some issues for quite some time. I have had various symptoms for decades, like chronic and severe IBS, cold intolerance, depression and anxiety, hives, and more. After I had my first son, things ramped up a bit. I developed migraine, peri-oral dermatitis, chronic sinusitis, chronic joint and muscle pain (particularly my neck and traps), and more.

About five years later, I fell pregnant with our second child. With this pregnancy came a ton of inflammation and a rare rash called pruritic folliculitis of pregnancy. Essentially, no one knows what causes it but it was yet another warning of Mast Cell Activation. From this point on, with three known Covid infections, migraine turned chronic. I developed POTS, MCAS, and dermatitis that would not quit. Along side this there was chronic pain, mystery symptoms (several dozen of them actually), and a whole lot of dead ends.

Medication wasn't working. Lotions, potions, and elimination diets all failed. Despite exercise and what I thought was a healthy diet, I continued to decline at what felt like a rapid pace.

**I was at a loss.**

Then I found articles that showed improvement of chronic migraine with a whole-food, plant-based way of eating. I dove into the literature head first and studied the daylights out of plant-based nutrition for healing. Despite having formal education in the biological sciences and a background in healthcare, this was all news to me. Since western medicine was failing me, I finally gave up my high animal protein diet that was 40% carbs, 30% fat, 30% protein. I quickly began to see improvements and I left my old ways in the dust where they belong.

# WELCOME TO VITALITY

*Your Sneak Peak to my Comprehensive Healing Program*

Over the past several years I have been learning, healing, and building Vitality so I can help others just like you and me finally heal their body and their mind. This is all done by taking a food as medicine approach along with incorporating lifestyle techniques that support your health and wellbeing in the fullest.

My goal is to support you on your health journey in a way that fits you, your needs, your lifestyle, and your family while providing you with support and education you need to empower yourself to live healthfully.

What you'll find is just a small sample of what the Vitality comprehensive program is all about. If this sounds appealing to you, please reach out to me via instagram or via email!

## **What does Vitality offer?**

- 1) Three or six month comprehensive health and healing program
- 2) Pick to bundle: Health and Wellness/Nutrition , Health and Wellness/Personal Training, Nutrition/Personal Training
- 3) A la Carte options for any of the above

## **What sets you apart? Can't anyone be a wellness or nutrition coach?**

Yes they can. However that's why you should choose someone that has invested both time and finances in themselves. You know you're getting a well-educated coach that is here to support and walk along side you, not just teach you what they think is best.

## **Credentials**

B.S. Biology - Duquesne University  
Certified Personal Trainer - NASM  
Sports Nutrition Coach - NASM  
Certified Holistic Nutritionist - AFPA  
Certified Health and Wellness Coach - AFPA  
In progress for 2025 - Board Certification with the NBHWC

## **Let's Connect!**

<https://www.vitalityholisticwh.com/>  
<https://www.instagram.com/vitalityholisticwh/>  
[https://www.tiktok.com/@vitalityholistic\\_hw](https://www.tiktok.com/@vitalityholistic_hw)  
<https://www.youtube.com/@VitalityHolisticHW>  
Courtney@VitalityHolisticHW.com

# WHY NOT TAKE THE STANDARD

## *If It Fits Your Macros Approach?*

**Ever notice how people desire and expect life-changing results,  
but they don't want to change their lives?**

"Nutrition advice" is moving farther away from what we should be eating (more on this to come) and tends to focus on what we want to be eating. Having your cake and eating it too sounds fantastic, but the reality is that **it doesn't work long-term**. Taking this approach may help people lose some weight temporarily but it doesn't equate to improved health, it does not facilitate behavior change, and it does not lead to lasting results.

Most diets fail because they are just that... diets. Mentality around diets are typically that they are short term in order to reach a specific goal and the diet is over once said goal has been reached. Following the typical IIFYM approach tells you that you can starve yourself all day and then drown yourself with alcohol and cupcakes so long as you've got the allotted calories and macros left for them. Weight loss may be attained, but healthy habits have not been implemented when one takes this approach. When the diet is over and macros are no longer tracked, weight is typically regained and health can, in many cases, decline.

