



Q: Can you start by describing how you got into nutrition? What led you to become a dietician?

Kathleen Bundy: As far as my background goes, I've always been interested in food and cooking and lifestyle and general health in all sorts of different ways. I did a lot of traveling when I was younger trying to figure out what I was going to do. And I worked in food service and I worked in the natural foods industry. And then one day, I guess you could say, I kind of saw the light, and I realized that I was going to get a degree in nutrition. So that sort of progressed. Then, with my interest in natural health, I found Bastyr University here in Washington State. After going through their undergraduate programs, I enrolled in the Masters program and decided to do the Dietetics program to become a registered Dietitian. So that included having to complete an internship. So I did that in California at the Los Angeles County and USC General Hospital.

Then I moved back to Seattle, and here I am working in inpatient clinical nutrition as well as running my outpatient practice. I have such a broad population of people that I do a lot of food allergies in addition to my weight loss programs.

The majority of sleep apnea that I see is related to the overweight status. And honestly, working in the hospital, we see a lot of hospitalized patients, overweight with sleep apnea. It's a very common sort of co-morbidity.

Q: What is your experience in designing meal plans?

Kathleen Bundy: I have designed different meal plans over the years for different scenarios or disease state or nutrition needs whether it's diabetes or kidney disease or weight loss. But I often do with the clients... I have to say it I'm not really big on meal planning because my purpose is to give people the tools so they can be able to problem solve and make healthy choices on their own. Because sometimes... If you just... When someone says just give me a meal plan. I just wanted a meal plan and I'll follow it and I'll do whatever you tell me. And then I also find that that just going to sets them up for failure not being able to follow the meal plan. So, I prefer to give them the tools to be able to choose. What I do too many kinds of people and I like to do them in collaboration with the client, so, we'll sit in the office together and design the meal plan. I usually kind of throw it into them half way and then have them take it home and they fill in the other half and then they bring it back to me and go over it.



From my perspective, people need to be empowered to be able to make healthy choices and eat in a healthy manner.

Q: Can you explain how metabolism influences weight loss. Is metabolism a big factor?

Kathleen Bundy: One way of looking at metabolism is that it's kind of how our engine runs, right? And so our engine either run faster or slower and food is basically the fuel for that engine that keeps refilling. So what we wanted to do is provide a steady force of fuel.

And that's what we want to have sort of a balance in daily diet because carbohydrate and protein and fat, those all do different things as far as metabolism goes. There are different factors that influence metabolism such as age, gender, caffeine, that sort of thing. But what's most important is that muscle mass burn calories more efficiently than lipid or fat mass or adipose tissue. So the more we can increase our lean muscle mass and be generally fit the more efficiently we burn calories.

Q: So does that mean that the people can actually influence their metabolism?

Kathleen Bundy: Yes, people can influence their metabolism. The heart burns calories almost up to 6 times more efficiently than fat mass.

Q: That's interesting. Because there is a perception that metabolism is fixed and some people are born with a quick metabolism and others aren't and that's the way it is. But what you're saying though is that there are other factors that you can actually change.

Kathleen Bundy: There are different other factors. There is a genetic component of course but there are definitely modifiable factors for your metabolism. Some people as far as their metabolism goes some people need help with their thyroids. The thyroid kind of determines how faster how slow engine runs and the thyroid can be affected by a lot of different things. So that's a big one for people too.

But we influence metabolism by how we eat. So, for example if we're skipping meals or for following a very low calorie diet, usually our metabolism will slow down to try to conserve energy and that's an evolutionary mechanism right? To make sure that we're preserving energy, maybe in times of lean or in times of when we're not able to procure food that sort of thing, it's an evolutionary thing. So, if we're actually not nourishing ourselves you can see slowing down our metabolism.



So that's why eating breakfast is so important. It provides us that sort of steady source of fuel in the morning, especially if we add protein to our breakfast that's just making sure that we have a steady source of energy, it's setting our engine up to like run efficiently throughout the day. So a really poor meal pattern that people generally have is to, you know, only have coffee in the morning, skip breakfast and then by the end of the day, they're eating a really large meal at night. So large meals at night are really not burned for energy but they're pretty much stored as fat.

Q: Is there any kind of like a guide that you could recommend that people could read, to learn more about how metabolism influences their weight and the role of protein versus carbohydrates and what not? Is there such a thing as one sort of simple guide or website that you would recommend?

Kathleen Bundy: No, there's different websites... Nutrition based websites that have a lot of information, so I don't know particularly one website that's based on metabolism but I do know a website that can sort of direct people, has a lot of information, they can search on for finding this information. It's called nutritiondata.com and it's run by a dietitian. She has a blog and she's always looking at research studies and they have all sorts of different information. I think that's a really valuable resource.

