

EP 204

Dr Susan Mitchell (00:01.77)

Everyone wants the benefits of GLP-1 medications. Less food noise and hunger, decreased appetite, weight loss, better blood sugar control, and more, all without the prescription. But can food actually activate GLP-1 in a meaningful way? Don't go anywhere. Today, we're separating physiology from fantasy and breaking down what nutrition can and cannot do compared to GLP-1 medications.

Dr Susan Mitchell (00:34.156)

I'm bariatric dietician, Dr. Susan Mitchell. You're listening to the Bariatric Surgery Success podcast. I'm so glad you're here today. It's a fresh new year. Are you excited about it? I am. Remember this year, it matters where you get your nutrition information. Here's what I want you to know now. Today, I'm tackling a popular question posted in my Facebook group.

Do certain foods have many of the same benefits as GLP-1 medications? Well, the short answer is to some degree, yes. There are foods which contain fiber plus the macros, protein and fat that all stimulate GLP-1. But here's the uncomfortable truth. The amount of natural GLP-1 released and its effects are not remotely compared to GLP-1 drugs. Instead,

Think of it this way, food and drugs can complement each other. So, GLP-1 is suddenly the most famous hormone in nutrition and obesity medicine. And predictably, information on the internet has decided that if medication such as Ozempic or Wigovia, Zepbound raise GLP-1, well, then food must be able to do the same thing naturally, gently, and without side effects.

This idea is partly true, but mostly oversold. GLP-1, which stands for glucagon-like peptide 1, is what's called an incretin hormone. It's released from the small intestine and the colon in response to certain food intake. It has several real jobs, two of which include slowing gastric emptying,

or the speed at which food moves out of your stomach so that you feel more full longer and then sending signals of satiety or fullness to your brain. Your GLP-1 level is supposed to rise after meals. That's normal physiology. So what about the foods that stimulate natural GLP-1 release? What are they? Well, let's start with fiber-rich foods.

Dr Susan Mitchell (02:54.69)

Fiber activates the same pathways as GLP-1 drugs. Now you may not know this, but your body makes the hormone GLP-1 naturally. So fiber rich foods help to boost it, especially fiber rich foods that your gut bacteria can digest. These foods are called fermentable because bacteria literally ferment them. So here's how, don't miss this. When you eat,

fiber rich foods such as beans or apples, oats, flax seeds, legumes, berries, the fiber in these foods feeds the gut bacteria. And the bit of science 101, this gut bacteria produces what's called short chain fatty acids, or you'll see it abbreviated SCFAs, that trigger the release of GLP-1 in your body.

Well, this release of GLP-1 sends signals to your brain to feel full and satisfied naturally, while it also tells your digestion to slow down some. And bonus, this GLP-1 release also slows the absorption of glucose so your blood sugar levels stay more constant. As preventative cardiologist Dr. Elizabeth Klodas teaches,

Fiber is your body's natural GLP-1 activator, and it delivers these benefits without side effect while nourishing your microbiome and reducing inflammation. Well, bottom line, this natural

release of GLP-1 from fiber-rich foods keeps you full longer and can help reduce cravings. Therefore, it benefits your weight maintenance. So protein foods or protein-rich foods

also promote GLP-1 release. And they're known to make you feel full as well, right? You'll notice that when you eat protein-rich foods, you're satisfied and you're satisfied for longer. Protein foods trigger these specialized L-cells, they're called, in your gut, which detect proteins building blocks known as amino acids and then release GLP-1 to signal fullness, slow digestion,

Dr Susan Mitchell (05:20.682)

and improve that blood sugar control. So choices like lean meats and eggs, fish, poultry, along with yogurt, beans, lentils, nuts, seeds, soy products, all help promote this natural release of GLP-1. So whether you've had bariatric surgery, maybe you're using GLP meds, maybe you've done both, started with surgery and you're on the med, you should be including protein at every meal.

and following a diet that's high in protein. Because protein and fiber-rich foods are the key players in the release of GLP-1 and should be included at all meals. So if you're struggling to get enough protein, and I hear this a lot, I just can't get in what I need at every meal, let me share 10 simple strategies and routines to help you effortlessly retake.

Are you struggling to get enough protein at every meal? I hear that a lot. Well, let me share 10 simple strategies and routines to help you effortlessly hit your goals and help keep your weight off. So I've got a freebie. You can grab the free guide at BreakingDownNutrition.com slash protein. I'll also put the link in the show notes and I hope that it helps you. And get this, I found this so interesting. The order in which you eat foods in a meal

influences the stimulation and release of GLP-1 also. When you eat protein-rich foods together with fiber-rich foods before you eat carbs, this is the most effective way to enhance that GLP-1 release. So let me say that again. When you're eating protein-rich foods first, along with your fiber-rich foods before you eat carbs,

this is the best way to enhance that GLP-1 release. So nutrition and specific foods absolutely matter when it comes to natural GLP retake.

Dr Susan Mitchell (07:34.414)

So nutrition and specific foods absolutely matter when it comes to natural GLP-1 release. Now, here's what I don't want you to miss. The natural GLP-1 that is released peaks shortly after meals. So a consistent intake of protein and fiber is needed every day at every meal. It cannot suppress your appetite 24-7 like the medications can, nor

produce medication level weight loss. No food, no food activates GLP-1 to pharmacological levels, period. GLP-1 medications are designed to resist breakdowns. So they override what may be impaired signaling when it comes to your satiety or your fullness. That's why they dramatically reduce hunger.

reduce food noise and lead to weight loss. So nutrition and medication are not competitors. They actually operate differently as you just heard, but they can complement each other. Bottom line here, yes, you can stimulate GLP-1 release naturally with a diet of fiber-rich and high protein foods. You can also improve this release by eating your protein and fiber-rich foods

first, first before the carbs as part of your day-to-day eating plan, which enhances your nutrition and your metabolic health. So nutrition is the foundation. But no, you cannot mimic

GLP-1 medications with food. Natural GLP-1 is designed to help regulate meals, fullness, and appetite. Medications are tools designed to override broken signaling and food noise.

which is a neurohormonal condition. So here's what I want you to think about this week. Take a few minutes, reflect on how you're eating right now. Have you been letting things slide a bit? Like over the holidays, did things slide? Did you start eating your carbs first, forget about your protein? Do you need to tweak a few things in how you eat every day? How often are those fiber-rich foods part of your day? Is protein included at every meal?

Dr Susan Mitchell (10:01.622)

Are you eating that first? Delicious foods that are fiber rich and protein rich benefit you in so many ways, including the release of the GLP-1 hormone. Remember, you're worth it.