

Nutrition in Vulnerable Times

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Nutrition in Vulnerable Times

Jenna Fields:

Good afternoon everyone. Thank you for joining us for our lunch time webinar. I'm Jenna Fields. I'm the California Regional Director for Sharsheret. We are the National Jewish Breast and Ovarian Cancer Support Organization and we provide free support for women and their family members facing breast and ovarian cancer as well as for those who are at increased genetic risk. All of our services are completely free so if there is anyone in your life or maybe even you yourself who is in need of support right now, please don't hesitate to reach out by phone or email and we'll send information on how you can contact us after this call.

Jenna Fields:

We also offer free programming throughout the year on risk reduction, healthy living and education for those who are in treatment and survivorship. We are so fortunate to have Miriam Lieber Kraemer and Cedars-Sinai on this webinar today, Nutrition in Vulnerable Times. Sharsheret is offering weekly programming related to COVID and everything going on right now. We actually have two webinars next week. On Monday, we're going to have an infectious disease specialist from UC Berkeley, talking about the intersection between COVID and cancer. Then, on Thursday, we're so lucky to have Dr. Arash Asher from Cedars-Sinai who'll be speaking on resiliency. His program will be the Roadmap to Resiliency, Medical Perspectives and Strategies for Managing This Moment. We'll send information on how you can sign up after this program. I want to thank Cedars-Sinai and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention for sponsoring today's program.

Jenna Fields:

Just a few pieces of Zoom etiquette before we begin. Everyone who comes on this call is muted, when you come on so please make sure to keep your microphone on mute as we go throughout this program. If you would like to be anonymous, you can turn off your video on the bottom left hand corner of your screen by clicking stop video. My colleagues have also put our phone number in the chat box so if you prefer to call in, you can do that right now. If you are going to use your screen, I do suggest you keep it on speaker view instead of gallery view because we will have a PowerPoint presentation during the program. If you miss anything and you want to share with your friends, we are recording this program, so you will get that recording after and you can go back and rewatch it at any time. Finally, if you have any questions for our speakers during the program, please type it into the chat box. We're going to have a Q and A when they're done with their presentation. We're also going to incorporate the questions from the people who submitted them in advanced and we'll try to get to as many as we can at the end.

Jenna Fields:

It's now my honor to introduce our two speakers for today's program. Our incredible dietitian, Diana Torres. She's an MPH, RD and CSO who attended the school of public health at Loma Linda University and earned her MPH in Nutrition. In 2014, she joined the Patient and Family Support Program at Cedars-Sinai Samuel Oschin Cancer Center and she's a board certified specialist in oncology nutrition. Diana provides outpatient oncology nutrition counseling with a focus on breast, lung and genitourinary cancers. Our incredible moderator Miriam Lieber Kraemer is the President of Lieber Consulting LLC. She's an independent consultant and trainer specializing in home care reimbursement and operations management and with over 25 years of experience in the home care field, she's a featured author and nationally known speaker which is why we're so lucky to have her joining us today. She'll be guiding us through Diana's presentation, through her own personal journey on nutrition. These two have been working very hard on today's presentation.

Jenna Fields:

Miriam and I met in October to start planning this program and never could we have imagined that this was going to end up being a virtual program in the middle of a global pandemic but here we are. We're so grateful to Diana who has adjusted her presentation to be relevant to this moment. Without further ado, I'm going to introduce Diana and Miriam to take over.

Miriam Kraemer:

Well, thank you. I think I'm going to start off if I remember right, Jenna and guide me through if I somehow forget, what an honor also for me to work with you Jenna and Diana. I just feel so privileged and most importantly, I just wanted to thank everyone for joining us today and being willing to spend your time in this way. I am so indebted to Sharsheret and what it has done for me and allowed me the space to really explore my own journey with breast cancer. To be honest, I just thought about it, but last week was my two year anniversary of my mastectomy and it's a big milestone for me and it brings up the reason why, in part, I wanted to discuss this today.

Miriam Kraemer:

I'm recalling now after my surgery, I was doing quite well and then all of a sudden one day, I realized my wound wasn't looking right and it didn't feel like it should look and didn't feel right and so, I discussed with my plastic surgeon what she thought the issues might be and if I could quote her, she said, "Well, this is not ideal." When we went down on kind of a rabbit hole with this wound that wouldn't heal, I started to feel really sheepish about my recovery and I felt almost like a sense of insecurity and a lack of control about whether or not I was going to get through this. And how I was going to get through it to be able to get on already. I'm that kind of person that needs to get moving and get back on track.

Miriam Kraemer:

At some point in the process, maybe the third visit over this, I decided, I've got to take this under control, get the control back and take it into my own hands. Into my head popped this idea and it reminded me that when I first got diagnosed, I was told I could use a dietitian and I thought, a nutritionist, a dietitian, what would that do for me? Forget it. And I put it in the back of my mind. Then as I was going through this process of needing to heal, I thought, "I have nothing to lose. I'm going to go ahead and make that phone call." I went ahead and called and I ended up at Cedars.

