

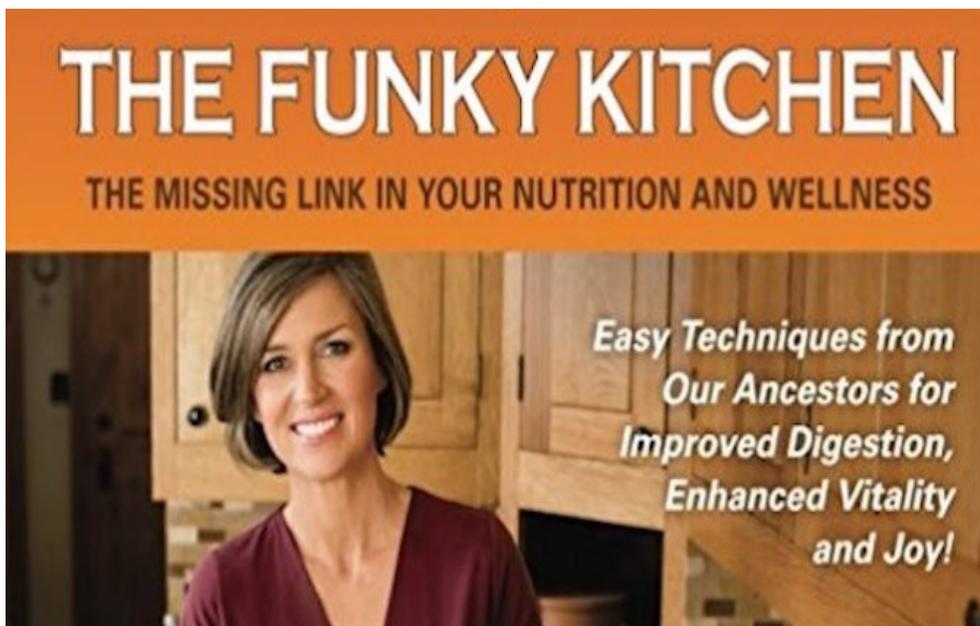
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The Solari Report

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**The Solari Wellness Series:
The Dangers of Fad Diets and
Antinutrients
with
Dr. Sarica Cernohous**



Brigitte Mouchet: Hello, this is Brigitte Mouchet with The Solari Wellness Series. Today I am talking again with Dr. Sarica Cernohous with whom we spoke a few weeks ago about Healthy Nutrition on a Budget. Today I want to talk about The Dangers of Fad Diets and Antinutrients.

I would also like to spend a few minutes at the end answering questions that we received from subscribers after the first interview.

Sarica, welcome again to The Solari Wellness Series.

Dr. Sarica Cernohous: Brigitte, I am so happy to be here with you again and with everyone, too. Thank you.

Mouchet: Thank you for making the time again.

Cernohous: Of course.

Mouchet: Let's start by saying that we don't need to be on a diet to have a healthy diet.

Cernohous: I would prefer folks don't frame it that way. It's about a lifestyle. I think that the feeling of the word 'diet' conjures up restrictions and something that has limitations and something that you have to follow. It's something that, in the design of how most of us would probably think of it, really has a terminal aspect to it. It has an ending. I think that growing up over the last 40, 50, and 60 years around these concepts of diets like grapefruit diets and cabbage soup diets and these sorts of things to get people to lose weight, it's a short-term effort.

To your point, I just think that it is so incredibly impactful to begin to just think about the nutrient choices that you make as an important part of your lifestyle so that it's not something that has an end game to it. It doesn't have this terminal end to it, and it's something that is just part of the warp and weave of who and what you are in a way that feels very natural and comfortable and is really built around giving you incredible vitality.

Mouchet: Absolutely. We are still going to look at all of those trendy diets out there. Some are definitely better than others. I thought it would be useful to understand what is good, what is not so good, and what is bad about the most popular diets out there.

It seems like keto is the most popular one these days, especially for weight loss. It's definitely great short-term. Paleo is also very popular, and it's sometimes hard to know exactly what the differences are between the two.

