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Heart, Hope, Healing

The Gut-Immune Restoration Intensive Nutrition (GRIN) Food Plan

BY KARYN SHANKS MD | JUNE 8, 2016



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For Inflammation and Autoimmunity

The Gut-Immune Restoration-Intensive Nutrition (GRIN) food plan is designed to help those with chronic inflammatory and autoimmune conditions take their healing to a deeper level. Some do well with the basic *Liftoff* Foundational Food Plan. Others need to go further to heal and repair tissues.

The GRIN Food Plan is an extension of the [Liftoff Foundational Intensive Nutrition Food Plan](#). It goes further by excluding some additional food groups that can be triggers for inflammation, toxicity and dysfunction.

Who needs to follow the GRIN food plan?

This plan should be considered for anyone with bowel or inflammatory disorders who do not achieve optimal healing with the [Liftoff Foundational Intensive Nutrition Food Plan](#), and for those with chronic autoimmune disorders such as rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, Hashimoto's thyroiditis, celiac, multiple sclerosis, inflammatory bowel disease as well as many others.

This food plan may also be appropriate for people with chronic disease or dysfunction without an obvious inflammatory component that fails to resolve with a less aggressive approach. Often inflammation is covert, without a readily recognized presentation, but may in fact be a factor in the process. I see this in my practice frequently with people who have fatigue, chronic mood or cognitive dysfunction or difficulty losing weight. They don't have sore joints or other signs of irritation of the body. We know that inflammation can be a "hidden" player in these issues and they respond beautifully to an anti-inflammatory approach to healing.

Decrease Inflammation by Healing Your Gut: Impaired Gut Permeability

A central theme to chronic inflammatory and autoimmune disorders is impaired gut permeability. This leads to an increase in immune responsiveness to certain food components and gut microbes. It also leads to increased transfer of gut-derived or ingested toxins into the body, engendering additional immune activation and stress on the system.

A normal gut, some thirty feet long from mouth to anus, and the surface area of 10 tennis courts, provides a very tightly controlled interface between the inside and outside worlds. As you can imagine, just as our skin is a crucial barrier for keeping the outside world out, the gut lining is designed to protect us from all potential threats, ingested or created within the gut, while at the same time selectively allowing in nutrients the body needs.

As vast as the gut interface to the outside world is, the body contributes more than 70% of its

immune cells to stand guard along its borders. If the barrier is breached, there is an instantaneous response by immune cells. That response is quite complex and involves a direct attack to the offender as well as chemical signaling to other immune cells throughout the body, inviting them to participate in the response. This quickly becomes a full body process, thus amplifying protection as well as potentially spreading inflammatory havoc from gut to tissues.

The gut lining is damaged by many potential insults. The susceptibility to injury varies from one person to the next. Some common offenders are anti-inflammatory drugs such as Ibuprofen, Aleve, aspirin and steroids. In addition, antibiotics, alcohol, acid-blocking drugs, heavy metals, infections (bacteria, parasites, fungi, viruses), food proteins, allergies, excessive exercise and stress can injure the gut mucosa, leading to breaches in the normally very tight, selective barrier.

The leaking through and between intestinal cells of material that normally would not have access to the internal environment of the gut lining cells or spaces, leads to an immune response that quickly escalates into a cascade of signaling and immune action that rapidly becomes a systemic process, leading to symptoms, dysfunction, and for some, catastrophe.

The current thinking is that at least part of the process of initiating and perpetuating a systemic inflammatory response, as experienced in chronic inflammatory or autoimmune disorders, is the activation of the immune response when the normal gut barrier is compromised. This is often referred to as “leaky gut syndrome.” I refer to it as “impaired intestinal permeability.”

It is a common problem. The more susceptible a person is in terms of genetics or previous loss of physiological reserve through chronic illness or high levels of stress, the more robust the response and symptoms will be.

Our goal is to repair the gut lining, restore normal permeability and decrease immune system responsiveness through food modulation and intensive targeted nutrition. This effort, when combined with other approaches that reduce physical stress and restore immune balance, will lead to improvement and usually resolution of symptoms. The process involves many steps. Food is where we start.

