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*Rivkah Krinsky, health coach

We thank them for their trust and for sharing their knowledge and experience with us. Special honorable mention to the Gutleizers who have been generous supporters and invaluable friends of the *N'shei Chabad Newsletter* from the day they opened shop at 376 Kingston Avenue.

FREE AT LAST: CONQUERING SUGAR

Knowing that sugar is bad for us is one thing. Giving up the habit for good is another. Even those who have gone off sugar for a while and felt much better as a result know how easy it is for all that effort to be undone with just a single bite.

Why is it so hard to break the sugar habit?

In this feature, we explore the dangers of excess sugar consumption. Dr. Debbie Herbst, MD, who practices medicine in Melbourne, Australia, briefly explains the biochemical processes that our body goes through when we take the first bite of sugar, which all but guarantee that we will keep eating more and more. Sara Lejderman, Zelda Pearl and Tamar Stone share their own harrowing stories of the health effects of excess sugar and how they were finally able to kick the habit.

Do we need to give up sugar for good, or is it possible to include some relatively healthy treats on occasion? You will find a range of opinions among experts, and among our panelists as well. Dr. Herbst is emphatic that there is no room for added sugar in a healthy diet: "Eat everything in moderation and *don't get results*." If we do consume some natural sugars, Dr. Herbst feels they should be in the quantities and of the quality that our ancestors ate. Rivkah Krinsky believes that maintaining a good diet for the long term is possible only when some indulgences, which she associates with joy, are part of the mix.

Many of the authors mentioned in our recommended reading list feel that controlling the environment is key to cutting out sugar; if it's in the house, it isn't realistic to expect the children (or the adults) to not eat it.

Visit our website at nsheichabadnewsletter.com for a video by Dr. Robert Lustig, a pediatric endocrinologist at University of California in San Francisco and one of the world's foremost experts on child obesity. Read his book and others in our recommended reading list. And see for yourself how conquering sugar can set you free at last. – The Editors

A DOCTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

DR. DEBBIE HERBST
MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

The following comments are culled from an interview Dr. Debbie Herbst gave to the *N'shei Chabad Newsletter* in July of 2017.

WHY ARE PEOPLE GETTING FATTY LIVER DISEASE?

I live in Melbourne, Australia, where I raise my family and practice medicine. At my office we are often visited by drug company representatives or specialists who want us to refer patients to them. Many people want to inform us for many reasons, and it is up to us to weed out what's true from what's not.

One day a professor, Dr. Ken Sikaris, the head of Melbourne Pathology, came to speak to us. His talk was an eye-opener. He spoke about the epidemic of fatty liver disease (FLD), diabetes and heart disease, a trio also known as metabolic syndrome. He said that doctors have it all wrong. It isn't high cholesterol that causes these problems. It's refined sugars and refined carbohydrates.



Dr. Debbie Herbst

He pointed out, quite correctly, that only a few decades ago, when we in the developed world ate much less sugar and much less refined carbs, FLD didn't exist. It was rare for a pathology report to show fatty liver disease at all. Not long ago the commonly recognized causes of liver disease were alcohol, certain medications, hepatitis and cancer. Now the most common form of liver disease is non-alcoholic fatty liver disease. Even healthy eaters are getting it, meaning "healthy eaters" who continue to eat the 6-11 daily servings of carbohydrates recommended by various health authorities.

Why?

It is all related to the modern diet. Overconsumption of highly processed foods, excess sugars and refined carbohydrates is destroying livers and causing increasing rates of Type II diabetes and obesity, or diabesity, as it is called.

We can stop testing everyone's cholesterol, we can stop putting people on low-fat diets. We have an epidemic of fatty liver disease in the Western world and the only way to reverse it to reduce sugar and carbohydrate intake.

You don't have to be obese to have fatty liver disease. I know of a woman in her early 60s who weighed 98 pounds and got this illness from too many fruit shakes (sugar) and too much bread (refined carbs). She wasn't a *nosher*, and she hardly ever ate junk food! *[And we got her to write for us. Read Zelda Pearl's interview in this feature. -Ed.]*

It is a complete over-simplification to say FLD is from being overweight, that you get fat so your liver gets fat. It has to do with the types of food that you're eating.

The reality is we were never designed to be consuming so much sugar. When we eat any carbohydrates (starches), the body quickly breaks the food down in order to get the energy into our blood stream. The glucose is used for energy or stored for later use. When we eat sugar or carbohydrates in excess, the liver can't use all of it and some of it is converted to fat.

Take a biopsy of the liver and you see fatty globules. Take a blood test and you'll see elevated liver enzymes because the liver is dangerously overloaded. Take a scan and you will see fatty deposits in the liver. This is such a common finding now that it may not even get reported! Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) has become so prevalent that the Alfred Hospital, one of Melbourne's biggest, has recently opened a dedicated NAFLD clinic to deal with the epidemic, and they are overwhelmed with patients.

Change the diet, so the liver doesn't have to process so much glucose and fructose, and the fatty liver disease goes away.

If everything were as simple as doctors and dieticians would have us think, then over the past 40 years with the low-fat craze, why are people getting fatter and sicker than ever before? There's an obesity epidemic in the Western world. There's a diabetes epidemic.

What did we doctors advise them? Eat less, exercise more, and you'll get better. When that didn't work, we had to conclude: Either people are inherently stupid and lazy, or the message was wrong.