I would love to have your opinion on these, especially when you look at them with your medical background and the perspective of Chinese medicine and Ayurveda.

Cernohous: I think it's fun to frame this from a historical perspective. When we think about what really became very popular in the 1980's and 1990's it was all about 'fat makes you fat' and so fat was removed from the foods that people were eating. Everything became low fat and nonfat. Do you remember that?

Mouchet: Oh yes.

Cernohous: I remember this product called Butter Buds. It was what you put onto things to add a little butter to. It was the thing you put on your potato.

We were really far culturally into this nonfat paradigm, and we did that for quite some time. The interesting thing about it was in that same period of time if you look at statistics, people started gaining more weight across the board.

From a Chinese medicine perspective, when you take away healthy fat from the diet, you are taking away one of the cornerstones of nutrition that really has in its nature what we would call more of a 'yin' aspect – something that really helps with the fluid tissue aspects of the body versus 'chi'. A lot of people are familiar with the term 'chi'. That is generally indicative of something relative to energy.

Well, yin is more the substance side of that. When you take away one of the three macronutrients (those larger groupings of nutrition where we have fat, carbohydrate, and protein) which in the 1980's was fat, you have to fill in the void over here in the protein and the carbohydrate. So what you are doing in that instance is you are really bringing things quite out of balance for what the human body is designed to work with in terms of macro-nutrition.

What ended up happening was these products were very full in very simplified carbohydrates. They had a lot of flavorings and enhancers to make the texture feel like maybe it had some fat to it, but it really didn't.

You can fool the body for only so long. It's an interesting thing because when we take the body down to its most basic composition anatomically, we are talking about the cell. The cell membrane of every cell in your body is comprised of a fatty lipid structure. That is part of the membrane structure. It is within that structure that we have the receptors on the cell membrane that allow for the communication with what is in the bloodstream back into what is in the cell.

When that goes missing in terms of the composition of what the cell is needing for its cell

structure, over time that is going to be quite damaging to the body.

It's an interesting thing because one of the big discussion points around that time also was, "Fat is bad. Fat makes you fat. Cholesterol is also a villain as well."

What will happen is even if you bring in no cholesterol and you eat no animal products, which are the source of cholesterol in our diet (you can't get cholesterol from plant products), the liver will actually create cholesterol because cholesterol is such an important component of healing the body. It's like the patchwork where there is injury through out the cardiovascular system and the brain and all of this. That is how important cholesterol is.

That was one of the big fallacies that I feel like we are still recovering from. It's a big deal.

When you bring in a lot of refined carbohydrate into the diet, one of the outcomes that research has shown is that it tends to lend itself towards this systemic, low-grade, chronic cellular inflammation. So the cell membrane that we were talking about I like to think of as like a puffer fish.

When the puffer fish in the ocean is happy, the little spines on the puffer fish are soft, and it is feeling what the world feels. Then when the puffer fish becomes startled or scared or threatened, it puffs up, and those spines become blunted, and it appears to be a much bigger fish.

That is how I think of the cell membranes when they have been under chronic assault because of different stresses. One of the big stresses that we've really brought into the human experience for over a decade – and for many people they continue to – is a super low fat diet. You're not bringing in the nutrition that the cells need at that level of the cell membrane, and you're bringing in this boatload of refined carbohydrates, sugars, and generally synthetic components that the body has to contend with. It gets the cells into this chronic cellular inflammatory pattern.

That's a historical view of where we were. So I feel like the pendulum really swung in the 1980's and 1990's. Then Dr. Atkins' work was really a high-fat, high protein diet with very low carbohydrate. I feel like that was a bit of a precursor to what many people would consider the ketogenic diet today – the popular ketogenic diet – and aspects of the Paleolithic diet as well.

His work became kind of a counterpoint to the super-low fat paradigm that people were living, and many people seem to have success with leaning down with this sort of thing.

I like to think of this kind of large cognitive awareness of, "Oh my gosh! We are starving ourselves on empty calories, and we need to eat every hour and a half because our glycemic index rises so high and our pancreas has to push out insulin to deal with that, and that

causes our blood sugar to drop.” That is where people really get into this roller coaster with energy. It impacts their sleep and their hormones and all of it.