Miriam Kraemer:

I got into the office of the dietitian and I thought to myself, "Okay, Miriam, go for it. Just do it. I was still super skeptical," and then I met Diana. Diana Torres ended up being my dietitian and she really set me on a path towards healing. She introduced me to ways to ... she introduced me to protein and ways to really help myself get through a process that felt so otherwise out of control and even to the point where I looked forward to my little protein smoothies every day. They were my treat that I got. I couldn't do a lot but I could get that protein smoothie in me. It felt like it really helped me get on my way to healing and she gave me so many ideas that it almost gave me this sense of power that I wouldn't have had otherwise.

Miriam Kraemer:

It really relates today to me, a little bit of a parallel because in today's COVID crisis, we feel a lot of this lack of control and power in our daily lives. I can't think of a better way to really focus this kind of energy than on something to learn about nutrition and ways to really seize control again and resume our sort of

daily activities, maybe in a new and creative way. That's where Diana comes in. I look forward to hearing so much from you, Diana about your ideas and ways to approach nutrition in a COVID-19 crisis.

Diana Torres:

Thank you, Miriam. I am really honored to hear your story and to be able to reconnect with you after our counseling sessions. It's not often that we get to hear the distant update, and I am grateful to hear it so I thank you for sharing your story with the group. Also, thank you to Jenna and yourself for inviting me today with this group virtually. Dr. Asher, he was the one to first make a connection with Sharsheret. Today, the topic is What Does Nutrition Mean When We Feel Most Vulnerable. This takes many different forms in our lives.

Diana Torres:

What I want to discuss is that nutrition is very personal and when we talk about what our individual eating habits are, we want to figure out what's appropriate for us and we want to say, what can we do with what we have now. In this time, where we are feeling very vulnerable and individuals may have their own personal health concerns, there are food access issues and issues of supply and availability, we have to really hone in on what is important to us and what role nutrition can play in our lives, in our lifestyle. What I want to encourage with this talk with everybody is to set your priorities, to consider what your situation is, consider if you have limited energy or limited resources or your specific health needs and know that what looks like healthy and appropriate and ideal nutrition for you may be different than somebody else.

Diana Torres:

Our goal posts should be focused on you alone, on your needs, yourself, your palate and your specific goals. Remember that there's no one perfect way to eat and that you can't do it all, all the time so that prioritizing is really important. We want to utilize our resources to help achieve our individual goals. I ask when we talk about nutrition if you want to make a change. Consider what is in your wheelhouse and then take that one step beyond what is comfortable for you. We want it to be a smart goal, what is specific, what is measurable, achievable and realistic? Consider that food is the fuel for your body and that our nutrition should be a gentle nutrition and perfection is not our goal in terms of our food choices in every meal, in every day.

Diana Torres:

What is important is our consistency and recognizing that food is self-care. Food can heal, and our food choices and habits can be in that one area where we have some sense of structure and some sense of control. And at this time, where we definitely aren't able to easily hop into the car and go grocery shopping, we want to set our expectations that we just want to focus on the healthy principles for us in a general way and have it be flexible and try to stay away from labels of good and bad and thinking about dieting and restricting. Think about food as being nourishing and food as being part of your self-care. One thing we want to focus on is that hunger is your body's way of asking for nourishment.

Diana Torres:

Hunger is not something that we can overcome with willpower, we want to connect with our body and connect with those signals. I want to address my philosophy when it comes to nutrition a little bit more and put it in the context of mindfulness. When we are mindful, we practice that non-judgmental awareness, of being present in the moment. That's really important, be present, be in the moment.

Nutrition in Vulnerable Times

When we talk about mindful eating specifically, it's non-judgmental awareness of your physical, your emotional sensations while you're eating, while you're in a food related environment and making that connection between what your body is saying and what you're choosing to do, really helps for you to make your individual choices in regards to food.

Diana Torres:

I want to take one more opportunity to discuss mindful eating a little bit more, and share this next slide which is just discussing mindful eating as a cycle and a relationship between your body, your feelings, your mind and how we are all connected, connected with other people that we choose to eat with, connected with people that supply our meals, and we're connected with the environment where we find our nourishment from. When we're talking about food and being present with our food choices, we want to think about what do I eat? How do I eat? How much do I eat? Where am I going to invest my energy in eating and why am I eating what I'm eating and when?

Diana Torres:

That question is really important which I'll kind of discuss later. When we eat, we have to plan for ourselves and plan that eating is self-care and eating is nourishment, so you have to plan to be able to make those choices in the moment. Another adjunct that I like to consider with our philosophy on eating is the concept of intuitive eating. Really, intuitive eating, it's a mind body approach to our food choices, and there are 10 tenants to it. This, we can spend a lot of time discussing each of these different factors. I really want to leave this up here for you and know that if you want to dive deeper into the concept of intuitive eating, there are many experts in the field, dietitians that I respect.

Diana Torres:

Evelyn Tribole is one, Elise Resch is another, Robyn Goldberg is another in the LA area, that are good resources for you to work individually if you want or to get ... they have different media, different books that can discuss intuitive eating more. Know that it's a personal process of honoring your health by listening and responding to the signals we get from our body, to meet our physical and our psychological needs in regards to food and how it can be comforting for us. In introducing the concept of intuitive eating, I'm going to direct you towards the end of the list of intuitive eating principles and really look at one, honoring your health. Knowing that this is one aspect of intuitive eating that really benefits us.