It is important to follow this plan strictly for at least the first three months. Even small amounts of culprit proteins will trigger the immune response we are trying to quiet. This will stall our efforts at healing the gut and reducing inflammation. Our goal, ultimately, is to reverse the physiology of autoimmunity and inflammation so successfully that some of the omitted foods can be added back in after a careful challenge.

The Gut-Immune Restoration Intensive Nutrition (GRIN) Food Plan

Listed below is a complete list of those foods allowed in the GRIN food plan and those that are to be avoided. The additional food groups to be avoided are all potential offenders as triggers of gut inflammation, leading to impaired intestinal permeability and immune activation. Even if they are not the original trigger or cause of the mess, they can mediate or perpetuate gut-derived inflammation. Their removal from your food plan is imperative for restoring normal gut permeability, decreasing activation of the immune system and alleviating inflammation-related symptoms and dysfunction.

The plan is quite simple. The execution will take planning and a strong commitment to change. Mobilize your support network. Read this carefully. Educate and prepare yourself. It can be done. It will provide a wonderful outcome. Stay present with the process. Make mistakes. Learn from them. Move on.

Food you CAN eat in the GRIN food plan:

Healthy meat and fish:

This includes grass fed beef, free-range chicken and turkey, grass fed lamb, wild-caught fish and shellfish, organ meats and wild game. These will be your major sources of protein so include them at every meal. Shoot for roughly 4-6 ounces at each meal (this will be the approximate size of a deck of cards).

Protein supplements:

The only commercially available protein that is allowed during this intensive phase of your food plan is gelatin and collagen derived from grass fed beef. I like the Hydrolyzed Collagen from Great Lakes. It is odorless, tasteless and performs extremely well, dissolving completely in any liquid of any temperature. It can be added to veggie smoothies, soups, stews, bone broth and all liquids you wish to consume.

Vegetables:

You may eat them all *except* for nightshades (see below under Food you must AVOID). Eat a wide variety of colors. Include options from the brassica family regularly (cabbage, Brussel's sprouts, broccoli, broccoli sprouts, kale, cauliflower). Eat veggies at every meal. Pile them up on your plate. They should take up at least 2/3 of your plate. Eat them liberally but don't overeat. There is no need to force yourself to eat a prescribed quantity—listen to your body!

Fruit:

Only very low sugar content fruit are allowed during this intensive phase. This includes berries, tart apples (Granny Smith), pomegranates and cranberries. No other fruit are allowed in order to reduce the load of fructose and simple sugars into the gut.

Healthy Fat:

You may use coconut oil, coconut milk (culinary coconut from the can—full-fatted version only or home-made), MCT oil (purified medium-chain triglycerides derived from coconut oil), extra virgin olive oil, olives, avocados, avocado oil, lard from healthy animals.

Smoothies:

This is a convenient and potentially delicious way to create a meal while on this plan. Simply include only those foods allowed on the plan. Include hydrolyzed collagen as your protein, some fat and water and/or coconut milk to create a meal that includes all major food groups to sustain you through part of your day.

Teas:

You may include green tea (preferably Sencha ground green tea powder) and all herbal teas in your food plan.

Fermented foods:

Fermented vegetables such as sour kraut and kim chi are allowed and provide essential probiotic organisms.

Supplements:

Most supplements that have been specifically prescribed for you to meet your unique needs will be allowed if manufacturers have been careful to exclude the undesirables. Work with your functional medicine practitioner on this.

Fluids:

It is important to stay well hydrated. Most people need a minimum of 2 quarts per day. You may use filtered water, mineral water, green tea, herbal tea and bone broth.

Bone Broth:

Bone broth made from healthy animals is a wonderful aid for gut healing and tissue repair due to its high content of collagen, connective tissue and amino acids that support this process. Drink 1-2 cups daily (more if desired). Add hydrolyzed collagen as needed for additional protein.

Food you must **AVOID** on the GRIN food plan:

Unhealthy meat and fish:

This includes corn fed or corn “finished” beef; commercial chicken, turkey, pork and lamb; farm raised fish and shellfish, organ meat from unhealthy animals, large predator fish (albacore tuna, swordfish, shark) due to high mercury content; or any meat that you have a known sensitivity to.

Eggs:

Avoid all eggs and egg products during this phase of your food plan.

Protein supplements:

Avoid all whey, soy, rice, pea, hemp or egg-derived protein supplements. Use only gelatin or hydrolyzed collagen.