I feel like what happened was societally we then swung the pendulum the other way, which was way more nutrient-dense. I feel like eating fat – whether it’s from animal or from plants – is really the fat of the land. You are eating at the densest component of the food chain. I feel that we have needed to have this healing, especially those people who they or their parents really adhered to a very low-fat diet for a long time. It’s like you have to flood the body with these nutrients. That became the way that we swung in this other direction.

In my mind, the happy medium is when the pendulum swings to the middle and we bring a balance of high-quality macronutrients into the body’s nutritional experience.

What that means for keto and how that shows up today is the ketogenic diet is a diet that has been used therapeutically for different situations and different neurological presentations. It’s a very strict adherence to these macro ratios. It’s a very moderate protein, which is different from the Atkins interpretation, and it’s certainly very low carbohydrate.

I would say that my two biggest concerns with people trying to ‘go keto’ and stay that way are first of all sustainability. What I mean by that is the sustainability of someone’s ability to adhere to it. That is a tough thing to do. It’s not an easy thing to adhere to. In fact, if one is really wanting to work with a ketogenic practice, it’s very important that they bring themselves out of ketosis periodically.

What happens is the body actually in this ketosis state where it’s using ketones as fuel rather than leaning on the glucose in the bloodstream from carbohydrates is when someone stays in ketosis, the body begins to adapt to that, and they start putting on weight – if they’ve even been able to get to ketosis. That is something that some people with hormonal issues can really have a hard time getting into.

To do it right, you actually have to have a lot of diet variation so that you are going in and out of ketosis and always letting your body know that it’s not starving and then putting it into stress periods. Ketosis is a stress period on the body, but a lot of people feel great when they are really running on ketones as their fuel source.

My first concern is sustainability of a person saying, “I’m really going to stay committed to this lifestyle,” and part of that sustainability concern is also the costs of doing this. Again, when you are eating the fat of the land, if you will, that does tend to be a rather costly way to eat on the pocketbook. The other aspect of that is the sustainability of what that means for the environment. The degradation of land relative to trying to keep up with a lot of palm oil production and wide-open cattle grazing that is not using good methods for restorative agriculture – which absolutely can be done with cattle grazing. But if everybody decided that they were going to really eat a lot of beef fat or other hooved animals, we

would be getting into degradation of the environment in a big way. I always keep that in mind, too.

Finally, the other component of it is doing this in a manner that is sustainable for the gut microbiome. The gut microbiome really does well with having fiber in the diet. The way that a lot of people think that they are doing keto is really more of a heavy protein (high protein) high-fat Atkins type of approach where they are not bringing in good amounts of fiber. One of the biggest things that I've seen with people when they say, "I'm doing keto," is they also say, "I've stopped going to the bathroom."

The fiber that we have is in different types of foods, and I'm not talking about products like Metamucil; I'm talking about fiber that would be in organic, properly prepared grains, whole grains, and different vegetables like root vegetables, and legumes, which are an incredible source of fiber. When people take those types of foods out of their diet, what is happening is they are not giving that fuel source to the colon lining itself – the cells of the colon that actually appreciate that nutrition – as does the microbiome, which is the bacteria that is deep within the large intestine. Also, that type of fiber is an incredible source for different short-chain fatty acids that are converted from the consumption of that fiber by the bacteria. They are converted into new fatty acids.

So you take a fiber, and through bacterial processes, it's actually converted into a fatty acid. Those fatty acids have an incredible impact on neurotransmitter production, which is how we end up showing up emotionally and how we feel about the world.

To do a ketogenic diet properly requires going in and out of ketosis using really high-quality foods. If you are going to do this, it's really more about high fat and very moderate protein, and low carbohydrate. I just don't see people really adhering to that.

I mean, I certainly know healthcare practitioners and some health adherents who do. Many people feel great about it. But I think we also get back into the bio-individuality of where a person is in their life, what their unique microbiome is, and what their personal health challenges and health goals are.

