



# CONQUER YOUR CRAVINGS

don't let your cravings sabotage your health goals

## What are you really craving?

Yes, it may be sugar, or a salty carb, but what are you really hungry for? What else brings you comfort, happiness and joy? Is it a **walk in nature**, a soothing **cup of tea**, **calling a friend**, **taking a bath**, or **reading a good book**? List the things that can replace an unhealthy craving that may be sabotaging your health.

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**Cravings!** While there are some foods you may have learned to live without, others keep creeping in there, even if you know they are sabotaging your health goals.

Your relationship to the foods you eat, and how you feel in your body is a dynamic one, and learning to create new healthy habits and let go of old unhealthy habits is often a lifelong journey.

The more you know about how food meets your physiology and how and why you have cravings, means you can choose food and make lifestyle choices that will benefit your body and make it easier to choose health!

Let's dive deeper into the biochemistry of your cravings, and how to calm some of those biochemical

## The 5 Ss for healing the gut

**Soaking** - make things softer and more digestible

**Sprouting** - make your food more bioavailable and calming to your immune system

**Soups** - bath the lining of your gut with nourishing soups

**Spices** - anti-inflammatory and nutrient dense, nature's first pharmaceuticals

**Superfoods** - always go for nutrient density to nourish your body

## Crunchy veggies

Sometimes a crunchy veggie provides the satisfaction you need when you feel hungry. Of course we all love, carrot, celery and sweet bell peppers, but don't forget about:

Parsnips slices (raw)

Jicama

Kohlrabi

Endive

Radishes

Cabbage

Broccoli (raw)

Asparagus (raw)

Snap peas

triggers that can give you more power with how you choose to nourish your best asset, YOU!

## Your Pancreas

While this handout is not a deep dive into the pancreas, it is your pancreas that helps you to process carbohydrates, by releasing insulin. It's the insulin that ushers the sugar into the cells. Your pancreas also makes digestive enzymes that are released via the bile duct into the small intestine. Digestive enzymes help you to break down proteins, carbs, and fats, so they become small enough to be absorbed through the intestinal wall and into the bloodstream. Your pancreas can become more "tired" as you age, and especially if it's been extra busy with sugar intake. Issues of diabetes and cardiovascular disease are increased with high sugar intake. So yes, getting a handle on our cravings, is especially important for our pancreas and to avoid diabetes.

The pancreas is located at your solar plexus, which is your 3rd chakra, or energy center of the body. This area of the body is at your core, or your gut instincts. This is where you choose, and yes, you always have a choice. The solar plexus, or Manipura 3rd chakra is translated as "the city of gems" The color yellow is represented here, and this is the place you make choices from. The more often you connect to your gut instincts, as well as a healthy and happy gut, the more you can listen to your gut and make choices that are in your own best interest.

Take a moment and put your hands on your belly and connect to this powerful place on your body.

## The Biochemistry of your cravings

*The Stress Connection* - When the body is under stress, your adrenals come to your rescue and release more cortisol to help you to adapt to whatever the stressor is. Cortisol is your fight or flight hormone and it will help your body to burn more sugar as it is a

quick and easy fuel to burn. However, when the body is stressed and burning sugar, it wants more and will crave more as a result. High levels of cortisol for longer periods of time can also cause more muscle breakdown, the muscle in the body being converted to sugars, to keep the body going.

***What can you do to support your adrenals?*** Of course reducing stress is the first step to lowering cortisol, but that is not always the easiest solution depending on what the stressor is. In addition to doing what you can, here are some ways to reduce cortisol in the body and minimize its impact:

- **Eat a building diet.** Emphasize healthy fats and proteins, as these will be the building blocks for your adrenals who are working overtime.
- **Breathe deeply.** Never underestimate the power of your breath. A longer exhale is one way to calm your nervous system and allow your adrenals to take a little rest.
- **Prioritize your sleep.** Sleep is one of the most nourishing and restorative activities you can do. Even if you struggle with sleep, time in bed resting is still better than staying up too late.
- **Eat a grounding nourishing breakfast.** Fasting is not the best way to go when stress is high, nourishment is better.