Night Shade vegetables:

Avoid all white potatoes, tomatoes and tomato products, eggplant, sweet bell peppers (all colors), hot peppers, cayenne pepper, goji berries, paprika, pimentos, tomatillos and some curry powders (check ingredients!).

Note: sweet potatoes and yams are fine to eat. Ashwaganda, an herb commonly contained in adrenal support formulas, is also a nightshade, so look at your supplements carefully.

Fruits:

Avoid all high sugar content fruit, which are most of them. Use only those listed above in Foods you CAN eat.

Unhealthy Fat:

Avoid all trans or hydrogenated fat (found in many processed or prepackaged foods), rancid fats (overly aged or oxidized; known for their highly characteristic turpentine-like odor), and vegetable oils other than those listed above in Foods you CAN eat.

Grains:

Avoid all grains (wheat, rye, barley, corn, oats, rice, sorghum, spelt, teff, kamut, wildrice) and pseudograins (grain-like seeds, such as quinoa and millet).

Dairy:

Avoid all animal milk products, including cheeses, yogurt, sour cream, whey protein products, buttermilk, butter, ghee, kefir, ice cream, cottage cheese.

Note: Ghee, even when derived from healthy, grass-fed cows, will be contaminated by milk protein. This is best to avoid during this intensive phase of the food plan.

Nuts:

Avoid all nuts and nut-derived oils. This includes almonds, walnuts, cashews, pecans, Brazil nuts, pine nuts, hazelnuts and pistachios.

Note: this includes all nut oils, flours and butters.

Seeds:

Avoid all seeds, such as pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, flax seed, chia seed, hemp seed, poppy seed, sunflower seeds.

Note: this includes all seed oils, flours and butters. It also includes all seed-derived spices, such as anise, caraway, celery seed, coriander, cumin, dill, fennel, mustard and nutmeg.

Beans and legumes:

Avoid all beans (such as black, kidney, black-eyed peas, garbonzo, fava, Great Northern white, lentils and split peas) and legumes (such as soy, peanuts and green beans).

Note: coffee and vanilla are both beans and should be eliminated during the initial intensive phase of this food plan.

Sugar:

Avoid all sugars added to food as well as high sugar content foods such as most fruits. This includes agave, honey, cane sugar, rice syrup, maple syrup, barley malt, corn syrup, molasses, and turbinado sugar.

Artificial and non-nutritive sweeteners:

Avoid all sugar substitutes and artificial sweeteners that add sweetness to food and beverages but have no nutritional value. These include sucralose, splenda, stevia, aspartame and sugar alcohols (such as mannitol, sorbitol, dextrose and xylitol).

Alcohol:

Avoid all alcohol in beverages as well as cooking during this initial intense phase of the food plan. Moderate alcohol may be added later for many individuals.

Other Considerations for Gut Healing and Reduced Inflammation

Supplements to Help With Gut Healing:

L-Glutamine

This is a very useful amino acid supplement to encourage healing of the gut mucosa and decrease permeability. It comes in powdered formulations. Use 5 grams 2-3 times daily between meals. Mix well with liquid of your choice.

Omega-3 Fatty Acids: EPA and DHA

These Omega-3 fatty acids, derived from fish, are essential nutrients for healing the gut mucosa and for reducing inflammation and supporting cellular energy production. If you are not eating wild-caught fatty fish on a regular basis (at least 2-3 times weekly), then you will need to supplement with it. Start with around 1000 mg of each EPA and DHA daily. Use only manufacturers who carefully test their oils for heavy metals, pesticides and rancidity.

Probiotics

These are the so-called good bacteria that help build a healthy microbiome, an essential part of having a healthy gut and healthy body. There are more bacteria living in your gut than there are cells of your body. They are important players in many of the central functions of the body including gut barrier function, immune system regulation, detoxification, nutrient production, energy production, gene expression, and many more.

Your gut flora can be completely wiped out when you take antibiotics, which most people have at some point in their lives. It can be difficult for the flora to reestablish itself in an optimal way, especially if the antibiotic exposure occurred in the first years of life when the immune system is developing.

Use a combination of Lactobacilli and Bifidobacteria. Start with 60 billion organisms per day. Your health advisor may recommend much higher doses if you have significant gut issues that would benefit from that. Use a freeze-dried, non-dairy formula and keep it stored in a cool place.

