

You are listening to Episode 169 of the Devoured Podcast. Welcome to Devoured, the podcast for women like you who have tried restrictive diet after diet and are ready for simple solutions and resources to help you lose weight for the last time, from a place of abundance and peace. If you're looking to end the yo-yo of comfort eating and rigid weight loss protocols, and instead step into living your life on your terms while losing weight in the process, you're in the right place.

Okay, or should I say okie-dokie artie-chokie? Welcome to another episode of the Devoured Podcast. I am super duper happy you are here. Today, this is an episode that makes my little NTP, nutritional therapy practitioner, heart very happy. We're talking about blood sugar levels and your thoughts. So I'm bringing things back to basics today on this episode, I want to give you an overview and primer of how your blood sugar levels, and what they do throughout the day, can affect the thoughts you think. Now, so often in coaching, we really focus on thoughts first and how we feel can come from our thoughts, but we have to reverse engineer things a little bit because the thoughts we think are coming from our body. It's like we talk about the brain so separate from the body so often, I think, just in life in general. But that doesn't quite serve us when we remember that our brains are housed within our bodies. Like, our brain is an organ in our body.

So when we are able to recognize both emotionally what's happening and also physiologically what's happening when we're experiencing the facts from our blood sugar levels and how they vary throughout the day, I just think this is going to be really helpful as well as a bit of a balm for many of you, because those of you who listen to this show, if weight loss has been this recurring thing for you, then more often than not, you probably have a body that needs a little bit of extra love, support, and care. You might have some thoughts around that. Like, "Well, why do I need extra love and care?" Like, why, right? Like, why? Even if you do have an autoimmune condition or you don't, guess what?

Our society serve us with this idea that, like, we should just be robots. We should be good to go. We should eat the foods we eat. We should move on, and if we need anything else, we're too much, we're extra. I really want to dissolve that here and say like, your needs are radically yours. It's like the idea of like, "Hey, eyes on your own plate." Like, don't worry about what other people need to be eating, what they choose to eat, why they choose to eat stuff. The only stuff that actually matters for you and your body are the foods that you're eating. Of course, when I've chatted about that before, I will add the additional layer that like, yes, we are social beings in the social world and we learn socially, right? If you're listening to this episode, you're learning from me, another person. We don't have to pretend that we're individuals that exist in vacuums.

But, additionally, more times than not, when we get to a certain point in our lives, what we've practiced is looking at what other people do instead of practicing what is it that I want to do with all of the information that I've gathered throughout my life. Because, guess what? You have a lot of information that you're bringing to your table and your plate, and you can use that really effectively and actually teach yourself and begin to practice with yourself the art of, in this case, losing weight, and, in other cases and on other shows, the art of whatever it is that you want to be accomplishing with yourself.

So at the intersection of the art of losing weight and blood sugar levels, the too long, don't read, okay, is that if we are having blood sugar levels that are fluctuating wildly throughout the day, we're on like a bit of a roller coaster, meaning we have blood sugar highs and we have blood sugar lows, and then we have blood sugar highs and then we blood sugar lows throughout the day, this is, first and foremost, a stressful experience on our bodies. Our bodies with the foods that they evolved to eat were intended to have blood sugar levels that gently rise and gently fall throughout the day. It's more like a super gentle wave in like a tidal pool, like a very gentle ripple. There's nothing dramatic about it. There's no like 45-degree angle or more or 90-degree angle to the rise and the fall of our blood sugar levels when they are balanced at the gentle wave.

When our blood sugar levels are not balanced and when they are dysregulated, there are much more abrupt highs. Meaning, our blood sugar levels raise really quickly and because of that intense increase, they then fall dramatically. If you have ever been someone who has been hypoglycemic, you've had a hypoglycemic episode, or you're someone who tends to get really hangry if don't get your meals or if you're not snacking throughout the day, that's a big indicator that blood sugar levels are dysregulated.

Now, first and foremost, nothing has gone wrong. Of course, if you are someone who's listening and you have type one diabetes or type two diabetes or gestational diabetes, you probably actually have a lot of information that you've had to both live in order to experience and glean and also that you've been provided. So this conversation is for people who, for the most part, do not have those considerations. You might have experienced gestational diabetes at one point and you no longer are. This information can be supportive for people who have different types of diabetes, but you will also, if you do, probably have an extra consideration or two. So just know that this conversation is for people who don't have those, but that being said, it can be helpful for those.

