

[CONNECT] We're in Week 4!

From: Dr. Venus (team@doctorvenus.com)

To:

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Welcome to Day 22 of the CONNECT TO HEALTH experience!

I hope you're doing well and have made some positive changes already!

It's not always easy, I know. Don't be hard on yourself if you haven't accomplished as much as you had hoped. Just make progress each day, little by little.

Like I tell my clients, we all get off track from time to time but the important thing is to stay focused on the big picture and your long-term goals. Dust yourself off and get back at it. I have times when I get off track too – we are only human.

Are you ready?

Okay, let's go! Let dive into week 4:

Think "Quality" over "Quantity"

While counting calories can be very helpful to help you stay within a desired calorie range, having a focus on the *quality* of those calories can make MORE of a difference in helping you reach your goals.

I talked a little bit about this in Week 1 ([emailed on 3/26/2020](#)), but let's go a little deeper into this.

Focus on **real food** as much as possible. By "real food," I mean unprocessed or minimally processed foods that either came from a plant or animal such as: vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, legumes, grains, meat, chicken, eggs, and seafood. To simplify, these are foods that can be found in nature.

Yes, calories matter, but even more so, it's the *quality* of those calories. We have become so conditioned to counting calories, while most of us have not been taught to also be aware of nutrients.

Let me give you an example. If you have a choice between 200 calories from a candy bar or 200 calories from a serving of nuts and fruit, the difference in quality is very dramatic. The sugar in the candy bar will spike your insulin levels, putting you on a sugar roller coaster ride that will crash, leaving you hungry again a short time later.

However, if you were to choose the nuts and fruit option, you would still be getting something sweet from the natural sugars in the fruit and you would benefit from healthy fat, some fiber, protein as well as other nutrients. Plus, this choice would keep you feeling full longer, which would help you avoid feeling the need for more snacks in another hour or so. You will be feeding your body nutrients and the fuel it needs instead of giving it "empty" calories.

This is something I've been doing myself. I had gotten "off track" in my eating choices of late, and my waistline was showing it. A lot of it stemmed from the grief I experienced when my father passed away.

So in order to start getting back to a healthier routine, I decided to take one step at a time and just focus on getting rid of processed foods. I didn't worry about calories or quantity at all. I didn't even change my physical activity... I just ate REAL foods. 40 days later, I had lost 9 pounds and was back to fitting into my jeans again.

Since it's common for snacking or "mindless munching" to be challenging for many people, let's start there.

HINT: When choosing a snack, ask yourself, "Is this going to nourish my body and give it what it needs?"

Keeping your body well-nourished will help with more than just weight control; it also supports your body with energy, digestion, elimination, immune function and disease prevention. So, instead of focusing just on the *number* of calories in your food, zero in on the quality as well.

This week, choose more real food (whole food) snacks instead of processed snacks and see what difference you notice.

Whole Food Snack Ideas

- Vegetables
- Fresh Fruit
- Dried Fruit
- Smoothies
- Nuts and nut butters
- Seeds
- Good quality beef jerky
- "real food" bars

Generally, snacks like meal replacement bars are usually highly processed foods, comprised of a long list of additives. While convenient, they do not fall into the "whole food" category! There are some exceptions. [Larabars](#) and [Raw Rev](#) bars are ones that I enjoy.

More ideas:

A salad with lots of greens, veggies, lean protein, and olive oil-based dressing is another example of a healthy snack.

You can keep a small container of almonds and raisins with you for a quick snack.

Dinner leftovers can even be a great snack as well.

I'll be putting more **Healthy Snack Ideas** in the [Facebook Group](#) this week, so be sure to take a look at that, too.

Tip #1: Plan ahead! Have healthy snacks stocked and ready to go, so that these become the options you and your family reach for most often.

Tip #2: Develop a transition plan! If you or someone in your family loves chips, for example, you can transition away from something like Doritos, Cheetos or other highly processed snacks that also contain MSG, artificial colors and artificial flavors (and a long list of other ingredients that sound like a science experiment) to something like [organic tortilla corn chips](#) with salsa. You don't need to overhaul everything at once.

I provided a fantastic [smoothie and juice recipe guide](#) for you last week. You can pick a smoothie from the guide and this will make it easy to add fresh (frozen is just as good) fruits and veggies to your day.

Helpful Resources

Not quite sure what's healthy or not? I know it can be confusing. A helpful app I like to use is called **Fooducate**. Using the app, you scan the package barcode with your smartphone and it gives the food a grade from A – D based on set criteria and it tells you the reason for the grade. It's fun to start with the food in your pantry to see what grades they get.

MyFitnessPal or **Loselt** are another couple of apps and websites for tracking your food. My personal favorite is MyFitnessPal because you can also track nutrients, and not just calories.

Tracking your food intake isn't always fun, but it's a great way to get a snap shot of how many calories you're consuming. Not that I'm saying you **HAVE** to count calories, but sometimes, just being more

aware of our food choices can help us eat healthier. The number of calories isn't the most important thing when it comes to healthy eating, but it gives us a place to start.

Allrecipes.com can be helpful to search for recipe ideas. Just type in 'healthy snacks' and see what appeals to you.

Strategy for the week:

- Add in more real foods this week. This will nourish you and give you more sustained energy as well as help control your appetite. Whip up a smoothie each day, and see how you feel.
- Make a list of what you plan to add this week so when you go to the grocery store, you'll be all set.
- Track your food and exercise this week using the MyFitnessPal or Loselt app.
- **Log into our private [Facebook Group](#)** and share your questions and ideas. Let us know what you plan to add in this week. You'll also get some more ideas from our group.

[NOTE: If you joined our program a little late, you can check out the previous emails and downloads on [this page](#).]

Remember our LIVE workout **TOMORROW!**

- Tues. April 14, 2020. 4pm PT / 7pm ET (US & Canada) - **LIVE** workout in the [Facebook Group](#). [Sample workout] Week 4, Workout Day 14.
- Thurs. April 16, 2020. 4pm PT / 7pm ET (US & Canada) - **LIVE** workout in the [Facebook Group](#). [Sample workout] Week 4, Workout Day 15.
- Sat. April 18, 2020. 10am PT / 1pm ET (US & Canada) - Zoom Call for Progressive Muscle Relaxation, Q&A, and Group Chat.

Join me on the Zoom call at:

Time: April 18, 2020, 10:00 AM Pacific Time, 1:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Meeting Link: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/996429857>

Meeting ID: 996 429 857

Stay Fit! Be Happy!

-Dr. Venus

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