How to Re-Introduce Foods

“If there’s no chocolate in heaven, I’m not going!” -Jane Seabrook

I miss chocolate! And coffee! When can I start re-introducing foods? And how and what?

This is an important question, and the answer is, it depends. If you are working with a health care professional who is knowledgeable about diet, it is best to check with that person before starting to reintroduce foods. Ideally you will wait until your body has experienced significant healing before testing your tolerance to new foods. Even if you feel better, it takes the immune system a minimum of three months to simmer down. We don't want to re-introduce foods too soon and have the old symptoms come back.

First foods:

- Nuts and seeds (one at a time-start with walnuts or almonds or sunflower seeds)
- Vanilla seeds (get a vanilla bean -cut it open and scrape the seeds out from inside the pod and eat ¼ of them or put them in a tolerated smoothie)
- Dark chocolate (make sure it doesn't have dairy in it)
- Coffee
- Spices (again, one at a time)
- Eggs (introduce white and yolk separately-try gently rinsing the yolks after separating)

How much/how often to eat that food

Initially you want to reintroduce ONE new food per week. On the day you decide to perform the food challenge, start by eating just one or two bites of the new food in the morning. If you don't have any symptoms, eat a small serving for lunch. If no symptoms then, eat a regular serving size for dinner. If you wake up the next morning feeling fine, eat one more serving of that food for breakfast or lunch.

Anytime you experience symptoms, stop and don't try that food again for at least three months.

Pay close attention to how you feel on the day of the food challenge and for 3-5 days afterward. Do you have any gut symptoms, extra fatigue, headaches, brain fog, muscle or joint pain, or any recurrence of your illness symptoms? If you feel fine, you can add that food to your list of acceptable foods. If not, you need to wait at least three months to try that food again in a challenge. You may regain tolerance to it once your body has experienced more healing, but it is possible you may not be able to tolerate it, either. Keeping a written food diary and recording symptoms daily can help a lot in this process.

Sometimes you may feel fine with a food during the food challenge, add it back to your diet, and then slowly start to see a gradual increase in illness symptoms or fatigue. This lengthy timeline can make figuring out the offending food(s) very difficult, as you've probably also added back a number of other foods during this time. If this occurs, you may need to do a "reset" by going back to the diet you were eating the last time you felt well (again, the food diary is very valuable in figuring this out), then really slowing down the reintroduction

process.

Foods to never reintroduce

- Gluten
- Processed foods

Anyone with inflammatory or autoimmune disease who has improved after removing gluten from their diet should never add it back. Never. None. It will make you just as sick as you were before.

Regardless of how many foods you are able to successfully reintroduce, it is important to never again rely on grains as a major part of your diet. Even if they are gluten-free, grains are a nutritionally inferior food. A grain-heavy diet is a high-sugar, nutrient-poor diet. While occasionally using gluten-free grains once you have experienced significant healing can be fine, remember to keep the basic structure of the GRIN plan to retain your health.

Sample Food Plans:

Here are sample meal plans for the GRIN food plan, courtesy of functional nutrition consultant, Lisa Scranton, MS, LDN, RD. You don't have to follow these—feel free to create your own, but these may give you some ideas. These meal plans are based on very simple recipes to help get you started. As you become more familiar with the diet, you may wish to experiment with more complex dishes. There is no need to count calories or grams of anything—just listen to your appetite.

Day 1 (Saturday, or a day when you'll have some extra time)

Breakfast: Wild blueberry smoothie, rosemary pork patty

Lunch: Sauteed shrimp over baby kale skillet meal

Dinner: Roasted chicken and root vegetables (this is a double recipe—after dinner toss the chicken bones from the first chicken into your crockpot with water and 1 tsp. vinegar to make overnight bone broth)

Day 2

Breakfast: Sauteed chicken livers with spinach (if you aren't ready to try liver, saute some leftover chicken in olive or coconut oil, then add the spinach)

Lunch: Garlicky pork burgers with romaine-apple salad

Dinner: Chicken-vegetable soup (made with the extra chicken and veggies and the bone

broth from last night) with baked acorn or butternut squash (this recipe doubles the squash for later use)

Day 3

Breakfast: Pina colada smoothie with protein powder (load up crockpot with beef roast and vegetables)