So what I really want to be honing in for all of you, because I think it's very easy to over-complicate our food and food choices. That's a pattern that our brains think and we can just love that. If we start to get down on ourselves because we over-complicate things and that's something that we've learned and what we've practiced, which I think comes from the culture of dieting, we're not going to get very far. To actually get somewhere with our health and wellness, we want to be cultivating what actually aligns with us and what we value. For many of us, it's not shaming ourselves or shooting ourselves to make change. When we shame ourselves and we shoot ourselves to make change, that change is only going to work in the short-term; it's really not going to work in the long-term because it doesn't resonate with our lives and with what we value. Even if we don't know consciously what we value with, there is a reason why you might be shooting yourself and doing stuff in the short-term, but then falling away from that in the long-term. It's usually just because of a misalignment.

So here's the too long, don't read with blood sugar levels and weight loss. For the easiest weight loss, you want your blood sugar levels to be really beautifully balanced. You want them to have those gentle waves instead of the big highs and big lows. First and foremost, you want those from a physiological standpoint and you also want them from an emotional standpoint, which I'll touch on in a few minutes. But first off, from a physiological standpoint, like I said, balanced blood sugar levels are not stressful. When our bodies are stressed out, they're not going to lose weight.

Secondly, when our blood sugar levels are high ... First off, let me tell you what causes high blood sugar levels. Primarily, it's going to be processed foods and processed carbohydrates. So you might have a lot of thoughts and feelings on that and that's okay. This gets to be part of the process. Like it really is, like that's part of really undoing diet culture is moving beyond the phase of rebellion of like, "It's good. I'll eat whatever I want." Of course, you could eat whatever you want. Like when that becomes a given, what is it that you actually want to eat and why is that? Most people that I talk with tend to want to eat foods that support their like most robust and full health.

When we boil that down, what that ends up looking like is the vast majority of foods are unprocessed and wholesome. Does that mean it's no carb? Carbohydrates are going to be the food that most influences your blood sugar levels, but protein does as well and then the fats, in combination with those foods, can blunt the spikes. But you don't have to go all or nothing on this conversation. You just get to understand that like a more unprocessed carbohydrate, your body is really going to know what to do with that and it also comes along with a package of beautiful vitamins and minerals that are co-factors that help support your body to not be stressed out. Most people from that standard American style of eating are eating too many total calories, their bodies are too stressed out, and they are too

undernourished when it comes to their vitamins and minerals, antioxidants, et cetera. That's a recipe for inflammation.

So when our insulin levels are consistently too high, chronically too high, over the long-term, what's going to be happening there is that insulin ... and this is not the only case. You've seen people and you know people who eat like a high carb vegan diet who are losing weight. But I think this conversation is really salient for those of us who feel like weight is like a consistent struggle. This might be more of the individualized lens for people who consistently, over time, have difficulty losing weight. We know that the foundation is going to be partially calories in, calories out, but the deeper foundation of health and wellness and weight loss is hormonal. So if our bodies respond hormonally to different foods, then the calories really do have to take a back burner.

So hormonally, if you're someone who is more sensitive to carbohydrates, we actually have to talk about that and I think it's a really salient point to be bringing up, hence this episode. So really trying to get strategic and curious about understanding, okay, if processed foods increase my blood sugar levels and when my blood sugar levels increase my body sends out insulin, and if my insulin levels have been consistently heightened for a consistent amount of time my cells can become numb to that insulin. That's called insulin resistance or being on your way towards insulin resistance. The way that we allow our bodies to become and regain insulin sensitivity is that we have to stop provoking a rise in blood sugar levels. When our blood sugar levels come back into the more balanced waves, a very gentle, just a super gentle wave up and down throughout the day depending on what we're eating, that is the time that our insulin does not have to send itself out.

This is why in *Lean and Liberated*, I do emphasize fasting because it's a really supportive tool for us to be able to regain insulin sensitivity. We regain insulin sensitivity, then we're really able to ... again, this is just a physiological standpoint ... we're really able to say, "Oh, how is it that I'd like to be eating carbohydrates? I don't feel like I have to be stuck with eating keto or eating no carbs or going on an extreme, even if those styles of eating have helped me lose weight in the past." See that? It really helps increase that metabolic flexibility.