It's something where I would not say that it's a one-size fits all.

Mouchet: Thank you. Would you say that paleo is a little bit more manageable and a little bit more balanced?

Cernohous: I think it can be. Again, I remember when I was going off of grains and I had my family off of grains for over a year. We were still consuming carbs, and it was definitely a very paleo way of doing things for that time. I remember thinking, "Should I be eating this much almond flour?" and, "Is it okay for me to eat this much coconut flour?"

I think that our microbiome is incredibly malleable. I think that epigenetics is something that allows for people making distinct changes that maybe their genetic ancestry wouldn't have had in large amounts in their diet. So I'm not saying that people can't make a change and have it be okay, but I always do think about, "What would my people have been eating?"

For my people, there was not coconut. They just didn't have it when I look back at the genetics. So some coconut is fine, but I was making a lot of coconut foods. It was the same for my husband. So with the genetics of our kids, I was thinking, "Should we be eating this much of this?"

So, again, I like the concepts of taking it back to simple ingredients – vegetables, working with some of the nut flours and that sort of thing, and good, clean protein sources. I look for good, unrefined cold-pressed oil and fat sources. Then I'm mindful of not going crazy with trying to create foods that were created around grains but now transferring that into different composition and eating that regularly.

Of course, some of that is fine. But when you are eating that type of food regularly, there is a bit of a concern there. Is that the right thing for you?

At the end of the day, Brigitte, I think that the biggest thing is to work with it for a while and see how your body feels with it. Be honest with yourself, and pay attention to those signals of, "You know what? I think it's time to make a change," or, "This is feeling great. Maybe I'll try bringing in some things that I thought I needed to remove and see how I'm doing with it."

I think that malleability relative to how we eat is such an important thing.

Mouchet: The body likes that, too, right? The body likes the variety in food, and the microbiome likes it.

Cernohous: That's right. It loves it.

Mouchet: Going back to fat for a second, fat is also super-important for the brain, right?

Cernohous: It's so important. I mean, it's water and fat up here. But to that point, Brigitte, I do want to say that in the standard American diet, what we do eat, we tend to have a very omega-6 heavy diet where we are leaning on a lot of plant-derived oils. They are in the processed foods, people use them in their dressings, and things like that.

That is too much, and they are very refined. So to create safflower oil or sunflower oil or canola oil, in any of these instances what we have is you have to really do a fair amount of

processing on those components, and then they tend to be used in cooked products. They are generally in clear bottles. It is their polyunsaturated fatty acid structure that makes them incredibly prone to rancidity, and we do not want that.

So when it comes to fats, a little bit of polyunsaturated fats in a very non-refined organic form is great. This is a generalization, but I would say that you should go heavier with a great organic extra-virgin olive oil. Flax oil is great for dressings. For cooking, use more of the saturated fatty acid structure that can handle that heat. That, of course, is where we get into the butter and ghee and coconut oil and palm oil and that sort of thing.

Mouchet: I still don't understand why so many people love the Mediterranean diet. They say that Italians and other cultures cook with olive oil, which is not right.

Cernohous: Correct. A lower heat on a more refined olive oil is okay. You can do that. But you see people toss veggies in olive oil and then broil them. That is going to degrade that oil, and you don't want to do that. That is where tossing in a little bit of a ghee is a much better choice.

Mouchet: What could be the problem with carbs?

Cernohous: Well, we eat too many of them for starters. By that I mean highly-refined carbohydrates.

In the 1970's that is when the marketing really got going around this concept of snacking. That is where we really started bringing in so many refined carbohydrate foods – things like Twinkies to chips. We certainly brought in more refined breads and snack-type foods. These are things that every time you consume one of those foods, it does the roller coaster for you, and it engages that.

They tend to have different flavor enhancements that make you crave them and want more of them. They are excitotoxins to the brain. Plus, you add to it what it does to your blood sugar, and without this awareness you get hooked into the pattern of it. I certainly didn't have that awareness as a kid. I didn't know what eating the Doritos or having pancakes for breakfast with some Mrs. Butterworth's 'syrup' (if we can call it that) was doing to my blood sugar. I didn't know, and my parents didn't know.