An IIFYM approach may leave you fed, but can leave you drastically undernourished. In a world obsessed with protein, carbs, and fat, the macronutrients are just a small part of the story. Think of the macronutrients as the gasoline in your tank. You can have a full tank, but if your oil needs to be changed or you've got a leak, you're going to break down.

This is where the micronutrients, fiber, and antioxidants come in to play. These bad boys are the oil that keeps your engine running smoothly. Without them, your bound to need to head to the shop for some repairs. When we focus on only our macronutrients, many times we are depriving our bodies of essential vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients that are required for a healthy cardiovascular system, a strong immune system, a healthy liver, and more. What we should be focusing on is not necessarily quantity (calories and macros) but rather the quality (micronutrients) of our food. Nourishing our bodies and flooding them with micronutrients so it can function effectively should be our primary goal.

You're not here because you wanted a standard program with standard results with standard relapse or failure rates. You're here because you want exceptional. You want optimal. You want sustainable. You want lasting results.

**You want to live with VITALITY.**

# WHAT IS THE OPTIMAL DIET FOR *The Human Species?*

Have you ever really sat down to think about your food? The food of those around you? On the grocery store shelves, the vending machines, and restaurant kitchens? Have you ever wondered where it came from or how it was created? What about how our ancestors ate? Or how our body utilizes food... or in many cases, how it can't. This is where we dive into the why behind Vitality's whole food, plant-based approach to nutrition.

## **First thing's first: We must tune out the noise and things that do not serve us**

On every street corner and crevasse of the internet, you will find nutrition "gurus" preaching their diet of choice and why it is best for optimal health. From Keto & Carnivore to IIFYM (if it fits your macros) or Vegan & Plant-based. Everyone has something to say about what they think is best. **How is this different?**



## **Let's start with the basics...**

Have you ever noticed that humans and their domesticated animals are the only creatures on the planet that suffer from chronic disease? The primary threats to survival of an animal in the wild is habitat loss and natural predators. Issues like heart disease, diabetes, and cancer don't threaten the health of any species other than humans and our pets.

What about energy balance? Humans are the only species that is obsessed with eating the correct amount of food and counting calories and macros. This is a very unnatural process and yet we still suffer from chronic disease and obesity. Animals in the wild eat when hungry until they are satiated without counting calories, carbs, or making sure they're hitting their daily protein goal. They eat their species specific diet to their heart's content without unhealthy weight gain, guilt, or concern that they're eating too much or too little.

Humans are also the only species on the earth that eats cooked and processed foods. We have all of the tools and information we could possibly ask for, and yet, we are the only species that is confused about what to eat and that has normalized chronic illness and believe that it is a natural and unavoidable part of life.

