

THE FRUIT AND SALAD DIET

by Diane Ligon

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I had been thin most of my adult life until I hit 40. From 40 to 51 I managed to gain the 90 pounds.

I didn't have the willpower to diet, so I needed to find a food plan where willpower wasn't necessary. I found that in a high carbohydrate low fat raw vegan diet, where I could eat as much as I wanted and still lose weight. The first month I lost 17 pounds without even exercising. Then I was able to find the time and energy to start an exercise program, which was mainly walking with a little yoga. Over the course of a year I was able to lose 90 pounds, going from 230 to 140. I'm 5'6" and currently a size 8. When I started out, I was a size 22 or 3X!

I didn't mind being overweight as much as others seemed to. In the whole ten years I was overweight, only two people said unkind things to me about it. I was a teacher and an actor and being overweight wasn't a problem for my work. At times I even got acting work because they wanted an overweight person.

Yet my health was falling apart and I started feeling like I was scotch taping myself together to get through the day. I drank HUGE amounts of caffeine to keep going because I had so much fatigue. I had mild asthma, which occasionally got worse and scared me when I had trouble breathing. My thyroid numbers were crazy off but when I tried to take one tablet of Synthroid it made me ill. So I stopped and just ignored the problem.

A combination of difficulties in my life helped me hit rock bottom. I had just gone through a divorce. I was broke, and my puppet theatre business, which had looked so promising, didn't provide enough income. It became clear that I wasn't going to have enough money to keep my house. Then, after six months on the market, it looked like the house might not sell.

Within a few days of starting this lifestyle I had an offer on my house and the sale went through a month later. While I normally don't think of events this way, it seemed as though the universe was rewarding me for making a positive change in my life.

I started feeling better physically and emotionally after just one day on the diet. My asthma improved instantly. When I finally had my thyroid tested 18 months later all levels were normal except one --- and that one was close to normal. My TSH, which had been as high as 16.23, went down to 5.19: still higher than the ideal high of 4.5, but significantly better. This was achieved without taking any medication.

So what do I eat? Any kind of fruit I like, usually as a mono meal. This means that I only eat one fruit at a time. I also eat lettuce by itself or in a salad with other fruits following

good food combining principals. Bear in mind that some foods we tend to think of as vegetables are actually fruits, such as tomatoes, cucumbers and sweet peppers. I also have small amounts of seeds or nuts at times, but never more than a few ounces spread out over a week.

I enter everything I eat on a website called cronometer.com. This helps me keep track of my calories and nutrition. I eat at least 2500 calories a day and often more than 3000. It was clear to me by entering all my food on Cronometer.com that eating less than 2500 calories a day wound up not giving me quite enough nutrition, although some women may do OK on 2000 a day if they are small and sedentary. For men it is recommended that they eat at least 2500 a day and ideally 3000 to really thrive. If someone is very active it sometimes works well for them to have much more.

I follow the 80/10/10 idea discussed in a book by Douglas Graham, in which he suggests we get at least 80 percent of our calories from carbohydrates, no more than 10 percent of our calories from protein and no more than 10 percent of our calories from fat. Something closer to 90/5/5 is also OK. If you follow the guidelines of the diet precisely, you will see the numbers often come out closer to that ratio.”

Many people lose weight quickly and effortlessly as I did. The heavier you are when you start, the easier it is to lose. If you need to lose only five to twenty pounds it will probably take longer. My last twenty pounds took several months whereas the first seventeen came off in a month. Many people who are underweight have successfully gained the weight they wanted to gain as well.

The number one reason people don't lose weight right away, or may even temporarily gain, is if they restricted calories a lot on diets or had/have an eating disorder. I rarely went on calorie restricting diets before I started this lifestyle.

It is hard to start a new healthy way of eating and gain weight if you need to lose it. Calorie restricting diets can put your body into starvation mode: it wants to hold on to whatever food you give it. In time your body will trust that you will nourish it properly and let go of excess weight. Since this is such a difficult situation to be in it helps to find other people doing this lifestyle through Meetups, online groups, retreats or festivals for support, community and companionship.