Q: Broadly speaking, are there certain foods that are close to ideal in terms of losing weight? Is there a group of foods that nutritionists and dietitians say should always be in a meal plan?

Kathleen Bundy: I believe lean protein and especially, fish. And I know, not everyone likes fish and there are some issues with contaminants, so you have to be kind of careful about where it comes from and how often you're eating it. And it also has those Omega 3 that are anti-inflammatory and I think it's so important specially with sleep apnea that might be sort of a constructive inflammatory component and vascular system there. So fish and lean protein, apples and pears, grapes.

Q: What makes those foods good compared to other kinds of fruit for example?

Kathleen Bundy: Apples and pears are very rich in soluble fiber so that's really good for the digestive tract. It's very good for cholesterol and fats and they're very high in phytochemicals too that can act as antioxidants and are generally biochemically active. Also, berries. Apples and pears and berries. That's really the way to go as far as fruit goes.

I really wish people would eat more greens, too. Like kale, collard greens, chard, even spinach, romaine lettuce, just generally more greens.



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Q: Do those kinds of foods also help digestion?

Kathleen Bundy: Well, they help digestion just in the way that they're fiber rich and they also have that... They've that chlorophyll compound that can also be healing and soothing to the digestive tract and they're very rich in folates, irons, phytochemicals, calcium... So they're very what we call "nutrient dense foods". They supply a lot of nutrients for a very small amount of calories.

Q: In your dealings with your clients, have you had feedback that people feel like they're always hungry? And if so, how do you deal with that?

Kathleen Bundy: I often find that people feel like they're always hungry if they're following a more restricted meal plan, perhaps they are not eating enough fish, or they're not eating appropriately for their calorie and energy needs. So that's why when I do meal planning I start with a calorie level.

For example, 1600 calories for women, maybe 1800 calories for men. And then, work within those calorie levels to make sure they get plenty of high nutrient density and low caloric density food.

And in my meal plans I always allow for healthy snacks too because our engine often runs more efficiently when we're eating actually small or more frequent meals. Instead of going long periods where you may need a huge meal, then you go another long period eating another big meal.

And I'm not really into "deprivation". I try and get people to follow more of an intuitive feeding model, which is very in touch with their own hunger, and they are able to understand when they need nourishment and to eat an appropriate healthy food when they are hungry. And allow their body to sort of guide them, as to when they are hungry and when they need to eat, because everyone is different, and I think that's part of the issue. And I think people really need to eat the fiberful foods, and lean protein and healthy fats, and those all help with feeling full and satisfied.

Q: Now, you said that you start with a certain calorie level based on sex. So is that just a rule of thumb, or is that set? Do you definitely start with say 1500 for females or 1800 for males, for example? Or will it depend on the person?

Kathleen Bundy: We have different ways of calculating calorie needs based on weight. As dietitians we have all sorts of different calculations we can use depending on the scenario. And then, what we would do is maybe subtract say 500 calories a day for weight loss. So we just determine



based on body weight and individual characteristics what the calorie level would be.

Q: Are there any kind of like vitamins or pills that you ever recommend in a person's diet to help with certain nutrients?

Kathleen Bundy: As far as vitamins go, I think that it is important for most people to take a good multivitamin. So generally, that's just what I recommend. I like a whole foods multivitamin, because I believe in the whole food matrix of nutrients as opposed to synthetically produced single nutrients.

There are other supplements that can be recommended usually based on an individual basis. So some people will need a little thyroid support, some people will need adrenal support. Sometimes people need something to help with sugar cravings; people may need chromium to help with insulin sensitivity. For some people, a medically supervised detox program is really, really helpful for them to sort of reset and support their liver. And there are some different metabolic support formulas out there.

Gymnema for sugar cravings is usually very safe. Ashwagandha for adrenal support with adaptogenic properties is generally safe.

Q: You mentioned that you think a meal plan should be customized for each person as opposed to using a generic kind of template. So what sort of steps you usually follow then in developing a meal plan for somebody?

Kathleen Bundy: Well, like I said sometimes I have generic meal plans for different sort of things. If someone needs to be say gluten free, as in 1800 calorie gluten free diet, I have some generic meal plans. And I also have blank meal planning worksheets that I use. So the main point is that each person is an individual and has unique needs and unique circumstances. But the best way to do meal planning is get generic meal plans based on calorie level, and then we use something called “exchanges”, which are basically choices of carbohydrate, protein and fat. And those are based on portion sizes, calories, grams of protein, grams of carbohydrate. So people following the meal plan just pick the different exchanges and they can exchange different carbohydrate, one carbohydrate source for another. They can use different sources of protein. So the meal plan becomes like a guide in that way.