MESSAGE WAS WRONG

Since clearly people are not inherently stupid and lazy, and they want to be slim and they want to be healthy (desperately), we have to conclude that the message was wrong. The problem wasn't that they were eating too much. They were eating too much *of the wrong type of food*, and the liver could not cope.

Over the past 40 years, there has been a dramatic increase in the

amounts of processed carbs people eat, in empty-calorie foods.

We can easily handle and process reasonable quantities of naturally occurring sugars and carbs, such as those found in fruits and vegetables, assuming we eat them whole (not blended, and not processed, and certainly not with the fiber removed such as apple juice). Sugar grows on the ground, but if you ate it in its raw cane sugar form, you wouldn't get sick from it. Plain corn-on-the-cob: have an ear or two, you can't overeat it. But process it into high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS) and you are in trouble.

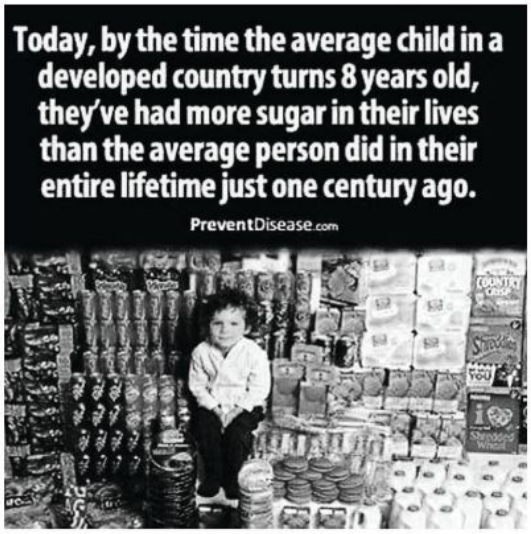
Genetic makeup and activity level do matter. They determine how much you can handle carbs of any form. When sugar enters your bloodstream, your body makes insulin to remove the glucose from your blood and bring it into the cells where it can be used for energy. The more sugar you eat, the more insulin your body produces, which in turn leads to a craving for carbohydrates. This leads to a feeling of hunger, even if you just ate.

It's not that people are weak, fat and lazy. It's that their body chemicals are instructing them to eat again because their bodies have produced so much insulin in response to highly-processed things like packaged dry cereal. Even if a cereal is labeled "multi-grain" and "natural," and even if it's marked "sugar-free," it's the worst way to start your day. It guarantees a day filled with hunger and sugar cravings. Insulin is also a fat-storing hormone, so having too much of it around almost certainly ensures that losing weight will be impossible. And the doctors just keep telling people to lose weight!

SCHOOLS TRYING TO HELP

Here in Australia, I often talk to school groups and start off by asking what most of them ate for breakfast. The most common breakfast is something that comes out of a box that has LOW FAT in bold letters and lots of check marks from the Heart Foundation. Most of these apparently healthy cereals contain large amounts of sugar, and if you're a growing kid one bowl often isn't enough. So the kids bounce off to school full of energy, also known as sugar. By 10 a.m. though, their blood sugar levels drop. They start to crave food, particularly sweet food. They lose focus and often get distracted and misbehave. Schools wonder why kids can't focus, and maybe the teachers themselves can't focus after enjoying sugary coffee and pastries, eaten as they rush off to start their day. Imagine if breakfast was a couple of eggs with vegetables and cheese, or grilled fish with a side of fresh salad and broccoli, or a bowl of steaming hot (real, not pre-chewed) steel-cut oats, with butter and salt and some fresh berries. Imagine if both students and staff partook of truly healthy breakfasts every day. Grades and behavior would definitely shoot up, as would job satisfaction.

Quinoa, buckwheat, oats, sweet potatoes and other starchy vegetables may be good for those who are more tolerant of carbs. We were not designed to eat so much processed carbs, such as bread and pasta, but if we only ate challah on Shabbos, instead of having bread every day, that would be a step in the right direction. When McDonald's moves into China or India, or people from those countries move to the U.S. and adopt a Western diet, their rates of diabetes shoot up immediately.



Do you want the secret to living a healthier life? The general principle is to eat real food; whole foods, nothing in a package with 20 mostly unpronounceable ingredients with ten chemicals at the end.

Ketchup, mayonnaise, duck sauce and other bottled condiments are filled with high-fructose corn syrup. Most Americans squirt some ketchup or other sauce on their food every day, eating lots of sugar without even realizing it.

APPLES AND APPLES

I participated in the production of an Australian film called "That Sugar Film." There's a scene where we compare one apple, with all its fiber, which one chews over the course of a minute or longer, versus one cup of apple juice which one consumes in about two seconds, which has the sugar content of four apples, without fiber. Are four apples (minus their fiber) a normal amount of fruit to consume in two seconds? No. We have processed apples to the point where they have become unhealthy.

We are so used to the idea that "fruit is healthy" that we have a hard time believing it can be bad for us. Once I convince a patient that fruits can be harmful, she will often ask: How much fruit is okay? The answer to that is highly individual. Some can handle one fruit per day (eaten whole, not juiced or blended). Some can only handle one per week.

If we stay closer to foods the way G-d created them, it is hard to go wrong. But when we squeeze them down and make them into something totally different, we



ask for trouble.

Another problem with the Standard American Diet (SAD indeed) is the oils we use. Consumption of vegetable oils and sugar both contribute to inflammatory damage in the body. Inflammation is the precursor of many diseases.