I am currently 5'6" and 140 pounds. Some might say I would do well to lose another ten or even twenty pounds. While part of me would love to be a size 4 or 6 instead of a size 8, I feel that pushing myself to lose weight could backfire into my actually gaining weight. At size 8 I can eat to my heart's content and never feel deprived. I think if I restricted I might wind up wanting to eat unhealthy foods. Some women have even told me that when they upped their calories they lost more weight, strange as that might sound. I think part of it is that they have more energy for exercise; another part might be that it improves their elimination. Some say that this can happen because your body goes out of starvation mode and doesn't try to hold on to food in the same way.

I am not a medical doctor. An all-raw or high-fruit diet might not be suitable for people with some medical conditions at certain points in their lives. Use common sense and seek medical advice when necessary.

If you have type 1 diabetes, find Robby Barbaro and Tasha Lee on YouTube to see how they manage with this lifestyle. I recommend the book “Self Healing Colitis and Crohn’s” by David Klein if you have these illnesses, as some adaptations need to be made in this case. Raw vegetables are harder to digest and I believe steaming vegetables is one change David Klein recommends, among others. Personally, the only raw vegetable I eat regularly is lettuce.

Initially, some people get symptoms as they are detoxing. These are usually harmless, but please always use common sense. Go to a doctor if and when you need professional help.

TIME

This diet takes less time than any other. There is no cooking involved, no messy clean ups and minimal food preparation. While you can make more complicated recipes if you enjoy that, you can also simply eat whole raw fruit and/or vegetables. I don’t even usually make salads and just eat from a head of lettuce, a pack of baby cucumbers and a pint of cherry tomatoes. Of course if you’d rather make a salad that’s fine too!

Where you probably will spend more time is on shopping to locate high quality produce at the best price possible. Yet still, overall the time spent on food will be far less for most people.

MONEY

Depending on what your food-purchasing habits are like now, this diet could cost more. You probably won’t be eating in restaurants as much and when you do it can be a relatively inexpensive salad so that may be a savings to begin with. You can get fantastic deals buying in bulk if you have the storage space and some fruits can be quite cheap per calorie such as bananas, fresh dates and other seasonal fruits. Yet in some places good quality fruit can be difficult to find at any price, or will be more expensive. If it is truly unaffordable or unavailable, second best would be a high carbohydrate low fat cooked vegan diet. This second best diet would include steamed vegetables and less expensive white and sweet potatoes, or whole grains such as brown rice and millet. Some people have fruit for breakfast and lunch and then have a cooked vegan diet for dinner. It’s important to still avoid salt and oil if you choose to eat some cooked vegan food.

I have spent thousands of dollars a year on medical bills at times in my life and I’m sure we all know many who have spent much more than that if we haven’t ourselves. I currently have no medical bills other than those for regular checkups. I believe that

investing in high quality food now will in the end save people much more money because of reduced medical expenses.

It's not just medical expenses that cause financial difficulties when we get sick. We also lose money not being able to work. If we are unwell we may become more accident-prone or make poor decisions, which can impact our financial health as well.

Then there's the value of good health itself, which is priceless.

BEST FOODS TO EAT

All fruits, which includes non-sweet fruits such as cucumbers, tomatoes and red, yellow and orange peppers.

All lettuces. You may include other greens but I find most of the others are not as easy to digest and have all others only occasionally. Baby greens are usually better if the greens aren't lettuce. Some have concern about including spinach, chard and beet greens due to their oxalic acid, which can interfere with the absorption of some minerals and may contribute to kidney stones.

I don't eat other vegetables regularly but will occasionally have them raw. Many can be difficult to digest raw. Some possibilities are fresh peas, sprouts, carrot, celery and radish. In any case they should be used at dinner as a side dish or to enhance a salad, ideally after a third fruit meal has been eaten. Cruciferous vegetables such as kale, collards, cauliflower and broccoli can be hard to digest raw but some on 80/10/10 include them. There is evidence to suggest that eating cruciferous vegetables raw can contribute to hypothyroidism.