Diana Torres:

We want to make food choices that honor our body, honor our taste buds, honor how we feel when we eat. Remember that food isn't a way to punish ourselves or it isn't a way to reward behavior, it's a way to nourish ourselves and to address certain health needs or goals. I want to ask that we prioritize our nutrition needs and know that prioritizing is ... it's not a concession or accommodation because of your health or your situation. It's an acknowledgement of respect and recognizing of what your body is going through. I ask that you listen to the demands of your body and tailor your food goals, to meet your needs and again, choose for you what is achievable and meaningful.

Diana Torres:

I think Miriam's story was a great highlight for that, about how she was choosing to meet her needs to help with her body's wound healing, to focus on protein and find ways to do that.

Miriam Kraemer:

Actually Diana I have a question for you.

Diana Torres:

Of course.

Miriam Kraemer:

You talk about sort of honoring your body and not making it a concession or an accommodation, so then how do you address the fact that you have these guilt feelings sometimes or should I indulge today or not, or what's a day to indulge, and some people will say, "Well, I just indulge on weekends or I feel so guilty." How do you address that and how do you know when or when not to feel that way?

Diana Torres:

I think that's a really great question, and a lot of it has to do with how we choose to frame things in our own heads. When we go back to intuitive eating principles, we want to kind of get away from the food police and that is food policing ourselves, those labels of what is good or bad and think more about balance, and that we eat to nourish our bodies but we also want it to be enjoyable and palatable. If we are focusing on food balance and food variety, if you want to enjoy some sweetness, if you want to enjoy a dessert at the end of your meal, don't think of that as a quote, unquote, indulgence or a reward for a good behavior.

Diana Torres:

Think of it as just you, honoring your palate, honoring your body and knowing that that balance is what's going to help you be consistent and further your health goals more.

Miriam Kraemer:

Okay.

Diana Torres:

I appreciate that question and with that discussion, let's go a little bit further into, so what can we do? Jenna was saying that this is such a unique situation and it's even more difficult to kind of have what we put into our mind as the ideal diet. What I want us to try and think about is, switching our perspective and thinking about ways in which our food choices can uplift ourselves. We want to make it practical and doable, focus on what we can eat instead of what we can avoid and we want to set ourselves up for success. Part of that, if we go back to our thoughts on mindful eating is making time for ourselves, when do we eat?

Diana Torres:

You can't make healthful choices in the moment if you don't prepare. What I want to encourage us to do is spend some time thinking about what choices we can make to set ourselves up for success and hopefully some of these ideas resonate with you, and they may be different ones for each individual. Pick a couple of things that resonate with you to try to implement starting right now. When we talk about ways to set ourselves up for success, we want to think about stocking our kitchen, and that's like, what are those pantry staples that we want to have so that we can make meals that we enjoy and meals that will nourish ourselves and how can we make the most use out of what we have, especially when it's harder to get access to what we want to be eating.

Diana Torres:

I'll spend some time talking about some healthy substitutes and a little bit more time about our setup. This is a basic list of what I consider our food staples and I want everyone to consider, you modify this for your own goals and your own palate. There may be things on here that you choose not to eat or you cannot tolerate then think of an alternative. I list these as food staples, as basics that we can have on hand because if you look at this, you can have full meals out of these foods and they're more on the shelf stable side, and so they're foods that you can have a little bit more of a stock of, without the possibility of it spoiling or rotting and not that eggs or bananas and apples don't rot but they're more shelf stable.

Diana Torres:

First on the list is frozen produce and a lot of times I get questions that really think of frozen produce where it may not have the most nutrients but I want everyone to consider that having something on hand is better than just doing without because it's not something that you think is the best. Frozen produce whether it's a fruit or a vegetable can be a great way to make something that is helpful, that has retained most of its nutrients. Beans are on my list, although some people may not tolerate beans. I think beans are a great source of B vitamins and protein. It's not a complete protein, so you would want to mix it with something else if you're looking for beans to meet your protein needs but beans can also be a great source of fiber and also iron, and can be prepared in many ways.

Diana Torres:

I list a shelf stable milk on here. You want to just look for something that is pasteurized and sterilized and it's whichever milk you like. Nut butters is on here. Nuts, I also want to say that nuts are great. It's that nature's snack to have on hand. Nuts, nut butters. If we want to think about what is immune boosting for us, nuts have a lot of the different nutrients that help contribute to our immune health. If we think Brazil nuts, Brazil nuts have the most amount of selenium and that's very important in enhancing our immunity and helping our body address oxidative stress and helping reduce inflammation. I list a protein in terms of like a canned or a pouch salmon.

Diana Torres:

If salmon is not something you enjoy, think of another protein and if you don't choose to eat fish, think of another protein or plant protein source. I list eggs on here. I definitely think there are many uses to them, onion, garlic, bananas and apples. They can play many different roles in our meals. Onion and garlic are great flavor enhancers and also foods that are immune boosting, thinking about them being antibacterial, anti-microbial and anti-inflammatory. This is a starter list and you may take some things off of your own list. You may add other things and I encourage you to do that. I like to have different squash, because they have thick skins they last a really long time.