Lunch: Leftover chicken vegetable soup, baby kale and romaine salad

Dinner: Beef roast, broccoli or cabbage slaw or cooked broccoli

Day 4

Breakfast: Acorn/butternut squash and bacon hash

Lunch: Leftover beef roast with slaw or broccoli

Dinner: Baked salmon with stir-fry veggies and baked sweet potato (these are doubled for later use)

Day 5

Breakfast: Berries with coconut cream, pork patty

Lunch: Spinach-orange salad with salmon

Dinner: GRIN tacos with cauliflower rice

Day 6

Breakfast: Sweet potato and pork stir-fry

Lunch: Tuna (light or skipjack ONLY) lettuce cups with bowl of berries

Dinner: Dilled pork loin roast and garlic-mushroom kale

Day 7

Breakfast: Plantains fried in coconut oil, bacon slices

Lunch: Pork roast and pear roll-ups, leftover cooked kale

Dinner: Classic liver-n-onions stir-fry (alternative: beef patties with caramelized onions) with beet-spinach salad

These meal plans are set up so that the first two days are your heavier-duty cooking days. You may also want to do your grocery shopping and prepare some salad dressings if you have these days off work. It will lighten the cooking load for the rest of the week. However,

be ready to spend an hour making dinner on weekday evenings, at least for the first few weeks. Once you are familiar with the necessary cooking techniques and recipes, many of these dinners will only take 30-40 minutes to prepare.

The lunches are generally based on using ingredients from dinner the night before. If you are not a morning person, it would be a great idea to get your lunch ready and into the fridge as soon as you've eaten dinner, while the food is still out. For taking lunches to work, it is helpful to have an insulated mug or thermos with a lid that closes tightly, and some sort of lunch box or bag that is insulated, with a small ice pack if you don't have access to a fridge.

Sample Recipes:

These recipes make enough for 2 people. If you are just cooking (or blending) for yourself, cut the amounts in half.

Day 1

Wild Blueberry Smoothie

4 cups frozen wild blueberries (Wyman brand is most readily available, at Costco and the co-op)

1 banana, peeled

½ avocado, peeled

1-4 handfuls of baby spinach leaves (however much you can tolerate)

Water if needed (preferably filtered) to make a nice consistency

Option 1: throw everything in the blender and whirr away! This will make a thick, super-cold smoothie.

Option 2: defrost berries in the microwave first. This will make a room-temperature, thinner smoothie.

Option 3: put all ingredients into the blender the night before, then refrigerate the container overnight. In the morning, just put the container on the motor base and blend. The smoothie will be cold-ish and medium thick.

If you're not used to the taste of vegetables in your smoothies, start small-just a handful of spinach leaves-and work up to more as you make more smoothies.

Rosemary Pork Patties

½ pound ground pork, plain

¼ tsp. rosemary

Salt (ancient sea salt)

Form the pork into two patties. Place in a hot frying pan. Turn the heat to medium. Chop the rosemary up into fine pieces with a chef's knife if it is not a powder, then sprinkle just ¼ tsp. over the patties. Salt the patties if desired. Cook approximately 4 minutes on the first side, flip over, and then immediately cover with a lid. Cook another 5 minutes, or until juices run clear.

Sautéed Shrimp over Baby Kale

One pound of small-to-medium frozen shrimp (buy already peeled for easy prep). Look for shrimp with the Marine Stewardship Council logo or Naturland logo on the package to ensure shrimp with few contaminants.

1/2 pound baby kale (or about 6 cups), prewashed if possible (Or use any deep green, like mustard greens or collards)

1 medium sweet potato, peeled

Garlic, 3 cloves

Onion powder, 1 tsp., or ½ chopped fresh onion

Salt to taste, and a dash of chopped rosemary if desired

Coconut oil for cooking

Place frozen shrimp in a large colander, and thaw under cool running water or by immersing the colander in a bowl of cold water. Drain well. Peel the sweet potato and chop into small pieces. Peel the garlic cloves, and fresh onion if desired, and mince finely. Wash the kale if it is not prewashed. Now you're ready to start!