## The Neurotransmitter Connection

The brain and the gut make neurotransmitters which are chemical messengers that help the body communicate messages via the nervous system. I like to call them feel good messengers. Some of them are excitatory, giving you energy and focus, while some are inhibitory, giving you calm and satisfaction. If your neurotransmitters are off, then you might have trouble focusing and be low energy, or you might have trouble relaxing, feeling stressed or unsatisfied and craving substances to find balance.

The building blocks of neurotransmitters are amino acids. So we need adequate protein to make neurotransmitters and we also need a healthy gut environment to make them, as a big majority are made in the gut with the assistance of the gut microbiome. Therefore, a healthy GI tract is key, so you can not only make the neurotransmitters there, but also absorb your food properly and have healthy building blocks to make more.

The neurotransmitter I tend to focus on with clients when it comes to sugar cravings is serotonin. Serotonin, or your sunshine neurotransmitter, helps us to feel calm, satisfied, good about yourself (self esteem) and when it's balanced in the body, you'll have less cravings. Here are a few tips for building your levels of serotonin:

- **Spend time in the sunshine.** From serotonin we build melatonin, another hormone that supports healthy sleep. Sunshine has so many benefits to all life forms, but for humans, it can help us to release healthy levels of serotonin through the day, supporting our mood and also converting to melatonin to support sleep at night.

- **Eat protein at each meal**, especially for breakfast, to give the body the amino acid building blocks for making neurotransmitters.
- **Exercise** - When you exercise you will release not only serotonin, but a few of the other feel good neurotransmitters, helping you to feel good and find your focus.
- **Heal your gut** - If you have digestive issues, you may be missing out on the neurotransmitters that the gut makes, with the help of the microbiome. It's estimated that 95% of the serotonin your body makes is in the gut. See the grey bar on page two for my 5 S's for healing the gut:

## The Power of Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner

Balanced meals give your body the nutrients it needs at regular intervals throughout the day. Many people are finding success in eating only 1 or 2 meals, while others feel better with 3 or more. I support my clients in finding what works for them, but I do believe that when you do sit down to eat, make sure it's balanced and you're giving your body what it needs to thrive. Cravings, especially for sugar or carbs, can reflect malnourishment. The body does not have what it needs and is wanting more. As stated above, sugar cravings often reflect a need for more protein to build our neurotransmitters. Sugar cravings can also be a sign of dysbiosis, which means you may need to focus on healing the gut.

If you are more of a snacker, are the snacks balanced? Is there a protein, a fat, a starch and vegetables? The more balanced and SATISFYING your meal or snack is, the less cravings you will have over time. Give it a try and let me know how it goes!

## Nutrients for cravings:

If you're looking for quality vitamins and minerals to support your blood sugar balance, check out my curated online dispensary with specific protocols.

[\*\*Visit My Dispensary\*\*](#)



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# NUTRIENTS AND SUPPLEMENTS

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Balancing blood sugar is a holistic approach that includes diet, lifestyle, and behavioral change. One targeted piece of the puzzle includes the vitamins and minerals necessary for blood sugar regulation. Below is a list of specific nutrients, and links to more targeted supplements. Always talk to your doctor before adding any supplements, especially if you are on medications. If you are unsure, remember, food is your first medicine.

## Support the Pancreas, Liver, & Thyroid

**Pancreas** - Your pancreas' **exocrine** function is to make digestive enzymes that support the breakdown of your macronutrients, so that you can absorb and assimilate the nutrients from your food. The **endocrine** function of the pancreas is to release Insulin to escort glucose into the cells. Insulin is an anabolic building hormone, necessary for life.

**Liver support - fatty liver - high triglycerides.** All things come to the liver, and our diet and lifestyle should protect and support the liver to do its job. If your triglycerides are high, this is a sign of fatty liver, and carbohydrate intolerance.

**Thyroid Support** - The thyroid functions as the thermostat of your metabolism and plays a specific role in fat burning, and energy production. Low thyroid symptoms can show up as feeling cold, sluggish, constipated, or TSH numbers that slowly rise. The thyroid is susceptible to toxicity and excess stress.

**Microbiome** - Your microbiome is an essential part of your metabolism, digestive health, mood, immune function, and overall health and vitality. A whole foods diet with limited processed foods is essential for a healthy microbiome.