In the Western diet, there is an over-reliance on these vegetable oils. Sunflower and safflower seeds are great. But when you process them, using chemicals such as hexane along the way, they're not great any more. Pure olive oil and even butter and schmaltz are better. The simpler and more natural the food–the better.

American radio and billboards and media shout, "100 percent fat-free! No added sugar! Healthy! Natural!" but those foods are really not healthy at all. Those so-called health bars (Lara bars, Kind bars, protein bars, etc.) are convenient but not healthy. You've got the sugar of many fruits, more than you would ever consume in one sitting, condensed and processed into a little bar that you down in a few seconds. In the Western world, it is hard to find even a yogurt without sugar or artificial sweetener. (Artificial sweeteners carry their own set of risks and dangers including what they do to the brain.)

We are habituated to the taste of sweetness. But the truth is once you stop eating sugar, you stop wanting it. When you replace sugar with other sweeteners, it makes sugar harder to give up because you are always craving the taste.

WHY MODERATION DOESN'T WORK

Back before I knew better, some years ago at the height of the "fat-free era," I would eat a handful of dates for breakfast. Dates are more than 30% fructose and nobody stops at one. The sugar hit from the dates would get me going along with a nice surge in insulin. Two hours later I'd be shaking and unable to focus. So I kept a jar of jelly beans on my desk and in-between seeing patients, I would grab some. The jelly beans would put me on my merry way again until again I felt weak, as my blood sugar dropped in response to all the insulin going around.

Traditional medical advice is to eat everything in moderation. I would add to that. Eat everything in moderation *and don't get results*. Convince yourself that you need a little sugar in your diet now and then, only to find yourself sucked in time and again. Change can happen if we make it happen. Start with reading some of the books. My favorites are *Our Daily Meds* by Melody Petersen, and *The Big Fat Surprise* by Nina Teicholz, and *Bring Back the Fat* by Christine Cronau. If you're not a reader, watch the documentary *Bring Back the Fat* or the one I was involved with, *That Sugar Film* [for women only-Ed.].

Millions of people are rejecting the processed food mentality and going back to nature, and becoming slim and healthy while feeling good. You can do it too. You were built to eat that way, and to live a long healthy life. Don't let food manufacturers with their multi-million-dollar advertising campaigns convince you otherwise. Energy or protein bars often have more sugar than a chocolate bar. Learn to read food labels to determine how much sugar a product really contains. The World Health Organization recommends that adults eat no more than six teaspoons of added sugar in *all* the foods we eat in a single day. By added we mean in addition to the naturally occurring sugars found in fruits and vegetables. Six may sound like a lot, but read the nutrition information on a box of cereal and you will see you'd probably get to more than six before your breakfast is even over. Add some low-fat fruit yogurt and your daily limit is blown while you are thinking you have downed a really "healthy" breakfast.

I believe in the power of the printed word to help us understand things and to help us make real changes. I am pleased that the *N'shei Chabad Newsletter* has decided to tackle this important public health

issue. I have noticed that the *N'shei Chabad Newsletter* features recipes that are low in sugar, and are truly healthy, real food made by real people. I'll actually make some of those recipes!

CANCER FREE, SUGAR FREE

SARA LEJDERMAN
GOTHENBURG, SWEDEN

I loved chocolate. I loved cake. I loved pastries. I loved fudge. I loved licorice. I loved cheese cake, carrot cake, vanilla cake. I loved my sweet tea, my rosehip soup, my hot chocolate. I loved meringues and caramel, candies and pies. All these different chocolates and pastries and shortbread melted in my mouth and made me happy and satisfied. I just could not get enough of them.

Literally. I could not stop myself from eating chocolate and pastries every single day. And I became increasingly overweight. The extra weight bothered me, but giving up my sweet life felt impossible. I deserved to indulge myself, didn't I? Why should I succumb to the weight hysteria of our culture? And delicious treats are part of life, of birthdays, of anniversaries, of Shabbos and Yomim Tovim. And isn't every single day a gift, and shouldn't life be celebrated? And isn't it lovely to share a piece of cake with a friend? I enjoyed the anticipation of buying chocolates and pastries, of baking them, of serving them and of eating them. I enjoyed the sweet taste in my mouth and the full, satisfied feeling in my belly.

In short, what was *not* to love about delicious treats?

Every day I drank several cups of tea, each cup with two or three cubes of sugar. As I watched the contents of the sugar box dwindle, I would get a feeling that this just cannot be good. I am going through these sugar cubes at an awful speed. Hmm. Oh, well.

Then my world collapsed. I was called back to the doctor's office after a routine mammogram. It was a Monday evening when I read the letter and I understood that the call-back was bad news. Tuesday morning I was in the doctor's office, telling them they had to see me now, even though the appointment was not for another week. The doctor agreed. I couldn't wait. As I lay on the table I saw what the doctor saw on the ultrasound. Two large tumors. She took biopsies and I wept. I knew it was cancer. I had to wait a whole week to get confirmation, but I knew. I knew I had breast cancer.



Sara Lejderman at the *seudas hoda'ah* hosted by her good friend, *shlucha* Leah Namdar of Gothenburg, Sweden.

And something happened within me. It felt almost... divine. Because it felt supernatural. It came simultaneously from within the deepest part of me, but also as an absolute knowledge from the outside. Without having read a single thing, without having talked to anyone, I just felt, with absolute clarity, that I did not want to touch sugar again. I knew it was poison. With the arrival of my diagnosis, the allure of sugar vanished instantaneously.