Small amounts of overt fats such as avocado, nuts and seeds. This is optional and I sometimes don't have them at all. When I do have them I don't have more than three servings a week. One serving can be a whole avocado if you limit fats to three times a week, yet a half an avocado as a serving would be better. One serving of seeds or nuts should be one ounce.

Dried fruits only as a backup. They are very convenient but are dehydrating and not as easy for the body to digest. Be sure you get dried fruit that has only fruit as the ingredient and nothing else. They also stick to the teeth, so it's best to be able to brush after a dried fruit meal, or as close to the meal as possible. It's best to re-hydrate by soaking them in water for a couple hours before eating them.

If you purchase fresh organic dates from companies such as 7hotdates.com they will be higher quality than those that have possibly sat around a store for a long time. Dates are dried but since they are fresher when buying directly from the farmer they are better than other dried fruits. Still, some do better having these in moderation.

In general organic produce is best yet sometimes it is difficult to find, overpriced, not tasty or not going to ripen properly if it was picked too early. Fruit should always taste good. If a fruit has a peel it is less important that it be organic. Sometimes conventional produce will be the better option.

On rare occasion when I don't have enough ripe fruit and am hungry I will have some high carb, low fat cooked vegan food that is oil and salt free. This is a second best choice. I feel that it's better to eat this way, rather than end up hungry and deprived, then turning to less healthy choices in desperation.

FOODS TO AVOID

Animal products. This includes fish, eggs and all dairy products as well as the more obvious meat and poultry.

Salt. There is enough sodium naturally occurring in greens and fruit.

Oil. There is enough fat naturally occurring in greens and fruit and especially the overt fats mentioned above.

Processed foods of any kind. No cereals, health bars, store bought "healthy ice cream", chips, and so on.

Super Foods, or any pill, potion or powder.

Sweeteners of any kind.

Herbs and spices outside of an occasional treat, perhaps at a raw restaurant.

Supplements of any kind. The one exception might be a vegan source of b12 yet in any case I would get tested first to be sure a deficiency truly exists. After 18 months on this lifestyle my b12 was normal.

WHAT TO DRINK

Distilled water is best. At least 2.5 liters a day, which is what I'd recommend as a minimum for anyone. Urine should be clear, so if it isn't more water should be taken in. Breastfeeding Moms should drink at least 4 liters of water a day. You can include any water you add to a smoothie. Some people purchase a water distiller. Poland Spring sells distilled water by the gallon inexpensively as another option.

Once in a while spring water if distilled isn't available.

Coconut water out of a young coconut or 100% pure coconut water.

Freshly squeezed orange juice that has most of the pulp. This is something I only have occasionally as eating the whole fruit is always best.

DRINKS TO AVOID

Most vegetable or fruit juices except freshly prepared ones on rare occasions as a treat. They spike your blood sugar in an unhealthy way because the fiber is missing. You may feel better right after drinking them because of this spike yet may also have an energy slump later in the day. This slump can lead to having cravings for unhealthy foods. Focusing on juicing in general can also lead to eating unhealthy foods at a later point because you aren't getting properly nourished and are more likely to get strong cravings.

Sodas

Milk, it's for baby calves, not humans.

Alcohol in any form.

Coffee or caffeinated teas. Herbal tea could be as a special treat but the best is to avoid this as well. Herbal tea will be better than caffeinated beverages in any case.

RIPE FRUIT

One skill that is important to learn is the ability to discern when fruit is truly ripe and ready to eat. You can make yourself ill eating fruit that is not yet ripe.

For example, bananas are usually unripe when eaten by most people. Most people feel as long as they aren't green anymore they are ready. Yet they are not ready to eat until they have at least some if not many brown speckles.

Melons are ripe when you hold them to your ear, thump on them and hear a deep hollow sound. Listen to a range of melons to practice this skill. Occasionally a melon may have a deep sound and be overripe. With some you can smell the sweetness, such as honeydew or Crenshaw. A little brown speckling can also be a good sign, such as with honeydew or canary, but this is not required.