So when we're eating foods that support a gentle wave of our blood sugar levels, which is what we evolve to have and to have the highs and the lows that we now have in our world because of the foods that we have access to, our bodies are going to regain insulin sensitivity and now we can shift over into the emotional aspects of blood sugar levels. But when our blood sugar levels are feeling balanced, we're going to feel more calm, more peaceful. We're going to be more able to understand what foods we actually want to eat. We get to clear the playing field with our actual food desires. When your blood sugar levels are rocketing really high and then they subsequently fall quite low and you're moving towards feelings of hypoglycemia, that's when we reach for cookies or snacks or popcorn and foods that get us out of that low blood sugar state. Because the low blood sugar state is a really stressful place for our bodies to be. We don't want that.

So, in the short-term, it's physiologically supportive to reach for a cookie or some chocolate, because it gets you out of that low blood sugar state, you can get on with your day, but in the long-term, it's a Band-Aid because it's never actually addressing the problem, which is having those low blood sugar episodes. So do you see right there, how, if we return to nourishing ourselves from a place that supports our insulin levels, that supports our blood sugar levels, to be more balanced and regulated, we actually are doing a huge step of cutting out blood sugar lows. When we cut out blood sugar lows, we're choosing to cut out anxiety, feelings of hangriness, episodes of dizziness every day, that physiological stressor.

But do you see how this conversation on weight loss can't even just be physical or emotional? If the combination of both, because guess what? You, as a human are combination of both. So we can have

this physiological lens of what's happening with our blood sugar levels, and our blood sugar levels then affect us emotionally and mentally. So if you're sitting there right now and you're white-knuckling, your white-knuckling through these feelings of like, "Oh, I just have to like either coach myself through when I feel anxious or I have to get through, just like get through the middle of the day and like say no to my cravings," I really want you to ask yourself, "Could some of my cravings just be physiologically based and maybe I've been honoring them and that works in the short-term, but it doesn't work in the long-term?" and that's the only thing that feels like it's gone wrong here. Because if that's the case, it makes it really simple what to do.

I want to add one more thing on as well. Food and nutrition is going to be one of the biggest drivers of our blood sugar and its ability to regulate itself, whether it's dysregulated or it is regulated, but other things affect blood sugar levels, too. Anything that stresses us out can have an effect on our blood sugar levels. That means if you're not getting enough sleep, if you have poor quality sleep, if you're choosing to undersleep yourself, that's going to lead to more propensity for dysregulated blood sugar levels the proceeding day. There are studies on it.

If you look at people who do night shift work or people who have chronic insomnia, you do see that their blood sugar levels are consistently almost like more sensitive, like more tender, like they're just higher high than lower lows. You also see it if you've ever had a night where you didn't sleep well, what happens the next day? You're looking for more energy because you are not rested and restored. You are looking for more energy from a caloric standpoint because you weren't able to get it from that restful standpoint.

As you'll remember, there's nothing good or bad about this. We're all going to have instances in our life where we might not be sleeping well. In fact, it might be a trade-off that's really worth it sometimes. But having that understanding can go a really long way if our brains are trying to flip into the pattern of wanting to beat themselves up or wanting to white-knuckle to some stricter rigid protocol in order to "fix" ourselves or better ourselves. No, we're just in conversation. Our bodies are talking to us all the time. Those sleep or a lack of sleep can be a big stressor and that can affect blood sugar regulation. Things like coffee and chocolate that have stimulants in them, the caffeine and theobromine can affect our blood sugar levels.

Typically, I have found, and this is not true for everyone, but I have found that for those who are sensitive to caffeine or to chocolate, what it's doing from a blood sugar perspective is that it's making the highs higher when the blood sugar is spiking high and then the lows lower. So it's just like making them more extreme. That's why when I find that people do cut out the coffee and they do either cut out chocolate or dramatically lower the chocolate, they're sleeping better, their hormones are more regulated, and the highs and the lows are less high and less low. They can just naturally become more regulated. It's much more relaxing and restorative for our bodies.

Emotional stressors also can affect our blood sugar levels. You might find that ... I think I want to do an episode at some point coming up around emotional eating and, of course, like a lot of this show is about emotional eating, but if we're eating after an argument, understand that, of course, it could be comforting, or if you'd be buffering some emotions emotionally because we're not like moving through them, we're not processing them because they feel a certain way in our bodies. We could be using food as a tool in that way. But if our blood levels, if we have been in such a stress response, if it was such a stressful experience emotionally for us, then our bodies might also be asking for and creating a craving for sugar in the short-term to give us a little bit of a high if we're feeling like we're thinking into a bit of a low or our blood sugar levels are just not feeling as regulated because of that emotional stressor and that emotional burden.