You begin to have this awareness of, "Whoa! Wait a minute. That doesn't feel like that is giving me a long burn of energy."

Sometimes we need to really hit bottom in terms of how we feel before we engage in a significant change. So when it comes to carbohydrates, I would say that we as a culture have been fully indoctrinated into the consumption of refined carbohydrates. It is something that

is totally new territory to the human body.

If a person has a genetic tendency and a microbiome tendency, based off of the different species they have in their gut, to really be able to withstand long periods of starvation – like not much food at all – if that is the kind of people they came from, when they eat the standard American diet of refined foods and refined carbohydrates and eating them frequently, that is really going to lend itself toward obesity and this holding on of weight. That is great if you are only eating two or three times a week, but that doesn't work so well when you have this chronic availability of food and this desire to eat it because of the excitotoxins and the changes that happen with the blood sugar.

Genetics and the microbiome together can really play quite a part in our cravings and our response in the way that our body looks and the way that we feel.

I think that the smartest thing to do is to just put in that stop-gap of, "I'm taking out the refined carbohydrates, and I'm going to start eating in a way that I know I feel satiated by the meal, and I'm not eating to the point of being stuffed."

Being stuffed is not good for your belly and it's not good for your body. But allowing a little bit of time to enjoy that meal so that your blood sugar naturally starts to come up will by design begin to slow you down on eating too much for a given meal, and then see how you do.

It's such a tremendous feeling to begin to feel like, "Wait a minute. I'm not having those crashes in my blood sugar. I'm not having these crashes in my energy where I feel like at 2pm I need to have a cup of coffee or some chocolate."

Mouchet: Very good. I think maybe it's time to switch to our other topic and talk about the antinutrients.

Cernohous: Sure! Yes. This is a big one.

Mouchet: Unless you have more to talk about on diets.

Cernohous: I feel like that covered it pretty well.

Mouchet: Antinutrients. What comes to mind is all of the bad stuff that is in so-called 'healthy' things that look healthy. They are things like oxalate, lectin, tannings, and that kind of stuff. What do you know about that? Not everybody is familiar with that.

Cernohous: Right, and this is one of the challenges. When a person says, "I'm going to start eating more whole grains," and, "I'm going to start eating more beans," and, "I'm

going to start eating lots of veggies,” certainly all of those things have incredible attributes. But all of them also have these components that have been called ‘antinutrients’. It’s interesting. In the nutrition class that I teach, I really try to take a little bit of the heat out of that by showing that these antinutrients oftentimes have good benefits for the body. They can have attributes in what they do that are not completely bad. However, when we eat a lot of them, and maybe we have problems with our digestion or maybe we are in a stress state where we could really be dealing with a lot more minerals in our diet that are actually getting into our system and working for us, I feel that what we can do to decrease them without saying, “Oh my gosh, I can’t eat that food,” that is a better way to go.

Leave it a little bit, but you’re also handling it.

I would say that one of the biggest ones that people have talked about recently is lectins. Dr. Steven Gundry has written a book about this, and he has a supplement line that helps to degrade these lectins and the carbohydrate-binding proteins that are common in different foods. Some of the nightshade family foods can have lectins. Different grains and beans can have lectins. In fact, gluten – the scary antinutrient – is a lectin. It’s in the family of lectins.

Rather than taking the approach of, “You can’t eat zucchini and you can’t eat tomatoes and you can’t eat these grains because of the lectins,” I would much prefer that we work with different preparation techniques so that we can enjoy those foods for the good benefit that they offer.

When it comes to lectins, one of the great ways that our ancestors got around that – and I’m sure lectin is a pretty new term – is there may have been an awareness about, “If we don’t do this, things don’t seem to feel right in the body. We notice that over time the kids develop certain issues.” I don’t know; I wasn’t there.

However, there are things that have happened around certain types of foods that can help to degrade these lectins. One of these things is fermentation. Sourcing bread and souring grains to make sourdough bread is a great way to degrade lectins. Baking is going to help to degrade it, too. But one of the really great ways to degrade lectins in beans and different vegetables is to cook with a pressure cooker.