Diana Torres:

When you are making your grocery list, whether it is something that you're going to pick up yourself or you're going to choose for delivery, squash is one of those things that can survive for quite some time and still be really nourishing and we say on order of a couple of months. Once you have what you consider as your list, what I want you to think of is to then help choose your foods based on what food groups we want to include and in what quantity. When we think of what is healthy eating, we want to use that visual approach to what's healthy and say most of it is produce or plant or grain based and then you have a protein.

Nutrition in Vulnerable Times

Diana Torres:

When you are grocery shopping, let's not look specifically for one type of leafy green or a specific other fruit or vegetable. Focus on just those groups, so if you're going grocery shopping and you don't see spinach, think of well, what other leafy green can I have? Can I have kale or arugula or Swiss chard, which is in season now. I know that that flexibility is really helpful in these moments, can help relieve the stress of what are healthful food choices, and when we can have on hand these variety of food groups, it makes it easier for us to plan our meals and make healthful choices.

Miriam Kraemer:

Diana, can I mention something that I thought was interesting? You talked about food groups and things like that. Is it okay to butt in here?

Diana Torres:

Definitely. I was waiting for you.

Miriam Kraemer:

Good. It's funny, my daughter who's home from college was looking to create some kind of healthy snack and it was the middle of the afternoon and the times they get up are all so different and she's like, "What can I do? I need to find a way to make something really healthy, but also something that tastes good to my palate." She immediately went for the smoothie. She got the blender out. She's all ready to go, and she's like, "I don't know even where to begin to put things in," and then all of a sudden, she remembered we have an orange tree and nobody uses it. She literally went to the orange tree and picked out some like beautiful blood oranges and made the most delicious smoothie out of something we never would have thought of before and it was just being resourceful in times when we haven't been in the past.

Miriam Kraemer:

I know you're probably thinking why not, but this heightened awareness is something that I think speaks volume to what you were mentioning about just trying to create where you have to find out a substitution or a way to think differently about the way you eat, this one really comes to mind. That's why I mentioned that story.

Diana Torres:

I appreciate that. Thank you. We get in to grooves with our lives and we have so many different things items on our checklist of what we need to get done, that we kind of narrow our focus, and this situation allows us to broaden it and hopefully this talk will allow each individual online here to take a moment to think about what are ways to broaden our perspective to take that one step beyond. I love the fact that your daughter is using oranges to spruce up her smoothies. I want to share a story with that as well. My daughter, she's eight years old and I was teaching her ... I always like to get her involved so that she is more inspired to eat with us and so we've all been home.

Diana Torres:

I have this big thing of greens and so we were going to make a salad, and so I was teaching her how to use oranges, just like your daughter for the salad. I taught her how to supreme an orange, and she's really great with a knife, even though she's eight, she's really great with the knife, and it got her really

interested in enjoying that salad. I want to say that's a great analog because I often think that we can use the foods that are available or use fruits to spruce up or spice up our meals that are vegetables forward and that when we're containing them in a meal, we're including oranges, which are a great source of vitamin C and immune enhancing, with our leafy green.

Diana Torres:

That vitamin C is also letting our bodies absorb more iron and in moments, when we need more of it, like if we're experiencing iron deficiency anemia then having oranges with a green salad is a great way to provide more iron. Of course, other iron sources which can also go on your salad would be nuts, seeds, beans or any other protein choice. Thank you for your story. Let's then move on. I apologize, I keep on losing my cursor so I can't change the slides quickly. Once we have our grocery list, once we have that preparation and that kind of basics available, let's think about ways that we can turn meal, multiple meals out of the same food.

Diana Torres:

This one I just threw up here, I looked for some very pretty pictures of different ways to use spinach and there's a smoothie right there in the middle but know that you can use spinach in your salads. You can use spinach in your smoothies but you can also cook it. Often, I would get the question of well, aren't I supposed to go to a farmers market, get the spinach that's just been picked out of the ground and eat it raw. Isn't that the best way for me to get my nutrition or make the most of the nutrition that is in that food product that I'm eating? What I really like to encourage is that we have a variety of ways to eat a variety of meal preparations, because when we are looking to do more with food prep, we're going to be able to absorb different nutrients better.

Diana Torres:

Often, when we're talking about our produce, our plants, our fruits, the fiber that is really great for us, can prevent our bodies from absorbing some of the other nutrients so when we cook some foods, we'll get more of our fat soluble vitamins and we'll also get more of our minerals. In this situation, where we're concerned about our immune function, those minerals are key, so eating something raw is helpful for the vitamin C and the B vitamins and the fiber, but eating something cooked is just as helpful because we need those fat soluble vitamins and those minerals as well. I hope that we consider ... that we don't have to go shopping for each meal, each dish that we're going to create.