Heat a large skillet over medium and melt 2 T. coconut oil in it. Toss in the chopped sweet potato and cook for about 10 minutes, turning occasionally, until softened and browned. Turn up the heat to medium-high and add the shrimp and garlic and onion and rosemary if desired. Sautee for about 2 minutes, then add the baby kale. Place a lid on the pan and allow the kale to wilt for a couple minutes. Take off the lid and continue cooking for another few minutes until the kale is the as soft as you like it. Sprinkle with salt before serving.

Whole Roasted Chicken with Root Vegetables

2 Roasting chickens, about 3-5 pounds (remove and save liver and other organ meat.)

2 medium celery roots

2 pound carrots

Olive oil, 4-8 T.

Fresh or dried thyme, basil, rosemary in any combination

Salt

Lemon or orange wedges, optional

Preheat oven to 375°F. Generously oil 2 roasting pans or 9×13 pans with tall sides. (You can place the chickens on a rack inside the pans if you want extra-crispy skin). You can rinse the chickens, but it isn't necessary. If you do rinse them, pat the tops dry with paper towels. Place the chickens on their backs in the oiled pans.

Reach your hand under the skin on the breast and pull it loose from the meat, but leave it in place. Rub the meat with some of the olive oil, and rub the rest onto the skin. Sprinkle the whole chickens with your chosen herbs and salt. For a bit of extra flavor, stuff the cavity with 3 or 4 orange or lemon wedges.

Rinse and scrub or peel the carrots, cut in half or thirds. Rinse and peel the celery root. You will have to set them on a cutting board and slice down thickly through the peel, especially at the root end. Don't leave any streaks of brown running through the flesh near the root end, as these contain gritty sand. Slice into thick slices or wedges. Place all veggies in the pans around the chickens, and drizzle them with olive oil. Cover the pans loosely with aluminum foil. (You will remove the foil after 40 minutes).

Bake in 375°oven for about 1 ½ hours (20 minutes per pound), or until a meat thermometer reads at least 165°F. Make sure to remove the foil after 40 minutes of cooking. Let rest at room temperature for 10 minutes before slicing.

For the GRIN food plan, after dinner is over, place the second chicken in the fridge, along with its vegetables. Take any remaining meat off the bones of the first chicken, and refrigerate this meat. Place the chicken carcass into your slow cooker, cover with water, add 1 tsp. vinegar, and garlic cloves or onion if desired. Cover. Turn your slow cooker on "high" and cook for up to 24 hours, adding water once or twice if needed to cover the bones. When ready to use tomorrow for the soup, strain the bones out of the broth, and return the broth to the slow cooker.

Day 2

Sauteed Chicken Livers with Spinach

½ pound chicken livers

3 or 4 handfuls of fresh spinach

Coconut oil, salt

Heat 1-2 T. coconut oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. When shimmering, drop in chicken livers and sauté for about 5 minutes, turning occasionally. When the livers look browned on both sides, add the spinach, and continue to cook, stirring until the spinach has wilted and seems soft.

Garlicky Pork Burgers

½ pound ground pork

1 clove garlic

Pinch each of ground sage, thyme, and basil

Pinch of salt OR 1 tsp. fish sauce (optional)

Combine ground pork, crushed or minced garlic, herbs, salt or fish sauce in a medium bowl. It works best to knead it with your hands. Refrigerate for 30 minutes to let flavors combine, or if you're starved, heat up your skillet right away. Form two burgers and cook 4 minutes on the first side, flip, and cover skillet, cook 4 minutes on second side.

Romaine-Apple Salad

1 head of Romaine lettuce

2 sweet apples, like Gala or Jonagold or Pink Lady (or use pears instead)

2 T. dried cherries, unsweetened, or raisins

1/3 cup olive oil

3 T. balsamic vinegar

¼ tsp. garlic powder

Pinch of dried basil

¼ tsp. salt or to taste

Rinse the romaine lettuce leaves and pat dry, or spin in a salad spinner to dry. Chop into bite-sized pieces. Wash and quarter the apples-take out the cores, then slice thinly. Arrange over the lettuce. Whisk together the olive oil, balsamic vinegar, garlic powder, basil and salt in a small bowl, and drizzle over the lettuce and apples. Sprinkle with dried cherries.

Thick Chicken-Vegetable Soup

If you're going to be making this soup in the slow cooker, it should be started right after lunch. If you want to wait until dinnertime, you can make it in a pot on the stove.