Mouchet: That is what I have heard.

Cernohous: These lectins tend to be in the skin and in the seeds of different fruits and vegetables. It also tends to be in those foods that are eaten out of season. So eating something at its peak ripeness is inherently going to have a much lower lectin content than if you were to eat a strawberry in the middle of winter or something.

Eating in season helps. If you really feel that lectins are something that you want to avoid, you can take the skin off and pull the seeds from tomatoes. That is going to have a really

big reduction of lectin content. Then look at the preparation. Soaking and fermenting of grains and beans and nuts and seeds helps. You can dehydrate at a low heat, and then you have what are known as 'crispy nuts'. Or you could turn that into bread like the naturally soured rye bread. I just took a loaf of that to my hairdresser today.

You can do these methods that really help to degrade these intense protein structures, which is what lectins are.

Mouchet: Do you want to say something else about the other antinutrients?

Cernohous: Phytic acid is another one. Phytic acid is common in a lot of different foods. One of the challenges of phytic acid is that it can bind to different minerals. With lectins and with phytic acid and oxalates, I think that people who are vegetarian and pretty committed to their vegetarianism and certainly veganism, I almost feel like they have to be even more aware of this.

Phytic acid binds to different minerals. Again, soaking and fermentation totally breaks down the phytic acid content of foods. It makes everything more easily digested. It's a predigestion method. So, to me, it has such tremendous benefit to soak your grains, soak your greens, and ferment them a bit, too.

When a person is vegetarian or vegan and they're not bringing in a huge mineral content from dairy and different meat products, it's really extra-important that they work on reducing the phytic acid content of their food.

Mouchet: And could you talk a little about the oxalates?

Cernohous: Oxalates are one of those that some people have no problem with them, and other people do. That is one where I feel that I don't focus quite as heavily on that with what I teach because I think that a lot of people don't actually get them much in their diet. A lot of people eat a rather refined diet. If a person does begin to note that they've got issues with stone formation or anything like that, that is when they really have to back that up and start doing some research on making sure that they reduce those oxalate-rich foods in the diet.

Spinach is super-high that way, and it's tough because so many of these foods have great nutrient quality, but many people will eat these foods raw. Another one is goitrogens which are naturally occurring components in the brassica family. The brassica family is broccoli and cauliflower and kale and stuff like that. So many people do these smoothies where they will put in raw spinach and raw kale and put it into a high-intensity blender. If those foods were just cooked, that would have made a big difference in terms of these more challenging attributes.

To that point, when it comes to brassica foods – kales and things like that – cook those guys. It's the same with spinach. Spinach should be sautéed with some ghee with some lemon juice and sea salt and garlic. That will make the nutrients in that spinach much more bioavailable to your body.

Mouchet: It's interesting. There is definitely a thought that anything raw is healthier than cooked, but that is not always the case.

Cernohous: It isn't. Again, cooking is a predigestion. We don't have the robust innate enzymatic action that a gorilla or a cow has; we're just not designed like that. So for us to be able to extract what is in there – and even our hydrochloric acid production. If a person is stressed or if they are on different medications that are blocking or inhibiting that hydrochloric acid production, their ability to break down the minerals and the proteins is quite compromised – especially if someone is making changes and they are feeling weak and debilitated to break down just a small amount of raw food and a lot of things that need to be cooked.

There is a reason why in Chinese medicine the convalescing foods that are given to women after childbirth or given to people after surgery or some kind of long convalescing after an illness are things like congee, which is different grains cooked for a really long time with water. It's a slow simmer, throwing in some different herbs and spices to that, and maybe even some medicinal herbs or cooking with some broth.

This is something that allows someone who has been at their chi and blood level so spent easy nutrition. Brigitte, I have been doing this long enough that I feel like a lot of people – even in the normal, daily way of being – are running on fumes. To have that person go into eating a super-cold, raw diet, if they are coming from a standard American diet, they are going to feel better for a while, but they don't have the digestive wherewithal – certainly in the state that they are in – to be able to get much from that over the long haul.