Knowing I had cancer was such a traumatic shock that I changed my life radically and instinctively and immediately. And the life change was to quit sugar. It was a couple of months before I started reading a number of books by very serious and dedicated doctors and medical researchers who all agreed that sugar is poison, sugar is a drug, sugar causes cancer. (The main book was *Fat Chance* by Dr. Robert Lustig.)

I was diagnosed with breast cancer in February 2016, at the age of 43. I had a mastectomy, followed by the whole battery of after-treatments available: chemotherapy, radiation, and Herceptin. In May of 2017 I had my final shot of Herceptin and, after 15 long months, I was finally released from the Oncology ward. The "only" thing I have left is the daily medication, an anti-hormonal drug that I will take for a total of five to ten years. *Baruch Hashem*, I am healthy! I am cancer-free and I am sugar-free. Everything I have read so far has confirmed what I instinctively felt, or the G-d-given knowledge that was bestowed upon me: sugar intake is a death sentence. Cancer cells feed on sugar. One piece of cake will not kill you, neither will one cigarette. But we do not quit after just one piece of cake or one cigarette. Either we consume sugar and cigarettes, or we do not.

Turns out there was a lovely side effect to quitting sugar. The weight naturally came off. When I was diagnosed with breast cancer I weighed around 120 kilos (almost 265 pounds). Now I weigh around 75 kilos (about 165 pounds). My height is 5.9. My body mass index (BMI) used to be in the "obese" category, and now my BMI is normal. I feel that my massive sugar intake during all these years caused my cancer. Because I am Ashkenazi and my maternal grandmother, Chaje, *a"h*, had breast cancer, I was referred to the

geneticist who did testing, but it turns out my breast cancer was not genetic. (My grandmother recovered and lived to be almost 90.) This furthered my belief that I unknowingly did this to myself. I almost killed myself eating sugar. And I realized that I hadn't loved vanilla and caramel and rosehip and cocoa and licorice—I had "loved" the common denominator: the sugar that is in all these goods. Throughout the treatments I have been eating fats: butter, peanut butter, nuts, but the weight continued to come off and stay off.

But it is not about weight. It is about health. Sugar caused the cancer and sugar caused the obesity. Now, I humbly realize that Hashem in His infinite kindness saved my life by giving me cancer and allowing the medical staff to remove it. Had I not been diagnosed with breast cancer, I would have kept eating pastries and chocolates and sugary drinks and I likely would have died in middle-age from heart disease. Now I am, by the grace and kindness of Hashem, looking forward to a long, cancer-free, sugar-free, healthy life. And I am so grateful!

Please do not harm yourselves the way I did.



HOW A 98-POUND WOMAN GOT FATTY LIVER DISEASE

ZELDA PEARL

At 60 years old, I found myself suffering from recurrent yeast infections. I generally don't visit doctors, but finally, I went to my GP. Besides discussing the yeast infections, she also took a blood test, only because I hadn't been there in so many years. The blood test disclosed a surprise: something was wrong with my liver. She sent me for a sonogram, which showed that I either had fatty liver disease or something else, and so I went to a liver specialist, who recommended a biopsy.

A sonogram doesn't bother me because it's not that invasive as long as you're not pregnant. But a biopsy is really invasive and I didn't want to do it. Also, I couldn't understand, why would I have fatty liver? I'm extremely thin. I don't smoke, I don't drink alcohol. And I am a healthy eater who very seldom eats junk food.

The doctor kept assuring me that the biopsy was no big deal and that fatty liver disease is also not a big deal; it can be treated with daily medication. (He didn't understand that to me, daily medication would be a very big deal.)

I asked him, does this have anything to do with diet? And this liver specialist, a top doctor in a top hospital, replied: "No. Diet has nothing to do with your fatty liver. It's totally random."

I couldn't bring myself to have the biopsy and possibly sign on for a lifetime of drugs. I also couldn't believe that diet had nothing to do with it. Diet has something to do with everything.

So I called our *rofeh yedid* and told him everything. He looked at all the numbers and asked one simple question: "What are you eating?"

I told him how I was eating. I would often eat four slices of bread in one sitting. I would sometimes eat three peaches in a row. I'm not a *nosher* but when I sit down to eat I eat big meals.

I have a grueling job, and often, instead of a meal, I'd have a smoothie consisting of protein powder, two bananas or some strawberries, a cup of rice milk, and crushed ice. This would fill me up for a few hours and not require brushing and flossing afterward.

This was my way of eating and for many years I was very thin and very energetic and, I thought, very healthy, until I found out I had fatty liver disease.

Our *rofeh yedid* (who asked me not to use his name in this article, as he is retired) said something totally different from what the liver

specialist had said. He said, "Cut your fruit down drastically. Less than one a day. Cut down your carbs, also drastically."

That's it.

And I did it.

Instead of four slices of bread almost every day, I started having one a day. Instead of four or five fruits per day, I cut down to four or five fruits *per week*. I still have a teaspoon of sugar every morning on my yogurt and cottage cheese. I'm not off all sugar. But I switched to a diet that is vegetable-heavy with some protein, including lentil, split pea and other soups. I'm still in a rush, with a demanding job, so I am more likely to broil some salmon and bake a butternut squash. Or I'll fry some eggs with a box of cherry tomatoes thrown in.

A few months later I went back to my GP for another blood test. She got the results and said, "You're all better. What did you do?" I told her about the changes I had made. This was a few years ago and I haven't seen her since. As for the liver specialist, I just never went back.