Some citrus will never ripen properly, probably because it was picked too early. Deeper colors and a give to the touch are good clues, as well as the sweet smell being noticeable. Your sense of smell will improve the longer you are on this lifestyle if it isn't great yet.

Pineapple should smell sweet, be mostly yellow or orange and it should be easy to pluck out one of the green leaves on top.

Pears, stone fruits, mangoes and papayas should be soft to the touch and give a little when you press on them.

If possible, do a taste test. When I get a good melon or other fruit that's hard to taste test at the store I try to go back and get more of that same batch when possible.

PICKING GOOD QUALITY FRUIT

If the fruit is already ripe a sweet smell helps you choose the sweetest fruit. If you can do a taste test, usually the fruit simply tasting delicious and sweet is a good indicator of its high quality.

For melons, good indicators, which are all optional, are:

A different colored spot on it showing that it has been sitting in the sun longer and so less likely to have been picked too early.

The stem is still attached to the melon.

The melon is relatively heavy for its size.

For bananas, try to get them with as little green as possible; sometimes the very green ones never ripen properly.

A nice sweet smell is always a good indicator. However, if it isn't ripe it may not smell sweet yet.

WHAT AND WHEN TO REFRIGERATE

Berries, greens and most vegetables should be refrigerated.

If a fruit is ripe and you aren't sure if you can eat it before it goes bad, pop it in the refrigerator.

If you buy a large amount of a fruit and don't think you can eat it all before it goes bad, put some of it in the fridge when it is close to being ripe.

Leaving fruit out of the refrigerator will allow it to ripen.

If bananas are about to go bad you can peel and freeze them. They will keep well this way and are good in smoothies. Again, I rarely make any type of recipe involving anything other than eating the whole fruit, yet smoothies are fun and easy to make. You can simply blend frozen bananas and water or add another fruit that combines well to it.

FOOD COMBINING

Melons should always be eaten alone and are best to have for breakfast. Once in a while I'll have them for both breakfast and lunch. Wait at least an hour before eating another food that combines poorly with it.

Sweet fruits such as bananas, figs, persimmons and dates combine well with each other. Avoid combining them with acid or sub-acid fruits. Wait at least four hours before eating another fruit that combines poorly with them. They take longer to digest than higher water content fruits. Ideally it's best to have four hours between meals yet some fruit digests faster such that you can wait less than four hours if you want to.

Sub acid fruits such as apples, pears, berries, grapes and mango combine well with each other and OK with acid fruits. Wait at least two hours before eating another food that combines poorly with them.

Acid fruits such as citrus, pineapple and tomatoes combine well with each other and OK with sub acid fruits. Don't combine them with sweet fruits. Wait at least two hours before eating another food that combines poorly with them.

Non-sweet fruits such as cucumbers and peppers combine well with everything except melons.

Lettuce combines well with everything except melons.

Overt fats such as nuts, seeds and avocado combine well with non-sweet fruits and acid fruits as well as lettuce. They should be eaten for dinner or as an after fruit dinner salad as they take the longest to fully digest. Ideally wait at least 12 hours before eating another food that combines poorly with fats.

Poor food combining can lead to obvious digestive symptoms such as gas and bloating, but can also show up in other symptoms such as fatigue. We use a lot of energy to digest our food even when we combine foods properly and so when we don't it becomes very taxing on the body. Even if we don't get digestive symptoms when combining poorly, it will affect how well we absorb the nutrients from our foods. So in any case it's best to follow good food combining as much as possible.

AVOID HIGH FAT VERSIONS AND RECIPES OF THE RAW DIET

A high fat raw vegan diet can be even worse than the Standard American Diet. Sometimes people wind up eating so much oil and so many nuts that the calories they get from fat in a day come to 60 percent or even more. If most of the other foods are vegetables, which are wonderful yet low calorie, this contributes to the problem. Focusing more on vegetables than fruit will leave you with most of your calories coming

from fat if you eat large amounts of nuts and/or oil. It doesn't matter that it's a healthier fat. A high percentage of any type of fat will cause health problems.