I'm making a generalization here. I understand that. But really for the type of stress that I see bodies under these days, we should really be coming from the perspective of, "What can I do to support my body through nutrition in a way that is going to make it so that those nutrients get into me?"

That is where working with long-prepared grains this way is very nutrient- and chi-building for the body. But then soups and stews work well, too. These allow the more fibrous content of vegetables to be broken down because we don't have the dentition for it. We're not cows, and we don't have the strong hydrochloric acid and enzymatic capacity for that.

Those are things that, yes, with stress and illness and age, they decline. So it's really important. It's not just what you eat, but how it was prepared.

Mouchet: So maybe trying to eat congee once a week would be amazing.

Cernohous: I think that it would be so good.

The thing that is neat about Chinese medicine and Ayurvedic medicine is that in the Western paradigm we really put things into broad categories. You say, “Here are your carbohydrates,” and that can range from anything from a Twinkie to long-grain organic brown rice that has been soaked and fermented and cooked in an instant pot. That all falls under ‘carbohydrate’.

In Chinese medicine and Ahurvedic medicine, the appreciation of the energetic qualities of different types of foods is where the importance is. So the energetic quality of millet is quite different from the energetic quality of rye or brown rice.

This is information that you can see from just a little bit of internet searching, and you can see what you would want to nourish within yourself.

Mouchet: The warming foods and the cooling foods. That is important to be aware of during the seasons. In the summer coconut water is okay, but not in the winter, right?

Cernohous: Exactly! I would even go so far as to say that with coconut oil. I feel like coconut oil has a little bit more of a cooling quality versus a ghee.

Mouchet: I heard that fat is better in the winter, and carbs are better in the summer. What do you think of that?

Cernohous: It makes sense. I’ve alluded to this a couple of times, how the fat is a very yin-essence deep nutrition. In the winter time you think, “What do the squirrels do? What do the trees do?” Everybody hibernates, and all of the energy goes back to the roots. This is a time to really rebuild your energies. Of course, in the modern setting we keep going 24/7 anyway. But it really is a time of quietude and building up. In the spring is when the sprouts come and the leaves come and the activity comes.

In the summertime, this is our full chi expression. If we really nourished ourselves well through the winter as we work through into the summer, it’s a great time to absorb the nutrients of the earth. The summertime is a time when it’s easier to live in your skin. The temperature around you is warmer. It doesn’t require as much to just keep going.

Mouchet: And the sun helps, right?

Cernohous: Totally. We generally just don’t need that deep level of nutrition. Again, if you’ve had a baby or you’ve had something that you are convalescing from, of course you

need to address that. That is your season within the season. But generally speaking, yes.

As we move into the fall, that is where the days get shorter and cooler, and the light is not as available. That is when we start moving into eating more deep nourishing foods.

Mouchet: That makes a lot of sense. Thank you.

Do you still have time to address two questions that we got from listeners? One was, “How can we create healthy mealtime habits for family time?”

Then they asked about the connection between nutrition and culture. Would that help to make that connection in challenging times?

So those are two different topics that you could address. That would be great.

Cernohous: Sure. I feel like I am living the challenge of the first one. When my kids were younger, it was easier for me to do as I wanted to do around their diet. They are 14 and 16 now, and one of my kids is very independent. She just wants to do it her way. I find that at this point for that independent streak it’s more about educating us to why we do things at our house the way that we do and incorporating that over periods of time.

Yesterday there was a fundraiser for her school at a fast food restaurant. That place has been in the town for as long as I’ve been here, but I’ve never been there – of course. It doesn’t even enter my radar. But I knew that it was important for her. I said, “This is not happening regularly, and this is why. I want you to understand my concern about the fats that are being used,” and that sort of thing.

So at this age, I feel like that education and giving some space around making some autonomous decisions is what you have to do.

With my son, who is older, he will eat whatever I put in front of him. He is just happy to have someone give him food. So it’s easier for his type of personality.