The body doesn't differentiate between healthy sugars and unhealthy sugars. Even healthy sugars (like fruit) and carbs (like sugar-free Ezekiel bread) have to be limited for me, the same as candy and cake. I was never a *nosher*, but I was eating in a way that made me sick. Now I am well. *Baruch Hashem.*

ADVANCED NUTRITION BY ZAHLER: HOW CAN VITAMINS AND SUPPLEMENTS HELP?

The following comments are culled from a telephone interview Peri Gutman née Zahler gave to the *N'shei Chabad Newsletter* in September 2017.

What are some health issues caused by excess sugar consumption? Do you have any products that can help with them?

Yeast infections, or *candida albicans*, are very prevalent because of a sugary diet. Yeast grow in warm, moist areas of the body and thrive on sugar. Thus, a high-sugar diet causes the yeast to proliferate. Thrush and nail fungus are also related to *candida albicans*. For those suffering from yeast infections we suggest CandAid and biophilus. CandAid contains caprylic acid, an anti-fungal, which helps clear yeast from the system. Biophilus is a probiotic which helps restore the balance of good bacteria in the digestive system, which keeps yeast growth in check.

Parasitic infection is also related to a high-sugar diet. Parasites such as pinworms are tiny organisms invisible to the naked eye that infect the intestines, often in children. Zahler's has a product, PARAGUARD, which promotes optimal digestive flora and supports a healthy intestinal balance. The herbs included in PARAGUARD, such as wormwood, pumpkin seed, and garlic, help clear the body of common symptoms of parasitic infection such as diarrhea, constipation, gas, bloating, nausea and fatigue.

Type II diabetes is unfortunately becoming rampant today due to a high-sugar diet. While high sugar consumption doesn't always bring on diabetes it clearly has a detrimental effect on the body's functioning. Zahler's has a product, Diabeater, which helps regulate blood sugar, control the rate at which sugar enters the bloodstream, improve glucose metabolism and promote a healthy circulatory system for people with high levels of glucose in the blood. The ingredients in Diabeater include cinnamon, fenugreek, bitter melon fruit powder and chromium, all of which can help lower blood sugar in conjunction with dietary changes.

Can you tell us how Zahler's got started?

Zahler's kosher vitamin company was started in 2002 by my grandmother, Mrs. Rachel Zahler. Her husband, my grandfather Yitzchok Zahler *a"h*, was suffering from allergies and other digestive and immune issues. They were running from doctor to doctor with no answers. My grandmother decided to explore alternative medicine. She went to libraries, studied many books, and earned a PhD in nutrition. She succeeded in helping her husband and this gave her the courage to become the expert for her own family and then share her wisdom with the Brooklyn Jewish community, then the entire Orthodox Jewish world. She felt a calling to help people feel better.

She was genuinely tuned in to people's problems and only wanted to help them. She never looked at what she did as a way to make money. She ran a health food store and had a room in back for consulting, specializing in female issues. People were coming to her day and night to consult and

she had a special *siyatta diShmaya*. The advice she gave helped many people to feel better and recover from their ailments. Eventually she began to produce her own line of kosher vitamins and supplements. In addition to providing nutritional counseling she would also *daven* for the people who came to her for advice. When she would counsel someone with fertility issues and that person had a baby, that was all the reward Mrs. Zahler wanted. She is retired today but she still *davens* for her many clients in need of help and support.



Linda Gutleizer (L) and Rishe Deitsch talking about sugar and other evils in Apple Drugs and Health Food Store at 376 Kingston Avenue in Crown Heights.

Any last words of advice?

If you're feeling unwell or fatigued, get a blood test. You may have a simple, easily treated issue that Zahler's can help you with. People will say, "It's normal for teens to be moody," or, "Of course you're tired, you're a nursing mother," or, "Older women all suffer from recurrent UTIs." Take a blood test. It could be a thyroid problem, it could be anemia, or mono, or a vitamin D deficiency. Maybe you need to make some changes to your diet or lifestyle. Possibly there is a Zahler's product that will be life-changing for you. You don't need to accept feeling less than your best. Solutions are out there if you seek them out.

"NO EASY WAY OUT"

Linda Gutleizer, a pharmacist, is owner of Apple Drugs and Health Food Store in Crown Heights, together with her husband, Shloime. These comments are culled from an interview she gave to the *N'shei Chabad Newsletter* in September 2017.

Do you see people moving away from drugs and on to better nutrition to solve their health problems? How do you explain the trend?

Many people who were following the conventional route felt things were spiraling out of control. Medications cause side effects which require more medication to control which cause more side effects... Americans now take more drugs than ever before and many want to get off that slippery slope. So they turn to alternatives, such as vitamins, herbs, and better nutrition. Also, people are realizing that drugs may get the symptoms to go away temporarily, but in many cases won't solve the problem permanently. Even though I'm a pharmacist, I'm aware that the drug solution is limited and can have a high price to pay, not in money.

Can you give us some examples of what vitamins and herbs can do?

There are women who tried nursing and didn't have enough milk; with the right supplements they are succeeding, and even "nursing clean." Turmeric, or rather its active ingredient, curcumin, has become famous as a powerful anti-inflammatory, and we carry it as a tea or a capsule. Some people with arthritis prefer curcumin to drugs, or to reduce the dose of drug they need. Apple cider vinegar can help treat acid reflux, lower blood pressure, improve diabetes and support weight loss. It can help kill pathogens, thereby making it useful in treating fungus, lice and warts.