Diana Torres:

That when we have limited food access, let's think of ways to expand our meal with using the same grocery list or food choices. I want to bring up another way that can be a little bit more use of ... bring a little bit more use out of what we're purchasing and what we're buying and making. I like to talk about ways we can use food scraps to further our produce and our meal choices. Up now is a kind of basic idea about using the leftover ingredients of our produce to make homemade stock and really, I say, garlic, onions, celery and carrots are what you have for stock. It can be and should be many other, whichever other produce that you also have. This is the way to use the bits and pieces that you would normally throw away.

Diana Torres:

A couple caveats to that is the starchier vegetable, the pieces of starchier vegetables would stick in or make your stock a little bit more gummy. Maybe not use potatoes or turnip ends for stock but what I do

is when I'm cooking or doing my food prep, I'll keep the peels and keep the ends of the garlic or the onions and the tip of the carrots and set that aside and then you let that boil down to help create your own stock. If you keep it in your refrigerator, it'll be stable for a few days. If you are not going to be making another dish that uses stock, you can always cook it down even more to make it a stock concentrate and then put them in freezer cubes.

Diana Torres:

I said starchy vegetables aren't good for stock. Other things that may make stock a little bit more bitter would be zucchini or green beans or our brassica vegetables. Sometimes broccoli makes stock more bitter, and if you are using beets, you probably don't want to put that in a stock because the beets could overpower the flavor of your stock. Beets, you can definitely throw in, all of the pieces of the beets for a smoothie and that would be a great way to use more of your food and reduce food waste. With the stock, even if you don't want to make a soup, you can also use the stock as an oil substitute, if you are sautéing or stir frying your vegetables and that can be a way to cut down on the fat content of the meal.

Diana Torres:

Other things that we can do that might be appropriate for us on this time to further our grocery shopping finds, is to turn some of our foods into a homemade garden, and I think that seeing your food growing is another way to encourage you to choose those foods versus something else. This is just a quick example for us to have and review that when you ... if you get the whole carrot, it's not just the root portion that is edible, the greens are definitely edible and provide great nourishment for us as well. I'm not going to go through the whole process but you can see that once you cut the head off, if you weren't going to use it for a stock, you could use it to grow the carrot green or this would be appropriate for radishes or beets as well.

Diana Torres:

Then, once that stock has grown, you can cut it down and use that either in a salad or you can saute it into a meal. This is one easy way to use food scraps to create your garden. Another one would be celery, this same process where you leave some remnants close to the root, cut it and put it in water and change that water every so often either once a day or every other day to keep it fresh and then planted into dirt. It's a great way to have produce on hand and celery can be a great component of a salad or snack on its own. This process is also appropriate for bok choy and appropriate for your cabbages and for lettuces to further your meal.

Diana Torres:

I think everybody has seen the big green onions and ways to have a continuous supply. This is just another opportunity to see it, maybe inspire you to take your bottoms of the green onions to grow it and turn it into your own garden. This can be the same process that you would do if you had lemongrass, which is a great flavor enhancer to many meals. Last one I think, and a great immune enhancing food choice would be ginger and a lot of people aren't aware that you can grow your own ginger by following this process. Same thing if you haven't seen turmeric in its root form, it looks just like ginger, just orange but can be grown like this. Hopefully, I-

Miriam Kraemer:

I wanted to butt in here, if that's okay.

Miriam Kraemer:

The whole notion of the onion in the jar, I've been seeing it all over Instagram and it looks so pretty and it's so resourceful. I've just seen a case in point. I've seen it all over the place in the last couple of weeks, during this time. This resonates for me and also, I just wanted to share, my daughter who's home, when we were taking a walk around the neighborhood last week and she said to me, "Mom, you know, I think we need to start a vegetable garden." I was like, "You're right, we do." When we've talked about it, we're ready to go. We just haven't sort of pulled the trigger, and she said, "No, the reason why is because during this crisis, there are a lot of people who need the food at the stores."

Miriam Kraemer:

"If we were to grow our own since we can, first of all, we'd leave the food for the people that really need it and secondly, if we have enough we could honestly share it with those around us who really need it as well," and it feels like it serves a purpose when ... especially now when people are just going without or we may end up with severe shortages, which we see, I thought that was really telling and really makes us think about ways to get our food and resources, ways that we haven't thought of before, and I think it speaks to those slides you just went through so beautifully. Thank you for sharing that.

Diana Torres:

Thank you, Miriam. We definitely want to think about practical ways to make it easier for us to make healthful choices and to honor not just ourselves but to take into consideration our community and our environment. When we kind of get back to the basics and we think of ways that we can provide for ourselves, we're also putting it into our mindset that these are foods that will nourish us and these are foods that we'll enjoy, and because you've taken the time to grow or really make the most use out of what you have, you appreciate it more. So, choosing to make a salad or choosing to include some greens or celery as your snack, it's much easier on us mentally and we don't feel like we're depriving ourselves of what we want.