I think this is even salient for those of us who do tend to have these conversations around our weight, who have gone through the last year of this pandemic, and a lot of people have had to confront their relationship with emotional eating and actually allow themselves to eat emotionally because it might have felt like one of the only tools they actually have available to themselves in the pandemic through social isolation. But really just understanding that, sure, there's this emotional part, that honestly we can like coach ourselves through and get through fairly easily and readily when we're able to, and as well, that then affects this part of the cycle of what is happening from that physiology place first.

So these conversations are always one side and two sides. There's physiology, and then there's emotions. And there's actually a third part, which is like the spiritual part, which is like, what are we doing here? Why are we doing this? But like, that's a little ... that's not quite for the scope of this episode. In this episode, it really is what's happening physiologically with my blood sugar levels and what do I think about that? What do I want to do? Then also emotionally what's happening with my blood sugar levels, what do I think about that? What do I want to do?

So there's so much you can do. I hope by now you understand if your blood sugars are feeling dysregulated, if you're feeling jittery, anxious throughout the day, you feel like you have to eat a lot of refined carbs at your meals. You feel like you have to have a treat after your meals. You feel like you have to take a nap after lunch or after any meal. If you are especially sensitive to caffeine and to chocolate, any of those are signs that your body might actually be looking for more blood sugar regulation. The way that we regulate blood sugar are not only getting crystal clear about when and why we're integrating processed foods into our days. Is it every single day? Can we shift that to be less frequent throughout the week? Why are we consuming these more processed foods?

It's also really understanding what are the foods that I am getting in? Am I getting in these mineral-rich foods that can support me with the co-factors that help my blood sugar levels take care of themselves? Mineral-rich foods, as like a translation there are vegetables. Eat your vegetables. What would happen if you emphasize using your food and nutrition as a way to support yourself with those blood sugar levels?

Also, the third bit for this week, if you want to consider any of this homework, the third bit would also be making sure that you are eating enough at your meals. If you are consistently undereating, that's dieting; if you're chronically dieting, you're not getting any enough nutrients, your body might be showing you those signs of a dysregulated blood sugar experience. So your job is to make sure that you're eating plenty of quality foods and then doing that emotional work of really saying, "And how do I feel?" Because sometimes, I'll add this in too, some of us can be anxious and so those signs of anxiety or anxiousness can also affect our blood sugar levels. So really getting curious with yourself and journaling with yourself, "Am I trying to hyperfixate on and figure out my blood sugar levels or the amount of food I'm eating? Or, am I looking at this with an anxiety first lens? And if I'm doing that, then I'm going to be on the hyperdrive on trying to fix myself."

So none of those conversations of saying, "What can I do to fix it to make it better?", all of this conversation is saying, "What am I noticing authentically, truthfully? How do I feel about that, and where would I like to shift from reflection into action? Not to fix or better anything, because it all just is, but really to come home into myself and say why is it that I'm taking the actions I take? If there's anything I'd like to shift, how can I beacon that shift in the most loving way possible?" That is truly how we dismantle diets, even when we're having the truths and realities about our bodies, our human bodies, our bodies that do have physiologies, that do have some truth to them.

In Lean and Liberated, like I'm not shy to tell people there are truths to just what's going on. Like, of course, you could lose weight only eating chocolate cake. It wouldn't be very much chocolate cake every single day. But do you want that experience in your life? Or, do you want the experience where you're full of nutrients, where your body has the tools that it's been asking for, and that you understand that

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some of the time and most of the time food and nutrition is going to be kind of boring, but it can be gloriously boring. Those hyperpalatable foods are hyperpalatable for a reason. They're new and novel on our bodies, and new and novel stuff is usually kind of stressful. So how would I like to bring myself home into these truths of nutrition while also making sure that I integrate what it is that I desire in my life?

When we're at that intersection, fats and weight loss can become easy, because now we've taken the emotions. They're not out for forever, but they make sense and we have our action plan. When we're at that intersection, that's when we start to understand that no emotions are bad emotions. It all just is. Our body sends us signals. It's our job to listen. The more we practice coming at this from this place of wholeness, of having our decisions be based in our values, the more we untangle that web of dieting and the diet cycle. The more we just get to say, "Oh, this process, this process of weight loss, it's for me by me, I can't mess it up. I'm always learning. I trust myself and I got this." I hope this episode found you well, and I'll see you on the next episode. Bye.

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