# HUMAN ANATOMY & PHYSIOLOGY

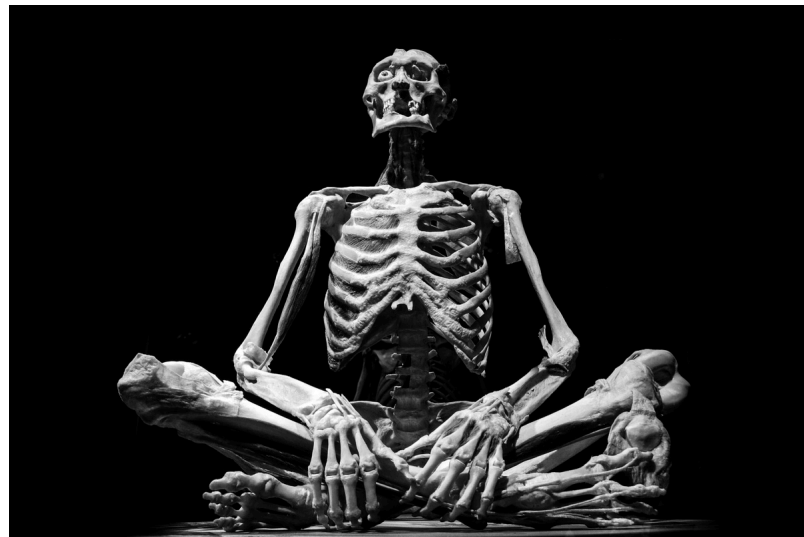
*It's really quite simple*

So what are humans supposed to eat? Do we have a species specific diet or can we eat whatever we want, how we want it, and when we want it?

It's no secret that humans are most similar on a genetic level to primates. Primarily chimpanzees and bonobos and we share nearly 99% of our DNA with these Great Apes. In the wild, chimps primarily consume 60-80% fruit but they also feed on vegetables nuts and seeds, honey, and only a small amount of meat (about 2-6% of their intake depending on age and gender). Similarly, bonobos consume about 57% of their calories from fruit and they also feed on vegetation, nuts and seeds, flowers, insects, and a very small amount of animal products.

These primates could be considered omnivores, but they are primarily frugivores that will feast on fruit whenever it is available to them. Despite having a high fruit diet high in carbohydrates, there is no denying that they have no issues with excessive weight gain, retaining muscle mass, or that they have incredible strength.

Not only are humans Great Apes that are nearly identical to other primates from a genetic perspective, we have many physical characteristics from our limbs and hands to our faces and mouths that make it clear that we too have a species specific diet that is indeed plant-based.



# LET'S TAKE A CLOSER LOOK

## *The Human Species*

**Body shape and movement:** Humans stand upright with legs designed for endurance and climbing, not a high-speed chase. Evidence concerning the majority of our evolutionary history shows that humans are actually gatherer hunters, not hunter gatherers. Not only do records show that we primarily consumed plant foods in the past, our physiology and desire to conserve energy and survive at all cost shows that gathering was ideal for both of these situations. Humans are not designed to hunt down prey and consume raw meat. Tools, cooking, and factory farming/modern agriculture are what makes meat consumption commonplace.

**Eyes:** Detects bright colors rather than quick motion. This design is perfect for foraging and allows us to seek out vibrant, fresh ripe fruit.

**Nose:** Preference for sweet and floral scents rather than for raw flesh which many have an aversion to

**Face and mouth:** Flat face designed to bring food to our face. We also have small mouth openings and lack a snout which makes it difficult to capture, kill, and consume raw unprocessed prey.

**Teeth/Jaw/Saliva/Tongue:** Teeth and jaw are flat and move up and down as well as side to side. Designed for chewing and grinding rather than biting and shredding. Amylase, which breaks down carbohydrates, is the most abundant enzyme in human saliva. Taste buds on the tongue are highly sensitive to sweet flavors

**Stomach and intestines:** Humans have a stomach acid pH of 1.5-3.5 but it becomes more alkaline when full, reaching a pH of up to 7 when full. Human intestines are 20-30ft long and harbor a wide array of microbial flora, perfectly designed for digestion of plant matter.

**Hands and feet:** Feet designed for walking slowly. Hands that grip and have short flat nails perfect for grabbing and peeling rather than claws designed for shredding.

**Energy use:** Humans are active for the majority of the day and only sleep for about eight hours per day. The primary fuel source for every cell in the human body is glucose. The body ONLY uses ketones when glucose is scarce.

# LET'S TAKE A CLOSER LOOK

## *Carnivorous Animals*

**Body shape and movement:** Carnivorous are quadrupeds that designed not only for speed but also for grasping prey. Their stable stance can propel them forward, allows for quick changes in direction, and gives them the ability to pounce on their prey. The only fully carnivorous animals that were bipedal were theropod dinosaurs.

**Eyes:** Carnivores are considered to be color blind, as they do not need to seek out ripe fruits and vegetables. Carnivores have more rods than cones in the eye making sight in low light conditions impeccable.