When they were younger, that engagement of, “What kind of recipe would you like to work with?” and, “What would you like to create in the crockpot?” or something like that would help, and then bringing them in on what that is. That was more enjoyable for them when they were younger. Now that they are older, it’s just not something that appeals to them.

I think that in that question it has to do with age appropriately educating the kids on why you are doing what you are doing because as they get older, they are going to be more and more on their own, over at friends’ homes, and maybe having some cash in their pocket and making decisions around the foods and beverages that they are consuming. If they have that working knowledge of why this choice maybe isn’t the best choice for them, and

maybe what they could do differently, that is the most important part of it to me. That is helping them to see why.

I think it just changes as you move through time. I get it because I remember in the question it's kind of like, "I make my own food and shuttle myself over here, and I kind of let everyone else do whatever they want to do." In doing so, I get it. If we get off on our timing with meals, I've been known to do that also. Or if I am in a hurry to do something, I say, "You guys are on your own; I have to go do this."

You are going to have to allow that you are going to have times like that, but if that is the model, then making sure that what is in the house – for the most part – is really good components for them to work with is really important.

No one in my family is going to turn their nose up to a grilled cheese sandwich that is made with really high-quality raw cheese on sprouted sourdough bread that is cooked in ghee. Who says no to that – unless you have an issue with dairy or wheat or whatever?

So having the good base components and then letting them have their freedom with it is also an important part of that.

Mouchet: Thank you. What about food and culture, and to be stronger in times of oppression? Are there some cultures that do better if they stay close to their food traditions?

Cernohous: Yes. I think that is so powerful and so beautiful. If a person has that, I think that is one of the most grounding ways to look after yourself.

Mouchet: It's comfort food, right?

Cernohous: Yes, and the thing about comfort food is for me growing up, pancakes were a comfort food. As I've gotten older and I know the feeling of the roller coaster energy, for a long time I really just didn't have an interest in pancakes. Even if I was making them with whole wheat, it was still a roller coaster type of thing.

Over time, on Mother's Day, I made pancakes for all of us, but I used sprouted grain as my flour and whole fat milk and lots of butter. So it's very stabilizing to the blood sugar. It's a completely different version of the pancake than the pancakes I ate as a kid.

In that framework of working with these culturally-sensitive foods, think about how you can make them better. Say it's lasagna. Work with an organic imported-from-Italy noodle to begin with. Make sure that you are using very high quality ingredients – the best cheese and grass-fed meats. Do that sort of thing, and then really stuff it with a lot of vegetables – maybe more than the original design of the recipe.

There are ways that we can work with things that we really love but make them better. I have worked with families where the kids are very averse to bringing in more whole food nutrition, and all they will want to eat is macaroni and cheese. That's where I say, "Okay. At the very least, rather than working with the most base ingredients, let's start working with some grass-fed butter in that sauce preparation. Let's see if we can cook those noodles in some good chicken broth that has gelatin."

There are different ways that we can slowly but surely begin to make those foods more nutrient-dense while still meeting that emotional content. It's important to look after ourselves.

Mouchet: That sounds really good. Thank you.

I think this is wonderful. Sarica, thank you so much for doing another interview with us. I think that we have plenty of inspiration now to eat a healthier diet.

Cernohous: Wonderful. Thank you, Brigitte. Yes, there is just so much creativity around food and nutrition. My gosh, don't be afraid of it; just have fun with it.

Mouchet: And if you have a good congee recipe, I will put it in the 'Resources' section.

Cernohous: Fantastic! These are things that you can find online.

I remember Paul Pitchford, author of *Healing with Whole Foods*, was the fellow who really took the idea of working with nutrition from a Chinese medicine angle. That is definitely one book that folks may want to look at. But we are in the age now of being able to work with the internet and say, "What is this? Let's see."

Mouchet: This is Brigitte Mouchet with The Solari Wellness Series. Thank you for listening, and take good care because it's more fun to be well!

MODIFICATION

Transcripts are not always verbatim. Modifications are sometimes made to improve clarity, usefulness and readability, while staying true to the original intent.

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