## Targeted nutrients - Insulin building blocks

### Amino Acids - the building blocks of protein

Adequate protein at each meal is essential to supply the body with the building blocks to make insulin, and other important hormones and molecules like neurotransmitters

**Vitamin D** - Fat soluble vitamin that acts like a hormone in the body.

The pancreas is rich in vitamin D receptors. Vitamin D helps regulate insulin secretion. ask your doctor to run a 25-OHD test to measure your levels. Optimal numbers are between 70 and 100.

**Magnesium** - 400-800 mg per day

- High insulin depletes magnesium, the body will urinate it out in response to high glucose and insulin levels. Magnesium is essential for insulin binding to the cells. Hyperinsulinemia promotes insulin depletion and low insulin promotes insulin resistance. **Magnesium rich food sources** - Dark leafy greens, nuts, seeds, fish, beans, whole grains, avocados, yogurt, bananas, dark chocolate.

**B12** - fits into insulin and is a key nutrient for its production.

- The presence of vitamin b 12 is necessary for the correct functioning of nerve cells. It helps to regulate the thyroid gland. B12 is important in the cell when it comes to carb metabolism in general. Sometimes Diabetic Neuropathy is misdiagnosed and it's actually B12 deficiency instead. B12 is absorbed in the distal ileum, and this area can take a lot of damage from gluten, and can affect b12 absorption. **B12 is found exclusively in animal proteins.**

**Zinc** - Essential mineral that acts like an antioxidant, immune booster and building block.

- Zinc is an essential building block of insulin. Zinc is immune protective especially against viral infections. It protects beta cells from destruction and Type 1 diabetics are often zinc deficient, and supplements have been shown to lower blood sugar levels in some type 1 cases. **Zinc is found in:** seafood, oysters, pumpkin seeds, mushrooms and in various legumes and seeds.

## Targeted Nutrients: Cell Receptors Building blocks

**Omega 3 Fatty Acids** - This is an essential fatty acid that helps to maintain a healthy cell membrane - supporting cell to cell communication - and cell receptors, for nutrients (insulin and glucose included) to easily flow in and out of the cells.

**Chromium** - 800 mcg per day - taking 200 mcg with each meal promotes the cell's uptake of Insulin particularly:

- Chromium is stored in the liver and is released in response to Insulin Rising. It promotes the binding of Insulin to our cells. Elevated and prolonged Insulin can decrease our levels of Chromium and use up what we normally store and excrete with the next meal. Chromium deficiency promotes hyperinsulinemia. **Foods high in chromium include** - Whole grains, nutritional yeast, lettuce, raw onions, broccoli, green beans, tomatoes, black pepper.

**Berberine** - Helps to reduce blood glucose, and has often been compared to Metformin in its action and effectiveness. 500 mg twice a day with meals.



## Support the Liver for blood sugar control:

### Whole food sources:

- **Beets** - Contains betaine to thin bile and prevent gallstones. Rich source of HCl to trigger gallbladder to release bile.
- **Artichoke** - Bile-producing food and liver protector. May boost glutathione (an antioxidant the body produces) by up to 50%.
- **Bitters** - Trigger pancreas to secrete digestive enzymes and gallbladder to release bile. Good options are arugula, endive, dandelion, radicchio, horseradish, Angelica and gentian for a vegan bitter.
- **Choline** - Acts as emulsifier, assists fat digestion, reduces cellulite and decongests liver. 90% of us are deficient. Improves cognitive function.
- **Lecithin** - Primary emulsifying agent in bile, makes fats more digestible. Look for non-GMO soy or sunflower lecithin. At 2 tablespoons daily.
- **Apple Cider Vinegar** - Contains malic acid to help digest protein, thin bile, and supports post prandial blood sugar levels. Take 2 teaspoons raw unpasteurized ACV in water before meals in 8 oz. of water.
- **Cumin** - Boosts metabolic rate and stimulates pancreatic enzymes.
- **Hot lemon water and hibiscus tea** liver and lymphatic supportive - 1 cup of hibiscus tea daily, and lemon water in the morning.
- **Adequate fiber**. - Fiber is essential to feed the microbiome and lower cholesterol.