**Nose:** The nose of carnivorous animals has a large olfactory region that allows them to smell and seek out prey from quite a distance.

**Face and mouth:** Carnivores have an extended snout and a wide mouth opening that allows them to latch on to prey. They have less complex facial musculature due to the lack of grinding or chewing.

**Teeth/Jaw/Saliva/Tongue:** Carnivores have a strong, hinge-like jaw joint that allows for tearing and limited side to side movement. They have long pointed canine teeth, sharp incisors, and carnivorous molars that slice and cut through meat. The tongue has rough, pointed papillae that help them to grip and tear meat and they also lack the taste receptors for sweet foods such as fruit.

**Stomach and intestines:** Carnivores have a more acidic stomach acid with cats having a stomach acid pH of about 1.6 and vultures having a pH of 0. Intestinal length is only 3-7 feet long designed to get food contents out of the body before it putrefies.

**Feet:** Carnivores have soft pads ideal for running and they have digitigrade locomotion which means they run on their toes making it easy to move with speed and agility. Carnivores also have claws or talons designed to subdue, kill, or carry prey.

**Energy use:** Carnivores tend to sleep for 15-20 hours per day. They consume food that is high in caloric density so they spend less time hunting and eating than frugivores or herbivores. Their body oxidizes fatty acids for fuel rather than using glucose.

As you can see, it's clear that humans are most similar to frugivores like our ape cousins than we are to other animals like carnivores, or even herbivores and omnivores for that matter.

# PLANT-BASED NUTRITION

## *For Optimal Health*

If you've never taken a good, hard look at the top killers in the United States, I urge you to do so. What you'll find are that the top ten killers are almost all chronic diseases.

As of 2024, some of the leading causes of death in the US are heart disease/cardiovascular disease (#1), cancer (#2), stroke/cerebrovascular disease (#4), Alzheimer's disease (#7), diabetes (#8), nephritis/nephrosis/nephrotic syndrome (#9), and chronic liver disease and cirrhosis (#10).

**Every last one of these is a dis-ease that is preventable with diet and lifestyle modifications.** Science has found that only about 5% of all cancers are caused by genetics only. In fact, when an individual moves from one population or region to another, they then assume the cancer risk of that population. The explosion of diabetes has been so rapid and robust that humans have not had enough time from an evolutionary perspective for genes to change. These two conditions alone show that they are induced by diet and lifestyle rather than genetics. We may have a genetic predisposition, but the silver lining is that our genes do **not** hold our fate. We have the power to prevent **and reverse** chronic illness every day.

Digging into the literature and the research, it is clear that there is one diet that prevents and reverses nearly all of these chronic conditionals, without fail. Plant-based nutrition is the one method that improves overall health and does not cause harm in another area.

Fad diets like the misunderstood Paleo diet, the keto diet, and carnivore diets are not only unsustainable, but they have no long-term research or positive health outcomes. On the contrary, they have been shown to increase risk of auto-immune disease, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and increase all-cause mortality. Many of these diets are also high in caloric density which can lead to food restriction, feelings of hunger, cravings, and are generally unsustainable.

WFPB nutrition allows you to focus on abundance rather than deprivation, gives you a comprehensive array of vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients, and improves nearly every biomarker without being a detriment to others. It is truly a Vitality way of eating.

The last page contains resources regarding plant-based nutrition if you would like to look further into the research for yourself.

# CHOOSING YOUR PATH

*Meeting you where you're at*

Making dietary and lifestyle changes can feel like a daunting task. As humans and social beings, we can be quite attached to our dietary preferences. Whether this is due to food addictions, flavor profile preferences, engrained beliefs about what proper food and nutrition looks like, or cultural or religious beliefs, the feeling of change can feel quite daunting. You may be more ready than ever to make these positive changes for your health, or you may be apprehensive. Maybe you already have made changes but need further guidance. This program is designed to meet you where you're at and guide you on your journey to health and wellness by using **food as medicine**.