Diana Torres:

These are the foods that we want, when you have a hand in growing your foods, you're more inspired to eat those foods. So, when I was thinking about this topic, I also wanted to discuss what are some of those healthy substitutes for us when we are preparing meals. So, I cover just a few food items and a few hints and maybe some of these things are things that you're already practicing or you're incorporating just so that we think about food balance. I'm listing healthy substitutes for butter but that doesn't mean that I think you should not have any. It just means that we want to use it sparingly but when we do use butter, which is a source of fat, we do allow ourselves to absorb more of those fat soluble vitamins that we need.

Diana Torres:

If you want to cut your reliance on butter, ways to do it would be to use bananas or applesauce. If we think back to that pantry list of staples, that's why I include bananas and applesauce because you can use it for many different functions rather than just the snack itself. Also on here, you can see avocado, purees, prune, prune purees and plain yogurt. When we're cutting down butter, we want to consider that butter is in recipes providing often a taste, it's providing moisture and texture. So, I generally say that we want to cut the butter by half and not necessarily remove all of it unless you have practiced with it so that you can see if the end result is how you prefer it. If we are using some of these things and

we're cutting down on some of the fat, I'm introducing other good nutrients that are found in these foods.

Miriam Kraemer:

I was going to say something. I also use a lot of butters not just peanut butter but almond butter mix. It's so great in smoothies and those kinds of things, as well as other uses and a lot of people use it in their main food groups, so case in point. I also wanted to just mention, I know we're running close to the time where we're going to have to fill the questions, I didn't know.

Diana Torres:

Thank you for the reminder. Another healthy substitute that we can talk about briefly would be sugar. We want to think that our added sugar should be less than 7% of the total calories, and so I put up this list of what that means for general individuals, it can be different and the numbers will be different based on your individual specifics. We can use applesauce or vanilla extract or cinnamon. When you're using a sugar substitute or alternative, you want to really look at those conversion charts and oftentimes, the sugar alternatives can be very sweet in comparison to regular sugar, so you need a lot. You would only need a smaller portion to meet that flavor profile.

Diana Torres:

Eggs, I say I like using eggs but I also think that there are great substitute for eggs and knowing that the egg is something that is emulsifying or binding to your meal or can be thickening for your recipe. A lot of things are self-explanatory, I just want to say that the Aquafaba is the liquid of garbanzo, if you're getting canned garbanzos and so if you get three tablespoons of that liquid that is equal to an egg. When we talk about food that can satisfy multiple roles in our diet, beans is another great choice, you can use the beans for the Aquafaba. You can use the beans to turn into hummus or you can use beans as your protein on salad.

Diana Torres:

We could spend a lot of time on this slide and I often do and I'm doing individual counseling of ways to cut down our reliance on that simple carb, which is great as a source of energy but if we are looking to lose weight or if we're looking to cut back on our calories, it's often looking at what are those carb alternatives and a lot of these are self-explanatory. Cauliflower can be used for rice, it can be a mashed potato substitute. You see those buffalo wings recipes that you can use instead. I put turnips and oftentimes people don't know how turnip can be a carb substitute or alternative but turnip can be that fry, different fry choice, if you wanted to cut it up and bake it and season it.

Diana Torres:

It could take that place of that finger food thing that we want to have. Zucchini for the noodles. Some things on here that you might not know, Shirataki noodles is just seen more in Asian stores and it's zero calorie so very appropriate for somebody if they were diabetic or needed to really cut down on their carb intake. Mushrooms I put on here because mushrooms can be like a bread substitute. It could be like a pizza bite, it can be a really flavorful way to provide more nourishment and knowing that mushrooms are really well researched for their immune enhancing capabilities. Some other things that we could talk about if you wanted to use frozen bananas instead of ice cream there or using cocoa nibs instead of chocolate chips or nutritional yeast instead of cheese. There are a lot of great healthy substitutes that are still really enjoyable.

Miriam Kraemer:

It's so funny my daughter started using ... making a meat sauce and instead of searching for the spaghetti, she ended up throwing the meat right over eggplant and zucchini and made a whole meal out of it and said it was really, really tasty.

Diana Torres:

That's the thing, is we want to make choices that utilize what we have and are still really enjoyable so thank you. When we think about making healthful choices and looking at what's in our wheelhouse and looking for what's that one step beyond, we got to know that we can't make those choices, if we don't put in the work or if we don't put it into our mindset that these are open and available to us and that these are things that we can do. So, you want to think of what are your staples. Think about the pre-prep for your meals. So, that may be ... that after the grocery shopping you cut vegetables ahead of time or you make certain dishes ahead of time and you put it at eye level.

Diana Torres:

We call it, the eye level being the buy level. Make it where you can see it so that you are more inspired to choose it when the time comes, when you're hungry or also, when you've set up a general schedule for yourself. Make time for yourself to grocery shop or think about what's going to be on your list. Make time for yourself to have a healthful snack or go for a walk before your meal or a walk after your meal, when we talk about healthful eating and lifestyles, it's making time, that is the most important. That brings me to my last couple of slides when I am gazing at the clock, we're headed towards the end. This is another concept in intuitive eating, is that we want to honor our feelings.