What are the biggest obstacles to becoming healthier?

Simply, we need to learn to carefully read labels. Food manufacturers can easily throw words like "all natural" on the label, or "low sugar" or "low fat," and people think it's good for them. Very often, it's not. Read labels. We're all better off cooking our own simple, healthy, *real* food, rather than buying highly processed manufactured products with misleading labels. Fat-free packaged foods are usually high in sugar, and sugar-free packaged foods are usually high in unhealthy fats or unhealthy artificial sweeteners. There's no easy way out; we have to learn to prepare healthful meals for our family.

"WE HAVE FORGOTTEN WHAT NORMAL FOOD PORTIONS LOOK LIKE"

Rivkah Krinsky is a certified health coach. These comments are culled from an interview she gave to the *N'shei Chabad Newsletter* in September 2017. See Rivkah's recipes, in the last color section of this magazine.

Before you were a health coach, you were a singer. How do you see the relationship between those two roles?

They are intertwined because living healthily nourishes the body physically and music nourishes the soul spiritually. Developing and growing with both those elements is very powerful and fulfilling and they only enhance each other.

How did you get started in health coaching?

After the birth of my third child, I had a lot of weight to lose and was feeling lethargic. I decided that I needed to make some changes, but I wanted to do so in a healthy, sustainable way. I started reading many books and articles about health and nutrition and what I learned helped me not only to lose weight but to feel better and have more energy. I wanted to share what I learned with others and so I became a certified health coach.

What is your main piece of advice to people who come to you for health coaching?

The first step in adopting a healthy eating plan is to really want to do it. You have to decide that you want to make changes in your life and you are ready to put in the work necessary.

Many people tend to think that the only way they can lose weight is by taking on an extreme diet, thereby denying themselves enjoyment along with many nutrients. This approach is not always sustainable in the long term. It's one of the many reasons I'm passionate about incorporating foods from all food groups, including healthy grains. This is how I live and how I guide my clients and my family. We enjoy healthy meals with an occasional dose of indulgence.

We have forgotten what normal food portions look like. Often a plate for a single person looks more like a serving platter. Eat to the point of feeling satiated, not until you feel overly full. There's no need to weigh and measure your food. Learn to tune into your body's own signals for when you're full. Learn to eat in a way that nourishes and energizes you and you will maintain these habits for life.

With this approach one is able to sustain a healthy balance naturally and joyfully. It enables you to go out to eat without anxiety and enjoy family occasions and meals. The key is moderation, making healthy choices with a healthy balance.

Keep in mind the eating habits you want to teach your children. If they see you adopting extreme diets or being stressed about what you can or can't eat, they will never want to eat as you do. If they see you eating in a balanced, healthy, joyous way they will pick it up too and you have instilled in them healthy eating habits for life.

I am always learning and gaining knowledge and ideas from textbooks, science articles and new discoveries, but I learn most from working with my clients. With time and experience I can see what works practically, for my clients as well as for myself in my own health journey.

I am always struck by the huge role our minds play in living healthily as well. Working through our emotional struggles is key to living a healthier life.

What are some ways we can enjoy the foods we love without compromising on health?

I usually advise my clients to save their indulgences for Shabbos, a treat that they will look forward to all week. It doesn't have to be sugar necessarily, it can also be a healthier version of something they love and enjoy.



Rivkah Krinsky

How does seeing a health coach help people achieve better health?

In addition to offering advice, motivation, customizing doable meal plans to suit their individual needs and helping them achieve their goals, a key element is being accountable to someone who will not only listen to the challenges being faced but also give one the tools to overcome them in the here and now and beyond.

HEALTHY EATING, BODY AND SOUL: EXCERPTS FROM CHASSIDUS

Compiled by *N'shei Chabad Newsletter* Staff

- We are sent into this world as a soul within a body. We are not here to

have perfect physical bodies. Nor are we here to soar to the heavens and neglect our physical needs. The core teaching of Chassidus is that our purpose is to form a partnership between the physical and spiritual, where the body serves the soul and vice versa. We fulfill our mission by making peace between the needs of the body and soul.

- Hashem created us with an ongoing need for food and drink, so that with every bite we take we reveal that Hashem is our true source of life and sustains the world at every moment (*Sefer Hasichos* 5751, p. 654).
- When Hillel would sit down to eat he famously said, "I'm going to do a favor for the lowly and poor creature." In other words, he treated his body as a small child or animal that one is obligated to care for (*Tanya* Chapter 27).
- Chassidus teaches us to "refine ourselves with what is permitted to you." *Kadesh atzmecha bemutar lach*. The word "*mutar*" means unbound. An unkosher food is *assur*—meaning that it is bound to the *kelipah* and cannot be elevated. A kosher food, on the other hand, is unbound and can be made holy as long as we eat it with the right intentions. When we eat food only to indulge ourselves, we are not nourished by it but on the contrary, it weakens us both physically and spiritually (*Tanya* Chapter 27).
- When we eat and drink not out of physical desire but out of a desire to broaden our minds in the service of Hashem, or to fulfill the *mitzvah* of enjoying Shabbos and Yom Tov, then the eating is a *mitzvah* in itself. On the other hand, if we eat gluttonously, only to fulfill the body's desires, then the life-force in the food and drink becomes degraded and drawn down into evil. This is only temporary, however. By doing *teshuvah* we can elevate the food and restore it to *kedushah* (*Tanya* Chapter 7).
- Delaying gratification even for a short time helps to drive out the *yetzer hara*. In the time of the *Gemara*, the average person would eat at the fourth hour (from sunrise) while *tzaddikim* would eat at the sixth hour, and would use the two-hour delay to study Torah. This was how they learned to restrain and master their desires (*Tanya*, Chapter 27).
- There is a famous *vort* of the Baal Shem Tov on the *passuk* in *Tehillim (106:5)*, "Hungry as well as thirsty, their soul enwraps itself in them." When the body is hungry or thirsty for physical nourishment, it is actually the soul that is hungry for the sparks of *kedushah* in that food. In other words, even though we may think it is our body that wants food, it is actually our soul that craves it, so it can elevate that spark to *kedushah* (*Keser Shem Tov*. See also *Likutei Sichos* vol. 19, p. 295).
- Having temptations and cravings are a natural state for all of us who are not *tzaddikim*. Therefore, being sad over the fact that we struggle with cravings shows that one simply lacks self-awareness and thinks he's a *tzaddik*! Instead of being angry or depressed when a craving or negative thought arises, rejoice—because this gives you the opportunity to fulfill a *mitzvah* by ignoring that thought (*Tanya* Chapter 27).
- "If someone sanctifies himself in a small measure here below, he is sanctified greatly from above." When we make a small effort to master our impulses, these efforts are aided from above and in time the *yetzer hara* gets driven out completely (*Tanya* Chapter 27).