Q: So the meal plans are flexible?



Kathleen Bundy: Flexible, yes.

Q: Another thing that I have been told by a lot of people is that they see meal plans as using a lot of exotic ingredients and are hard to prepare. Especially with sleep apnea sufferers, some days they just don't have the energy, so they're looking for something that uses common ingredients that they find in the average kitchen, and doesn't take a long time to prepare. So is that the sort of thing that you emphasize?

Kathleen Bundy: Meal planning is definitely a challenge for people, just because of our busy schedules. We are just so accustomed to being able to eat convenience and processed and quick food. So healthy eating can be simple. But, honestly, the reality of the situation is that healthy eating does require some cooking.

And the way I see it is that the time commitment really pays off in the long run, because you can't put a time or money value on vibrant health and chronic disease prevention and spending more time taking care of yourself.

I think that some people could probably spend less time in front of the television or in front of a computer and maybe some a little bit more time in the kitchen. There are definitely ways to make things easier that require less time. You can do quick snacks and easy lunches that are just very basic. Some of the things I use are frozen vegetables or batch cooking and also I do a basic flavor combination so people can just take kind of raw ingredients, they can take a chicken breast, a sweet potato and some vegetables, depending on whether they wanted to do Asian, Mexican or Italian. They could add some fresh herbs and spices. They can make a healthy meal in about half an hour. So, it's definitely doable.

Q: That's an interesting approach. So what you're saying is that if you take the base ingredients like chicken, sweet potato, etc., you can use those in several different meals but they'll taste differently based on the spices that you might use, for example?

Kathleen Bundy: Yes. You could go to the grocery store and if you're on the budget but you're trying to eat organic, you could get whatever organic produce happens to be on sale.

You could get the all natural whatever all natural meat or poultry product. You could try dried beans and dried greens and try to eat on the budget and just have the basics around but be able to get results from variety of flavor. Maybe you could buy a bunch of cilantro one week or a bunch of parsley the next and then.



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Just use a good high quality colorful like sea salt or something, fresh lemon and fresh herbs, vinegars, different oils and it just takes a little bit of practice, a little bit of practice and a little bit of experience and then it becomes intuitive.

Q: I guess if a person sees results from this kind of approach they stick with it. So, how do you try to ensure that your clients actually do see results in a reasonable amount of time?

Kathleen Bundy: I do an initial four-to-six week detox diet when we're cutting out the junk, cutting out the processed food. And people generally feel a lot better. They lose brain fog. They sleep better. They start to loss weight. They have more energy throughout the day. So I think that really gets people in line. It's like "wow, I was eating all this crummy stuff before, and I really wasn't feeling good". So I help people to really clean things out and they start to feel better. I have found that to be very effective.

Q: You said that when you sit down with each person and you figure out the calorie intake, how important is the portion control in that? Is portion control a big part of it?

Kathleen Bundy: Yes, portion control is major. Again, that's another major issue in our culture: portion sizes.

Portion sizes have become greatly exaggerated, and people have lost any sense they've ever had about what a meal should look like. And we know from research studies that the more food that's put in front of us, the more we eat.

When I was talking earlier about using food "exchanges", each food has the calorie level, and exchanges are based on portion sizes.

Q: You mentioned sugar intake before. I know that a lot of people increase their sugar intake when they're feeling tired. Do you try to restrict the amount of sugar in your meal plans?

Kathleen Bundy: I think that added sugars are also another major problem. We're very accustomed to eating very sweet foods. So I try and get people to eat all natural whole foods. And there's definitely a place for sugar from sweet juice sometimes. There's food and then there's fun and we need to have a little bit of fun sometimes.

Also we need to focus on portion size and reasonable treats. But I really don't think people should be using a lot of extra sugar because it thickens up the blood very quickly. It promotes the release of



insulin and also creates fluctuations in our blood sugar. So we're going up, we're going down...and that promotes all these different cravings.

So if we eat things like more complex carbohydrates and proteins, those give us more consistent blood sugar levels and we don't have those cravings, we have more energy.

Q: Is there anything that you recommend for dessert as a replacement?

Kathleen Bundy: Often if someone is having cravings for something, I'll try to tease out what's behind those cravings. Because some people have emotional eating, some people just have poor eating habits; some people have blood sugar issues. But mostly people need to eat a regular balanced diet, allowing them treats sometimes, but trying to keep the potentially problematic food like the ice cream out the house.

Also, if they do want to have a treat and they do want to have dessert, portion size is important. So for example, a good portion of ice cream is half of a cup.

I also really like yogurt for dessert. People can make fruit and yogurt frappes, and also with berries.