I rarely had nuts my first seven months raw and had avocado only occasionally. Then I moved to Manhattan and started going to the raw restaurants regularly where most of the dishes were super high in oil and salt. My health declined to some degree during this time, although I was still able to maintain my weight loss. I wound up temporarily developing new food sensitivities to fruit, which was very upsetting.

I now think a meal of baked potato and steamed vegetables meal is healthier than a high oil and salt raw meal for regular consumption. Yet if you are only going to have a gourmet raw meal out very occasionally I think it can be a better choice than having cooked food, as psychologically you are still staying raw and one day of high fat in an otherwise low fat diet isn't as significant.

However, eating anything cooked or eating gourmet high fat raw food does affect me in a very profound way. I tend to temporarily gain a few pounds, probably from the salt making me retain water or my digestion and elimination slowing down. These foods awaken all kinds of crazy cravings I normally don't have, and I have to work hard to control myself from eating more of them. I get tired more easily. And with cooked food I tend to get mildly depressed for at least 24 hours afterward. With my more extreme slips that included wheat, I would get severely depressed temporarily. When the cooked vegan food is oil and salt free it's not as big a problem yet I still don't feel nearly as wonderful as when I am 100% high carb low fat raw.

Luckily I knew the cause when I went off the diet and didn't get as upset about it for this reason. I hate to think of how many people don't realize depression is often related to what you eat, including the individual's unique food sensitivities at times.

DRINK ENOUGH WATER!

Most people are dehydrated. Not drinking enough water can cause a range of symptoms and health problems. I've seen people actually pass out when the only diagnosis was that they were dehydrated.

I drink at least 2.5 liters a day, and often drink more if I am walking in the heat or eating fruits with a low water content such as bananas or dried fruit.

It's best to avoid drinking water 30 minutes before, during and 45 minutes after meals. Otherwise the water dilutes the digestive juices and can interfere with good digestion.

Your urine should be clear or very light straw yellow, not a darker yellow. Otherwise, drink more.

I'M VEGAN FOR SELFISH REASONS ABOVE ALL

Many vegans choose to be so because of ethical reasons above all. They don't want their food choices to involve the killing or suffering of animals. While I am very happy that my diet doesn't involve this, it's not my main inspiration for being vegan. My main reason is because it makes me feel wonderful and has improved my health. I loved the taste of most animal products and possibly could still enjoy the taste of them. But as Douglas Graham has said, these foods don't love you back. They cause a huge range of problems, even if we don't notice it initially.

One reason some people may feel that animal products HAVE to be good for them is that they feel good after eating them. I myself have usually felt a surge of energy after eating them, but this doesn't mean they are good for you. I also feel a surge of energy after eating cake or drinking caffeine, and most people would agree these aren't good for you. We could even take it a step further and say, many people feel great right after they take heroin or cocaine – and these things obviously are extremely unhealthy. So going by how we feel after eating something isn't always a good indicator. Sometimes we are even “addicted” to foods like wheat, and may temporarily feel relief after eating them -- yet they may be causing a range of problems we are unaware of as they pass through our system.

If you truly believe that it is healthy, or even vital, to eat animal products, the ethical argument may not impress you very much. We look at animals in nature and see that nature is very cruel a huge percentage of the time. Yes, nature doesn't include large-scale factory farming of animals, yet many animals die a cruel death when they are attacked or eaten by another animal. The attacking animal doesn't think about the most humane way to kill its victim and some deaths may be long and painful.

The vegan diet also helps so many other world problems such as hunger and pollution. So many more people can be fed with the grain we now give to animals. The waste products coming out of these raised animals contribute heavily to pollution on our planet as well. But again, while I love these bonuses of my diet as well, it doesn't keep me vegan above all.