## Thyroid Support

The thyroid gland responds well to the vitamins and minerals recommended throughout this document that also support blood sugar balance.

- **Thyroid supportive nutrients:** Iodine, tyrosine, zinc, copper, selenium, iron, vitamin A, B complex, Vitamin D, Omega 3 Fatty acids, and ferments foods to support the microbiome.
- **The thyroid is susceptible to:** Environmental Toxins, Gluten, food allergens, imbalanced liver and GI health, and nutrient deficiencies.

## Herbs and spices

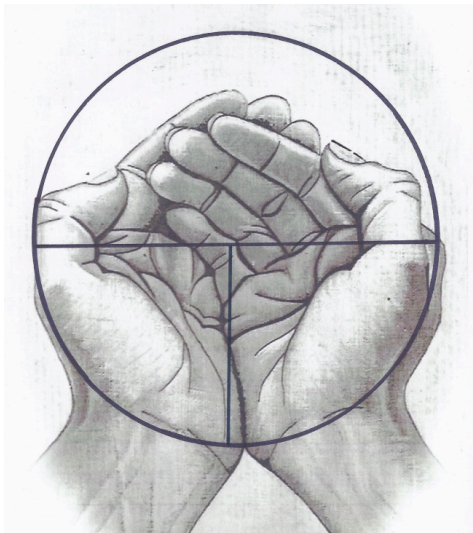
Next to organ meats, herbs and spices are the second most nutrient dense foods on the planet. Most culinary herbs have digestive benefits, which support lower blood sugar and metabolic healing.

- **Basil** - improves insulin sensitivity
- **Bitter melon** - lowers insulin and triglycerides
- **Cinnamon** - enhances insulin receptors
- **Fenugreek** - lowers insulin secretion and lowers triglycerides

## Meals and timing -

- Break your fast (break-fast) with - protein - fat - fiber - see The Breakfast Report for more info.
- Try to space your meal 4-6 hours apart - with minimal snacking between meals.
- Drink water between meals, not with them - so you don't dilute your digestive juices.
- Stop eating 3 hours before bed
- Have a starch with dinner, to satisfy you, promote sleep, and eliminate or reduce late night cravings.

## Building Your Plate



### PROTEIN

1 serving per meal

Animal Protein serving size: 3-5 ounces, size of one palm, ¼ of plate

Vegetarian Protein serving size: 6 ounces, 1 cup, ½ of plate

### NON-STARCHY CARBOHYDRATES

2 to 4 servings per meal

A serving is ½ cup cooked or 1 cup raw, all the fingers, ½ of plate

### STARCHY CARBOHYDRATE

0-2 servings per meal

1 serving is 1/3 - ½ cup - size of one palm, ¼ of plate

### FAT

1-3 servings per meal

Serving size is 1 tbsp, a thumb is one serving



## Sourcing supplements

I invite you to check out my online Fullscript Dispensary if you'd like to purchase or look any of the highlighted supplements.

You can **create a free account here** and check out this protocol specific to **Blood Sugar and Metabolic Balance**.

And here's specific supplements to **Conquer Your Cravings**.



## **Download my free Breakfast Report and learn how you can conquer your cravings.**

Discover what the right breakfast can do for your hormonal balance and blood sugar regulation

## **Work with me! Targeted 1 on 1 support**

If you're interested in learning more, **schedule a time to talk with Mary Sheila**, to see if it's right for you!

## MARY SHEILA GONNELLA

*Certified Nutrition Consultant,*

*Board Certified in Holistic Nutrition*

Mary Sheila brings over 13 years of experience in the nutrition, health, and wellness world. She'll provide the information, insight, empowerment, and support you need to take charge of your health and live the life you were meant to live.

Her mastery is holding clinical focus on GI health, hormonal harmony, blood sugar balance, diabetes prevention, mood regulation, and cultivating right-size body weight.

Mary Sheila combines holistic nutrition, clinical Ayurveda, adrenal support, and amino acid therapy to create a unique supportive experience for her clients and students. Her passion makes nutrition concepts come to life and leads her clients to consistently successful outcomes.