Q: Is the time of day that people eat also important?

Kathleen Bundy: Yes, it's important, but it's also based on the individual. Because like I said before, breakfast truly is the most important meal of the day, but some people are like, "You know what, I'm really just not hungry. First thing when I get up I really don't feel like eating." And you have to honor that when you prepare a meal plan with someone. So, you come up with times that are appropriate for their personal schedule, their work schedule.

But it's definitely important to nourish yourself at the beginning of the day at some point. I'm a big fan of snacks and just keeping your metabolism going with smaller frequent meals.

Q: Are there any foods that that you recommend to your clients to help them sleep better? Some sleep apnea sufferers have internal issues that are causing them not to get enough good sleep, but are there any foods that help with sleep?

Kathleen Bundy: First of all, I usually recommend that people don't eat a large meal too late, to eat a little bit earlier in the evening. For some people, depending on how much time is between their dinner meal and bedtime, might need a little bit of a snack, especially people with diabetes or blood sugar issues. So usually one carbohydrate "exchange" and one protein "exchange" would be an



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appropriate snack. Also, just decreasing caffeine in the afternoon helps with sleep. Herbal teas I find are really great for digestion after the dinner meal and just for relaxation.

Q: What kinds of food, in particular, do you recommend as a snack before bedtime?

Kathleen Bundy: Oh, it could be yoghurt. Or a piece of whole grain toast with some almond butter, a carbohydrate and a protein. It could be some milk, maybe mixed up with some berries in a blender, something like that; crackers and cheese, a slice of cheese and a couple of whole grain crackers.

Q: Is there anything that people can do to boost their energy levels during the day, because that's obviously a major issue for sleep apnea sufferers?

Kathleen Bundy: A lot of fatigue during the day is due to the fluctuating blood sugar levels that I've talked about, and also too-large meals. If we're eating too much at one meal, we get sluggish. If we're eating foods that cause an inflammatory response, we can get tired.

So I find that cleaning up the diet, eating less processed foods, really helps. Like I said, when we do a detox people get so much more energy because they're eating regular meals, they've cleaned out some of the "junk" and the sugar and all the refined carbohydrates that makes their blood sugar fluctuate. So, starting the day with a healthy breakfast, eating regularly throughout the day, making sure you're eating balanced meals, snacks when and if you need them, and just generally cleaning up the diet, and eating less of the processed foods, and the added sugars, I find that that often gives people improved energy.

Q: When you're developing a weight loss program, what role does exercise play? And when do you implement exercise in the weight loss program?

Kathleen Bundy: Exercise is definitely an important part of weight loss, and is also individual-based. So it really depends on the person, their functional status, what they can do. Sometimes we start with just 15 minutes a day. If we can get people to move 15 minutes a day, or get them to turn off their screen - whether it's the television or a computer - decrease screen time and sedentary behavior.

I think that exercise should be a part of every day life. So I try and get people just to take the stairs, maybe walk to the grocery store, walk to the drug store; find some way to just incorporate more motion and more movement in their every day life.



It should be fun, too. So, people can get out with their kids, or walk the dog, or go biking, or do something that's fun. I don't think everyone has to go to the gym every day and slog through a weight routine or something like that. But people also need a combination of cardio (getting the heart pumping) as well as develop their strength, because lean muscle mass is more efficient at burning calories.

Also, exercise is good for stress, sleep, relaxation. I think yoga is actually really good for a lot of people cause' it promotes relaxation and deep breathing, and also they've found that the more flexible people are in general the more flexible and less constrictive their blood vessels are. So any sort of stretching people can do can decrease that constriction of the blood vessels. It can lower blood pressure. It might even help with some of that constriction that's related to apnea. And yoga also has that component of cardiovascular and strength training.

Q: So if somebody came to you who has severe sleep apnea and is obese, for example, what you would recommend to start out with 15 minutes per day? Would you recommend they try to take the stairs as opposed to the elevator, walking to the store instead of taking the car, and that sort of thing?

Kathleen Bundy: Absolutely. If you're at work and you're on the phone, get up off the chair, maybe do a little bit of pacing, stand up, tap your feet, just get your body moving in whatever way is reasonable for you. Ideally, we can move from that stage to getting people up to going for a 30 minute walk 5 times a week, or doing a little bit of strength training while they're watching TV. If you're tired and then you sit down you can just get out an exercise band or some little weights and just work on getting those muscles to work and be more efficient.

I find that stress is a major, major problem in almost any sort of health problem, so I try not to get people stressed out about having to go to the gym. If exercise is stressing you out then maybe we need to think of ways to get your body moving besides having to schedule an aerobics class.