## 1. **Conversion to plant-based**

Maybe you're still on the Standard American Diet or some other form of diet and you need assistance transitioning to plant-based eating. There are two approaches to this: All-in over night or slow and steady. The overnight approach requires more discipline up front but can yield faster results. I actually recommend the slow and steady approach. This can help ease symptoms of detox, allows your digestive system and gut microbiome to adjust to increased fiber, and helps make the transition more manageable by focusing on one meal at a time.

## 2. **Improved plant-based nutrition**

Maybe you're already plant-based but you're eating a lot of processed foods, junk foods, or takeout and you would like to improve your nutrition. This route focuses on improving your plant-based nutrition for optimal health.

## 3. **Going high raw**

If your interest is in eating 80-100% of your foods in raw form, then we will focus on how you can implement a highly nutritious primarily raw food diet for health improvement.

### **Your homework...**

For the next week, without making any dietary changes, please track your meals using the food log PDF or a tracking app (recommended method) such as the Vitality Holistic Fitness app, My Fitness Pal, or Cronometer. Using the PDF will be the most simple but a tracking app will allow you to see a comprehensive nutritional profile of the foods that you're eating. Please do your best to be as accurate as possible. If you can measure or weigh your food to track, please do so. If tracking apps are new to you and this method is too cumbersome and time consuming, please use the PDF printout and make life as simple for you as possible.

# COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS of Plant-Based Nutrition

You may get these questions from friends and family or you may have even had some of them yourself. The following misconceptions are actually quite common and not as daunting as you may think once you begin to understand plant-based nutrition.

## **Where do you get your protein?**

There is a misconception that animal protein is **the** only form of protein or that it is the only **complete** protein and you need complete protein for optimal health. This could not be further from the truth and scientific research has proved this to be incorrect for decades. What humans really need is **amino acids** and, lucky for us, **every amino acid can be found in every single plant food** in varying amounts. This means that you're consuming vital amino acids with every bite you take on a whole-foods, plant-based diet. Studies have actually shown that too much animal protein is detrimental and can lead to chronic disease like diabetes and cancer. More on this later.

## **You can't get B-12 on a plant-based diet.**

Where this is partially accurate, it's not founded in truth. Most people believe that animals produce B-12 when, in fact, they do not. B-12 is actually produced by microbes in the soil and not by animals themselves. Our soil is actually so depleted of beneficial vitamins, minerals, and microbes that farmed animals are typically given a B-12 supplement and **this** is how humans are getting B-12 from consuming animal products. People with an abundant and healthy gut microbiome have also been shown to possess bacterium that produce B-12 in their own gut, but it seems to be in the large intestine where B-12 is not believed to be absorbed. Given the abundance of B-12 deficiency, it is recommended that most people supplement with B-12, not just those on a plant-based diet.

## **Oxalates.**

Let's talk about the fact that plants are not killing people. No one is out there overdosing on so much spinach that oxalates are causing serious health problems and deficiencies. It is true that oxalates can inhibit calcium absorption from the food that contains oxalates, but contrary to popular belief, it does not inhibit absorption of calcium from other foods. IE: Oxalates in spinach may reduce bioavailability of the calcium found in that spinach, but not in other foods eaten with the spinach or throughout the day. For this reason, one would not want to make spinach their primary source of calcium. Additionally, *Oxalobacter formigenes* is a microbial species found in a healthy gut microbiome that uses oxalate as its sole fuel source

# COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS *of Plant-Based Nutrition*

## **Fiber**

Essentially all of the fad diets these days focus on low carbohydrate, high fat and protein diets. This in turn reduces fiber intake and, being that fiber is the primary fuel source of our gut microbiome, this compromises our gut health. Fiber is not a fuel source and humans cannot directly digest it, but it is a crucial component of this symbiotic relationship and our overall health. Our gut microbiome thrives on fibrous materials and in turn allows for healthy functioning of these little bugs. We will dive deeper into this when we discuss gut health!