If the ethical arguments appeal to you so much the better, you have additional inspiration to choose the best diet for your health. If they don't, you don't need them to choose the vegan diet for the most selfish reason. You just need to want to feel your best and have little or no medical bills. You just need to want to not suffer yourself. Now that I have been doing this lifestyle for three years, it is so obvious when I temporarily go off it that I am starting to suffer in small ways that were a precursor to serious problems for me in the past.

While I at first often feel very good right after I eat something off my normal plan, within hours I start to feel mildly to strongly depressed. I don't sleep as well at night and have less energy for several days. At times I even get very mild asthma symptoms warning me

that this is a mistake. I can gain a few pounds overnight even if the amount of poor quality food is small, especially if it has any added salt or oil.

FEELING DEPRIVED

My first year I never felt deprived. I was so excited to be feeling so much better and losing weight so effortlessly. My second, third and fourth years have been more difficult as I enter more and more situations in which many people eat differently than I do. Sometimes I feel deprived but other times I feel isolated from people I'd like to be close to. At times I have briefly gone off but every time I pay a price for it and always want to get right back on the wagon.

PLENTY OF NUTRITION

People often worry that this diet doesn't provide enough nutrition, especially protein. If you follow the guidelines and eat enough calories, getting enough nutrition is not a problem. You can enter all your food on a nutrition site such as www.cronometer.com and clearly see that you are getting enough of everything you need, and if you aren't you can research which vegan foods are high in what you are missing and have more of those foods. I don't worry about hitting 100% for everything every day as long as over the course of the week I get at least 75% of everything. I often get more than 100% of almost everything except b12. Many people say that vegans are able to absorb everything better, so my 75% may be better than a non vegan's 100%. With more focused attention it would be easy to get 100% of everything except b12 if this was of concern to you.

Even though I don't take in b12 through animal products, my b12 test after one and a half years on this diet was completely normal. Some say our body is able to produce it on its own; others say occasionally having unwashed produce gives you b12 from the remnants of dirt on them. I sometimes wash my produce, but often I am on the go and don't. Or, I don't want my berries or figs to get water logged. When it's organic or has a peel I don't worry about washing produce. So for whatever reason my b12 is fine. If yours isn't, you have the option of taking a vegan supplement. However, I wouldn't take it without getting tested to be sure you need it. You can consider seeing if this lifestyle works its magic without supplements if you feel comfortable doing so.

WALKING IS MY PRIMARY EXERCISE

I love walking for several reasons:

- 1) It's a wonderful way to get fresh air. Even in Manhattan I strive to find the less polluted route to walk and I'm often surprised by how great the air is at times. Air quality in the subway, on the bus or in a cab is usually worse.

- 2) I can do it at any time of day without being concerned about how long it's been since I last ate. Many kinds of exercise really need you to wait one to three hours after eating depending on the size of the meal and the type of exercise. I often have the time and energy to exercise right after a meal.
- 3) There's a low risk of injury. Part of the reason I gained so much weight in the past is that I injured myself several times such that even taking a brisk walk wasn't possible for months.
- 4) It saves money on transportation if you walk where you need to go instead of riding. I often walk for the pure exercise and enjoyment of it, but I also walk many places I need to go to. I walk three miles each way when I visit my uncle several times a week. I walk four miles each way when I have lunch with my daughter in the village. I walk to auditions and jobs whenever possible, sometimes covering ten miles over the course of a day. My record for walking in one day is 15 miles.

Some type of stretching or yoga is important to do on a daily basis when walking this much to help avoid soreness or mild injury. Tight muscles are easier to pull. I usually do fifteen to thirty minutes of yoga or stretching before bed and/or upon waking. I have a series of stretches I can actually do in my bed, and sometimes that makes it much much easier for me to fit them in. One good source for learning new stretches is the book "Stretching" by Bob Anderson.

Doing stretches before bed helps me relax and fall asleep. Doing them in the morning helps me wake up. I also do standing stretches while waiting for a light to change at times, but not as much as I should – I often forget to. ☺

For some of my yoga I will pull out the mat and do poses on my own or with a DVD. I like Rodney Yee's DVDs.