1 whole chicken, cooked

1 celery root and 1 pound carrots, either already cooked or raw

Chicken bone broth, or filtered water if you don't have broth

1 large or 2 small onions

3 cloves garlic

1 tsp. dried thyme

½ tsp. dried oregano

Salt (1-2 tsp.)

Strain the bones out of your bone broth that has been in the slow cooker. Return the broth to the slow cooker and turn it on "high". Take the meat off the bones of your second chicken that has been in the fridge, and placing it on a large cutting board, chop through it with your chef's knife to get small pieces (don't worry about how they look). Place the chicken pieces in the slow cooker. You can save this second carcass in the fridge for up to 3 days to make more bone broth later if desired.

If you have leftover cooked celery root and carrots from last night, chop these up and add to the slow cooker. If you are using raw vegetables, peel and chop the celery root into bite-sized pieces, and scrub and chop the carrots into small coins. Add to the slow cooker.

Peel and chop the onions and sauté them in a frying pan on the stove for 5-10 minutes. Add to the slow cooker. Peel the garlic and mince or crush, then add to the slow cooker. Finally, add herbs and salt. Let simmer for about 4 hours in the slow cooker, or if you are using a stockpot on the stove, about 40 min.

Baked Butternut or Acorn Squash

2 small butternut squash, or two large acorn or kombucha squash

Olive oil

Rinse off the squash and dry it. Place on a large, stable cutting board. Using your chef's knife, slice each squash in half. This can be hard-make sure your knife is sharp and you are very careful that the squash doesn't roll while you are trying to cut it. Once cut in half, scoop out the seeds with a spoon. You'll either have to toss those lovely seeds or toast them for a family member, unless you've been able to successfully reintroduce them into your diet. Rub olive oil all over the squashes. Oil a 9×13 baking pan, and place them face-down in the pan (peel side up). Bake at 350° for about an hour, or until a knife poked into the thick part of the squash goes in very easily. Cool slightly, and pull off the peel. Cut into pieces and place one squash in the fridge for later.

Day 3

Green Pina Colada Protein Smoothie

4 cups frozen pineapple chunks

1 orange, peeled

½ banana if desired

½ cup coconut milk, plus water as needed for consistency

Several handfuls of baby kale, or regular kale with the ribs removed

One scoop of collagen protein powder

Blend together using one of the methods mentioned in the Wild Blueberry smoothie recipe. If you don't have collagen protein powder to use in this smoothie, add a serving of meat or fish to your breakfast.

Slow-cooker Beef Roast

After breakfast is the time to load up the slow cooker for tonight's dinner with a beef chuck roast or a beef rump roast, about 1 cup of water, and vegetables if desired, like onions, carrots, turnip, parsnips, white sweet potatoes. Sprinkle in 1 tsp. of dried thyme, 1 tsp. salt, and add a couple bay leaves if you have them. Cook on "low" for 8-10 hours.

Day 3 lunch is leftover chicken soup and any salad left from day 2. You can heat the soup and take it to work in a thermos, and add some kale to the salad if needed.

Broccoli or Cabbage Slaw

1 package pre-shredded coleslaw cabbage, or pre-shredded broccoli-slaw (about 12 ounces)

½ cup olive oil

1/4-1/3 cup apple cider vinegar, depending on how sour you like your slaw

1 T. honey or maple syrup

½ tsp. garlic powder

Grated lemon zest, if desired

Dump the pre-shredded slaw into a large bowl. In a small bowl, whisk together olive oil, vinegar, honey or maple syrup, garlic powder, and a few gratings of lemon zest. Quickly pour over the cabbage in the large bowl and stir to mix. You can also add chopped celery and onion to this slaw if you wish.

Day 4

Butternut Squash/Bacon Hash

1 leftover butternut or acorn or other winter squash, cooked and peeled

4 strips uncured bacon

Pinch of dried sage and pinch of thyme

Salt to taste

Cook the bacon over medium heat in your large skillet, turning several times, until done to your liking. Remove the bacon from pan and let the pieces cool. Meanwhile, cut the squash into bite-sized pieces, and place in the hot frying pan with all that nice bacon fat. You can either let them crisp up as they are, or mash them down with a fork or potato masher to make more of a “hash-brown” style. Season with salt, sage and thyme. Allow to cook on one side until crisp, then turn over and let the other side crisp up. Cut your bacon into small pieces, and toss back in the pan with the squash.