Diana Torres:

Find ways to comfort, to nurture and distract ourselves and help resolve our issues without using food but to know that food is there as our self-nourishment. It's there to practice self love and compassion. When we think about ourselves in vulnerable conditions, and the situations and we're all in a vulnerable situation, but at different times in our lives, we can find ourselves in vulnerable situations as well, we want to build our repertoire of those non-food coping techniques now. We want to practice it now so that when we're in situations where we want to emotionally eat or we want to comfort with ... or eat out of anxiety or loneliness or boredom, we want to have those tools already within our back pocket.

Diana Torres:

To know that practice so that we can implement those non-food based coping techniques to help us deal with the situation, and the last slide I want to bring us to is a slide to remind us of mindful eating. What I want to encourage is that we notice, we want to feel, taste, enjoy and observe what we're doing in the moment. We want to be present in the moment and some examples of mindful eating might be to cooking and eating when you're in a good mood. It's gardening so that you can have your food ingredients to prepare your meals and enjoy your meals. Maybe eating without distraction and sitting at a real table.

Diana Torres:

Remember, we want to respect our body and our health and we want to enjoy the moment without hurrying and in the situation when our routines are thrown out of whack, maybe it's a time to reassess what is respecting and honoring ourselves and how do we want to invest our time and hopefully, I've given you some ideas for that.

Miriam Kraemer:

That was excellent, Diana. I'm so impressed by you and honored that you were willing to do this with us. I got a lot of takeaways myself, I have a page full of notes, and I'm so excited to start thinking about how to be a little bit more resourceful and enjoying the time to prepare the foods that we make and taking the time to really savor the moments and family time that we haven't gotten before, even if it's with someone on Zoom. So, it's such a delight to hear you talk about using nutrition in such a positive way. It's given me some renewed energy, sort of much like it did when I was feeling so helpless during the time when I needed to heal from breast cancer, I get the same feeling here today that it's sort of a renewed sense of power and control over ... in a time when I'm otherwise feeling so vulnerable.

Miriam Kraemer:

I'm sure that I'm echoing the sentiments of many others on the call today and I'm just so pleased to have gotten this opportunity and thank you again to you and Cedars and Sharsheret for allowing this forum and it couldn't have been in a better time. Thanks again for all of your hard work. I really think it paid off.

Diana Torres:

Thank you. It's really my honor and my pleasure to be involved in this and to hear your story and to be able to connect again and to provide some of this information and hopefully sparked something in everyone's minds about what each person can individually do to take ownership and to use our food choices to help us and to be that self-care. I'm going to stop sharing my slides now, so we can see everybody else. I know we have a short time for questions.

Jenna Fields:

I'm going to jump in Diana and Miriam, thank you so much for this presentation. We'll get to some questions right now. The first question asks specifically from a cancer patient undergoing chemotherapy and radiation after, are there any specific diet recommendations you can make for people in active treatment?

Diana Torres:

Well, I like to say that our diet choices during treatment need to be individualized and I hope you have a dietitian that you can work with because not all cancer diagnosis or treatment trajectories are the same. We really want to individualize your needs and your goals. If anything that I can encourage for someone going through treatment is to practice some gentle nutrition, I use that term in the beginning. That we want to be flexible in our food choices and really understand that it's not a moment to practice the perfect diet. Really, that the perfect diet for you is listening to your body and being present in that moment, and so for some people that means being on a high fiber diet. For some people, it's the exact opposite, in low fiber.

Diana Torres:

What I can encourage and what I really hope you're able to is to work with your treatment team and hopefully your treatment team has a dietitian to individualize your nutrition goals during active treatment.

Jenna Fields:

Diana, so many of us are struggling between, should we do the food delivery service versus going into the store right now. When we do food delivery, we don't get all the items. Could you address what you're recommending to your patients about that dilemma?

Diana Torres:

Definitely. I want to say that we want to focus on the basics, and so if you're choosing to do delivery, maybe you set up what your first choice is but then open it up for alternatives, so if they don't have mushrooms, what else can you have? If they don't have your preferred arugula or salad green, what other green can you do and think about what is more shelf stable right now. Maybe we can't go to the farmers market and get what is fresh picked, maybe we do get that frozen produce and know that those choices are not concessions. Again, those choices are honoring the situation that we're in and knowing that your consistent food choices are really the most helpful.

Jenna Fields:

We're still taking questions in the chat box but I'm going to keep going with the ones we have. Diana, can you address soy and how much soy is okay?

Diana Torres:

I definitely want to encourage people to speak with their providers in regards to this question. Soy is not something that we need to necessarily avoid when we think of minimally processed soy for an individual that has had a breast cancer diagnosis or is concerned about a breast cancer diagnosis. We say that minimally processed soy has been shown to be helpful because the type of estrogen in there is not one that's going to raise our body's Estradiol. So, if you wanted to include soy on a daily basis and with a serving being half of a cup, please feel free to do so. It's not going to stimulate that cell division that we're worried about in regards to our own body's production of estrogen.

Jenna Fields:

Can you address any specific vitamins people should think about taking in addition to what we normally take during the pandemic?