COLONICS AND ENEMAS ARE NOT HEALTHY OUTSIDE OF EMERGENCIES

Colonics and enemas weaken your intestines. They weaken your ability to eliminate well on your own. I would only consider it for a one-time use in an extreme situation.

Many people find that following this lifestyle helps with constipation problems. Some people may even move their bowels many more times a day initially as they clean out. Once things are stabilized the average person on this lifestyle moves their bowels an average of three times a day. If you don't move your bowels at least once a day you are constipated. This alone can cause weight gain and bloating.

Here are some ideas on how to help with constipation naturally:

Drink more water. It's good to drink at least 2.5 liters of water a day, but if you are constipated consider drinking more temporarily to help get things going.

Google "I love you abdominal massage" to learn how to do a simple abdominal massage yourself, ideally on an empty stomach.

Watermelon, citrus and grapes are all good fruits for constipation. Unripe bananas will make things much worse, so don't eat bananas that aren't ripe and spotted. If you are eating cooked food avoid white rice as that is famous for helping diarrhea – and causing constipation.

While not as ideal as fresh fruit, dried prunes are well known as a laxative. While prune juice isn't raw and also not as ideal, organic prune juice is better than having an enema or colonic. So if it helps you avoid enemas or colonics it's worth trying.

Salt is not on this lifestyle but if you are using it, stop immediately-- it can contribute to constipation problems.

Exercise usually helps.

I'M NOT IN PERFECT HEALTH AND I DON'T DO IT PERFECTLY

I've held off sharing my story publicly because I am not in perfect health, though I am so much healthier than when I started. I have had Multiple Chemical Sensitivity since 1995, and although it is better I still have it. This problem involves being more sensitive to many every day products than the average person. Some of these toxic products include perfume, cologne, scented personal care products, air fresheners and pesticides. However, in my opinion these products are toxic for everyone and I just happen to have a body that is more obviously sensitive to them.

Here's an analogy to show how I see it. Let's say you and I work for a boss who is emotionally abusive. Let's also say that I am super sensitive emotionally and you have a much thicker skin than I do. So when the boss is abusive to you, you can let it go more easily, whereas when they are abusive to me, I get more upset. There's no question that being treated horribly is bad for both of us, and may even eventually take a bad toll on you. I'm just more sensitive than you are.

In a way I appreciate my body warning me to stay away from them, yet I wish the reaction wasn't quite as strong. However, I am grateful for all that has improved.

While I may do this lifestyle perfectly for months at a time, I have times when I have gone off and eaten unhealthy things. I pay the price for it in feeling unwell to one degree or another and always get back on track.

CHOOSE HEALTHY PRODUCTS FOR YOUR HOME AND PERSONAL CARE

For best health I would encourage you to avoid the following products:

Perfume and cologne

Any scented personal care product or cleaner

All air fresheners

All pesticides. If you absolutely need them choose baits over sprays. Don't use sprays preventively. This alone can destroy your health.

Mothballs

Here are some great products that are unscented and healthier:

Magick Botanicals Oil Free Shampoo and Conditioner, Hair Gel and Hair Spray. The Hair Spray is slightly toxic but it's the least toxic one I've found. I use the shampoo as a body wash.

Eucerin Original Healing Lotion, Cerave products

Many of Clinique's and MAC's products

AFM's Superclean

Free and Clear products for cleaning, Seventh Generation is a good one

IN CONCLUSION

Do the best you can, and if you get off track forgive yourself and move on.

I wasn't able to improve my diet at times in my life partly due to stress. If changing your diet seems impossible right now, see what you can do to make your life less stressful so that at another point you can improve your diet. Improve whatever you can. Perhaps you can exercise more or make your home better air quality wise. Get more sleep if you haven't been getting enough. Maybe you can say no to something that is optional that you don't enjoy in your life, freeing up energy for something more positive.

I've been miserable and have felt so stuck it seemed I could never make it better at times. But I did. And you can too!

Below are before and after photos. ☺