THE FIRE WITHIN

TAMAR STONE
CROWN HEIGHTS, NY

I don't remember when it began, but I do remember when I had had enough. I reached my limit on Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan 5776. I knew I had a problem, but I kept hoping it would go away. It didn't, though, and by Cheshvan I was a mess. I didn't sleep through the night. I felt trapped and tired, oh, so tired. I had begun to have weird thoughts, which seemed to take on a life of their own; waking dreams that morphed into nighttime terrors. My kids were scared. My husband was worried. My parents were upset. No one could talk to me. To the world I was a short-tempered, nasty, glassy-eyed shadow of my former self.

It was time to get help, and even I—forever living in the town of deNile—had to admit the truth.

I had heartburn.

But not just any heartburn. It was a red-hot fire that started on the tip of my tongue and ended somewhere around my knees, a 24-hour non-stop pain that made me numb. The flames liked to show up at inopportune times: at rush hour when I needed to make dinner for the family, do homework with the kids, or attend PTA...and it was

especially fond of 2 a.m. and again at 5:30 a.m., although it had been 10 hours since I last ate or drank anything. Everything made me hurt, even plain water.

I come from a family of heartburn-sufferers, so it was just a natural assumption that this was a "family thing" that I'd have to live with. Add to that my 22 years of almost continual states of pregnancy and nursing which caused hormonally induced heartburn, so I figured I had just reached a new *madreigah* in heartburn. My pregnancy reflux had always been bad, to the point that the only time I ever lost weight was during pregnancy–I could not eat for nine months due to the heartburn. But somehow, this was different.

My fire had a resemblance to the fires of Gehinnom, but maybe worse. *Neshamos* generally stay in Gehinnom for 11 months. I wasn't so lucky. It seemed that I had an open-ended ticket–with no end in sight. And the feeling was too much for me to handle. To put it bluntly, I was mean and nasty and short-tempered and mean. Did I say I was mean? Yeah, I was mean.

Now I do have a tendency to be a Mean Mommy, which meant that I had to enforce the rules, draw the line, and generally be annoying to my children. But this fire-fueled mean was the old-fashioned kind: swatting away the kids as if they were mosquitos, never smiling, never laughing, never joking. Just being all-out not nice. My growling and grumbling became the musical accompaniment that preceded my entrance and exit from every scene. My family seemed to be relieved when I would stomp my way up to my bed and slam the door. Gone were the "Good night, Mommy, I love you!!"s. Gone were the "Have a good day!"s. The mommy they knew was gone.

And so, on Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan, I finally hit the wall. As bad as the Fire Within had been for the preceding years, it had hit its nadir during Tishrei and I could not take it anymore. Through the fog of pain, I single-mindedly formulated a Plan.


Tamar Stone

First: to do some research. I had to figure out the cause of my misery and crush it. I decided to eliminate all the possible causes of internal distress and re-introduce them one by one to see which was the culprit.

The obvious suspects were wheat, dairy, sugar, and soy. I chose these because certain family members had been sensitive to these foods. For approximately six weeks I removed all traces of these ingredients in my diet. To say it was hard is an understatement. I drank my coffee black or with unsweetened almond milk. I ate protein and vegetables and drank water, lots of water. I read every label before I put something in my mouth. I was surprised at how many things have sugar and soy lurking within. Who knew that Rice Crispies had sugar? And go find a mayonnaise that doesn't have soy...

Those six weeks were difficult, but I knew it was the right thing to do as I noticed an improvement soon after I started the diet. The Fire Within seemed to be less intense. I was still experiencing the low hum of constant pain, but those white-hot flames that would randomly hit me seemed to become muted and then gone by the six-week mark.

The re-introduction part was hard because now that I'd shown my unwanted guest the door, I didn't want to be inviting him back in... First I tried some dairy, and after a week, I saw that it was not the culprit.

Then I added in some wheat, and I saw that even though my body wasn't thrilled with this guest, at least I didn't have pain when it entered.

Next came soy, and I realized that it caused me some digestive discomfort, but no pain.