## **Glucose**

Sugar. Sugar. Sugar. We live in a world afraid of sugar. Unfortunately, those that fear sugar are only sharing part of the story. This leaves consumers and patients afraid to consume healthy foods that contain glucose energy because it has carbohydrates in the form of sugar. There are sugars that you want to stay away from such as refined table sugar, but there are sugars that we need. As you saw earlier, the human bodies primary fuel source is glucose. Glucose energy is readily available and our body is designed to ingest, digest, absorb, store, and utilize glucose energy easily. In addition, whole food plant-based forms of glucose energy come packaged with a plethora of health improving compounds. These include fiber, amino acids, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. When we evaluate glucose energy, we need to understand that it is a package deal and consuming whole food plant-based sources of glucose is essential for optimal health.

## **What about the ex-vegans?**

We all know someone who used to be vegan or vegetarian. You may have heard that they “lost their health” going vegan. I first want you to take solace in knowing that this is just NOISE and we need to do our best to acknowledge the noise and move forward with what we know to be best for our health journey. There are **many** reasons someone may say that a vegan diet failed them without recognizing or disclosing all of the information. They could have had an underlying condition that started prior to going plant-based that surfaced after changing their diet. They could have been junk-food vegans. They could have been WFPB but simply did not eat enough to nourish their body and became deficient. They could be obsessed with cleansing and depleted their body of vital nutrients. They could have lacked a support system and felt they could no longer succeed. They could have other unhealthy habits or exposure to toxins like alcohol, cigarettes, fragrances, cleaning solutions, etc that they did not remove. They could have stress or trauma that they did not address and thus they have negative health outcomes regardless of their nutrition. **Always keep in mind that we never know the full story and, in order to thrive, we must tune out the noise and focus on our opportunity and ability to LIVE WITH VITALITY.**

# PLANT-BASED NUTRITION

## *References and Resources*

### ***Documentaries you can stream:***

**Live to 100: Secrets of the Blue Zones**  
**You Are What You Eat, A Twin Experiment**  
**Forks Over Knives**  
**Plant Pure Nation**  
**How Not to Die**  
**SuperJuice Me!**

### ***Books (most available on Spotify and Audible as well as hardcopy):***

**The Pleasure Trap** by Douglas Lisle, PhD & Alan Goldhamer, DC  
**Mastering Diabetes** by Cyrus Khambatta, PhD & Robby Barbaro, MPH  
**The Raw Food Nutrition Handbook** by Rick Dina, DC & Karen Dina, DC  
**The China Study** by T. Colin Campbell, PhD & Thomas M. Campbell, MD  
**Whole** by T. Colin Campbell, PhD  
**The Future of Nutrition** by T. Colin Campbell, PhD  
**Forks Over Knives** by T. Colin Campbell, PhD, Gene Stone, & Caldwell Esselstyn  
**The Campbell Plan** by Thomas M. Campbell, MD  
**Goodbye Lupus** and **Goodbye Autoimmune Disease** by Dr. Brooke Goldner  
**Fit For Life, A New Beginning** by Harvey Diamond  
**Super Juice Me!** by Jason Vale  
**80/10/10** by Douglas Graham  
**Miracle Metabolism** by Thomas Tadlock  
**Feeding You Lies** by Vari Hari (The Food Babe)  
**Proteinaholic** by Garth Davis, MD  
Any of the **Medical Medium Book Series** by Anthony William

### ***I have not yet read the following myself but would suggest:***

**How Not to Die** by Michael Greger, MD  
**Prevent and Reverse Heart Disease** by Caldwell Esselstyn, Jr MD  
**Fiber Fueled** by Will Bulsiewicz, MD  
**The Starch Solution** and **The McDougall Program** by John McDougall, MD  
**The Blue Zones** by Dan Buettner  
**The Anatomy of Wellbeing** by Monisha Bhanote, MD