Diana Torres:

This is another question that is very pertinent for you to discuss with your health care provider. We often think of what can we do when we have this lack of control and we're exposed to things and we are more vulnerable, but supplements aren't always innocuous or supplements aren't always health promoting. Sometimes certain supplements, and specifically with this situation can be counter to our health and often, I hear people taking more supplements. One end point would be people taking elderberry but we find out that in COVID and for people that are COVID positive, a lot of the negative health outcomes are related to that, stimulating of what we call a Cytokine Storm and certain foods and supplements can be stimulating of our immune system but what they're actually doing is activating the immune system.

Diana Torres:

If we're dealing with those respiratory disease, and we're dealing with the cytokine storm, certain supplements are immune activating and activating more of the cytokine storm. So, it may be helpful to take elderberry if we had no concerns about ourselves being positive but if you were COVID positive, you wouldn't want to take elderberry because you run the risk of exacerbating, stimulating that cytokine

storm and that leading to worse health outcomes. My personal preference is to try and go for a variety of food sources to meet our nutrient needs and put your focus there. If you have concerns for specific supplements, really work with your team.

Diana Torres:

Certain supplements can be ... have negative health effects even though they sound or they're marketed as being immune promoting.

Jenna Fields:

I'm going to do two more questions. One is someone who is taking medication right now, eating healthy drinking water but her cancer medication is still contributing to weight increase, she believes. How common is that? How much does that contribute?

Diana Torres:

It's so hard because there are so many different medications that can lead to weight gain and for different reasons, depending on what you're taking, there are ones that can stimulate your appetite. There are ones that can lead to more fluid retention or more fat storage or that slowed metabolism for individuals with a breast cancer diagnosis and maybe they're being thrown into menopause. It's very difficult and individuals that have gone through different types of treatment, your energy level is impacted and so you may have some difficulty exercising. It's really hard to quantify the amount that is purely due to medication but we do know that that happens and the amount can vary widely.

Diana Torres:

What I would encourage is for us to focus on what we can do and just to practice a gentle understanding for what our bodies have been through, and to know that we can address weight gain with the goals of weight loss, but focus more on the habits as opposed to beating ourselves up by looking on the scale all the time.

Jenna Fields:

Last question, Diana. Can you recommend any additional nutrient dense vegan meal options?

Diana Torres:

When we think about nutrient density and vegan meal, hopefully you can tolerate legumes, our beans, our lentils, our nuts. Those are really great nutrient sources and then you have the whole variety of produce, our leafy green vegetables, our different squashes, our colorful vegetables are all great nutrient sources. When we think of a vegan meal, we're narrowing our food choices, so oftentimes you have to be eating more to be meeting your nutrient needs.

Jenna Fields:

Thank you so much Diana and Miriam for this wonderful presentation. We're so delighted that you shared your expertise with us today. Thank you to all of you who joins. We will be recording this and sending it out along with information about our upcoming webinars next week including one with Dr. Arash Asher, Diana's colleague. Please reach out to us and share any questions, if your questions didn't get answered today, please let us know and we'll see if we can get them answered for you after the program. I hope everybody has a wonderful afternoon and thank you again.

Nutrition in Vulnerable Times

Diana Torres:

I appreciate it Jenna. Have a good day everybody.

Jenna Fields:

Bye Diana and Miriam.

Miriam Kraemer:

Thank you.

About Sharsheret

Sharsheret, Hebrew for “chain”, is a national non-profit organization, improves the lives of Jewish women and families living with or at increased genetic risk for breast or ovarian cancer through personalized support and saves lives through educational outreach.

With four offices (California, Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey), Sharsheret serves 150,000 women, families, health care professionals, community leaders, and students, in all 50 states. Sharsheret creates a safe community for women facing breast cancer and ovarian cancer and their families at every stage of life and at every stage of cancer - from before diagnosis, during treatment and into the survivorship years. While our expertise is focused on young women and Jewish families, more than 15% of those we serve are not Jewish. All Sharsheret programs serve all women and men.

As a premier organization for psychosocial support, Sharsheret’s Executive Director chairs the Federal Advisory Committee on Breast Cancer in Young Women, Sharsheret works closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and participates in psychosocial research studies and evaluations with major cancer centers, including Georgetown University Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center. Sharsheret is accredited by the Better Business Bureau and has earned a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator for four consecutive years.

Sharsheret offers the following national programs:

The Link Program

- Peer Support Network, connecting women newly diagnosed or at high risk of developing breast cancer one-on-one with others who share similar diagnoses and experiences
- Embrace™, supporting women living with advanced breast cancer • Genetics for Life®, addressing hereditary breast and ovarian cancer
- Thriving Again®, providing individualized support, education, and survivorship plans for young breast cancer survivors • Busy Box®, for young parents facing breast cancer
- Best Face Forward®, addressing the cosmetic side effects of treatment
- Family Focus®, providing resources and support for caregivers and family members
- Ovarian Cancer Program, tailored resources and support for young Jewish women and families facing ovarian cancer • Sharsheret Supports™, developing local support groups and programs

Education and Outreach Programs

- Health Care Symposia, on issues unique to younger women facing breast cancer
- Sharsheret on Campus, outreach and education to students on campus
- Sharsheret Educational Resource Booklet Series, culturally-relevant publications for Jewish women and their families and healthcare Professionals

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