The biggest surprise came when I tried sugar. WOW! The pain started on my tongue with my taste buds complaining and hurting, followed by a return of the Fire Within, and moving on to my knees and all my joints. BINGO!

I began my new life without sugar. I found that I could take small amounts of honey or maple syrup–as long as they were pure without added sugar. Corn syrup, fructose syrup, high fructose syrup, stevia, agave, and all sugar substitutes were all just as bad as regular sugar. I stopped eating cookies and cakes. I stopped eating bread (except a small piece of challah on Shabbos). I stopped eating candy. I even significantly cut down on my chocolate consumption, but only for a short time, 'cause a girl's gotta live a little.

Was it hard to live without sugar? I only know that I finally felt well. It was worth living without something in order to get that wonderful feeling of being pain-free. It's been almost two years and I am on a modified version of that diet. Today, when I think of eating that luscious cake at a *l'chaim*, the memory of the Fire Within stops me cold. I do allow myself to have sugar in my morning coffee, although I often opt for maple syrup. However, it is the chocolate that calls me, the siren song that will lead this ship to the fires of Gehinnom yet again. At least now I know which direction to turn in order to regain my footing on the shores of Pain-Free.

RECOMMENDED READING

Sugar Blues
by William Dufty

One of the first books on the dangers of sugar, written in 1975, and still the best

Fat Chance: Beating the Odds Against Sugar, Processed Foods, Obesity and Disease,
by Dr. Robert H. Lustig

SUGAR HAS 56 NAMES: A Shopper's Guide
by Dr. Robert H. Lustig

Dr. Robert Lustig is an expert in pediatric obesity. His stories of obese children are heartbreaking, but most have happy endings. Lustig also has a cookbook. Two of his videos may be viewed at nsheichabadnewsletter.com.

Sweet Poison—Why Sugar Makes Us Fat
by David Gillespie

David Gillespie is an Australian lawyer and researcher who is credited with having started the no-sugar movement in Australia. Best of all, this book is funny! Gillespie also has a cookbook. And now he has written two more books detailing what he feels is the other great dietary scourge of our time, seed oils:

Big Fat Lies
by David Gillespie

Toxic Oil
by David Gillespie

Our Daily Meds
by Melody Petersen

The Big Fat Surprise
by Nina Teicholz

Bring Back the Fat
by Christine Cronau

Year of No Sugar: A Memoir
by Eve Schaub

Pure, White and Deadly: How sugar is killing us and what we can do to stop it
by Dr. John Yudkin

Sugar Crush: How to Reduce Inflammation, Reverse Nerve Damage, and Reclaim Good Health
by Richard Jacoby and Raquel Baldelomar

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FOLLOW ME FOR HEALTH TIPS AND RECIPES
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As a certified Health Coach, I will be your personal guide to a healthy and balanced lifestyle. With individualized attention, I will customize a program to suit your specific, age, gender and current wellbeing.

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"Rivkah is a truly vibrant, enthusiastic, dedicated Health Coach who really cares about her clients and gets results!" - JESSICA RUTH SHEPARD, CHHC

"Rivkah is fantastic at discovering the source of health/nutrition issues and targeting them. With me, it was my lack of energy. In these past few months Rivkah has been so informative, accommodating and supportive-and I've got my energy back! Thank you Rivkah!" - DALYA

"Rivkah is so encouraging and easy to talk to. Not only has she helped me reach my weight loss goal but I have changed to a much healthier lifestyle because of her." - RIVKY

EXCERPTS

This year [of no sugar] had taught me that just like anything toxic–alcohol, nicotine–we need as a society to start handling sugar (fructose) with care, as potentially addictive, potentially dangerous. ...I had come to understand that sugar, while fun, is nutritionally expensive. Why would I want to waste my allotment of it on vending machine cookies or breakfast cereal? Why not save it for that something truly special? Americans instead simply decide to have it all ... and then are tragically surprised when health ramifications ensue. No one ever told them sugar could be really, truly harmful.

–Eva Schaub, in her book, "Year of No Sugar"

The problem is how to control our environment, adequately, when there is such free access to high-sugar, low-fiber food... Parents can do it–they can make their homes safe for their children.

–Dr. Robert Lustig, whose videos appear on nsheichabadnewsletter.com

Both the Sugar Association and the Corn Refiners Association have gone out of their way in their attempts to exonerate sugar, whatever the source.

–Dr. Robert Lustig, in his book, "Fat Chance," in the chapter entitled "The 'Empire' Strikes Back: Response of the Food Industry"

Government cannot be conducted wholly in the dark; business can... That's especially true of the food industry.

–William Dufty, in his book, "Sugar Blues"

The difference between feeling up or down, sane or insane, calm or freaked out, inspired or depressed depends in large measure upon what we put in our mouth.

–William Dufty, "Sugar Blues"

We learn nothing from our hangovers and our heartburn, except to reach for that Alka-Seltzer.

– William Dufty, "Sugar Blues"

The sugar-in-everything craze reached such a peak in this country that, during one four-year period in the 1960s, the amount of sugar used in processed food increased a whopping 50 percent.

–William Dufty, "Sugar Blues"

Any diet which lumps all carbohydrates together is dangerous. Any diet which does not consider the quality of carbohydrates and [does not make] the crucial life-and-death distinction between natural, unrefined carbohydrates like whole grains and vegetables and man-refined carbohydrates like sugar and white flour is dangerous. Any diet which includes refined sugar and white flour, no matter what "scientific" name is applied to them, is dangerous.

–William Dufty, "Sugar Blues"

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