Your day 4 lunch is leftover beef roast from last night, with some leftover slaw and/or veggies that were cooked with the roast. You can roll up small pieces of roast beef in lettuce leaves with some oil and vinegar dressing if you want finger food.

Baked sweet potato

Rinse four medium sweet potatoes. If cooking in the microwave, pierce the skin with a fork in several places. Wrap each potato in a moist paper towel, and place on a microwave-safe plate. Microwave on high for 20-25 minutes, turning and checking for doneness every 5 minutes. They are done when they feel soft under the pressure of your finger, or when a fork easily slides into the sweet potato. Wrap in a towel to keep warm until the rest of your dinner is ready.

If baking in the oven, you’ll want to set the sweet potatoes in a baking dish, even if you wrap them in foil first (they leak!) Allow an hour in the oven for the sweet potatoes to bake (so start them 30 minutes before you put the salmon in the oven.)

Baked salmon with Stir-Fry Veggies

1 ½ pound salmon fillet

2 T. olive oil

½ tsp. dried basil

½ lemon

Salt

Coconut aminos, if available

2 T. coconut oil

4-6 cups diced vegetables, such as asparagus, onions, garlic, broccoli, mushrooms, cauliflower, fresh ginger. You can often buy bags of pre-sliced fresh vegetables in the produce section of the grocery store. The problem with almost all *frozen* stir-fry blends is that they contain peppers or peas or other nightshades/legumes. But if you find an acceptable frozen brand, go for it!

Preheat the oven to 400°. Place 1-2 T. olive oil in a baking dish or 9×13 pan. Unwrap your salmon, and roll it around in the oil in the baking dish, coating both sides. Lay it skin-side down, sprinkle with the basil and some salt, and a squeeze of lemon juice if desired. Bake at 400° for about 20-25 minutes, or until it flakes easily but still looks very moist.

If you are using frozen veggies, thaw them in a colander placed in a bowl of cool water, and drain them well. (Otherwise, if you cook them from the frozen state, they will get quite soggy). If using fresh veggies, make sure they are trimmed, cut into pieces, and washed.

While the salmon is baking, heat your large skillet over “high” and add the coconut oil. Once the skillet is very hot (the oil should be shimmering but NOT smoking), add your vegetables. Cook on “high”, stirring frequently, for about 5 minutes, or until they are crisp-tender. Remove from heat and add about 1 T. coconut aminos, and stir to coat the veggies. If not using the aminos, add some salt to taste. You can either flake the fish into the vegetables for a one-dish meal, or eat them separately.

(Because this is a double recipe, you will probably need to cook the vegetables in two batches in order to have room for all of them in your skillet.)

Day 5

Follow the instructions for Rosemary Pork Patty from day one.

Berries with coconut cream

1, 13.5 ounce can of full-fat, canned coconut milk

1 T. pure maple syrup or honey, optional

4 cups berries, fresh or frozen

Take the can of coconut milk out of the refrigerator and turn it right-side up (it needs to have been in there at least overnight for this recipe to work.) Open the top of the can and pour the coconut water that’s on top into a jar and save it in the fridge for smoothies. Dig out the firm coconut cream that’s collected on the bottom. Place in a small bowl with deep sides, and whip with electric beaters for 2-3 minutes, until it has a “whipped cream” texture. You can also whip in 1 T. of maple syrup or honey if desired. Refrigerate any uneaten portion right

away. This will keep 3 or 4 days in the fridge (except that it never lasts that long, because everyone loves it).

Rinse 4 cups of fresh berries, divide into two bowls, and serve with dollops of the coconut cream. Or use frozen berries and thaw them for 1-2 minutes in the microwave after you have put them into the bowls.

Spinach-orange salad with Salmon

4 cups baby spinach leaves	2 T. lemon juice
4 cups lettuce leaves	2 T. orange juice
2 oranges, peeled	½ cup olive oil
1 cucumber or 2 carrots	2 tsp. fresh grated ginger, or ½ tsp. ground ginger
	½ tsp. salt

Toss together the spinach and lettuce in a large bowl. Juice ½ an orange and 1 lemon and set aside in a small bowl. Cut the oranges into chunks and add to the lettuce. Slice a cucumber or carrots if desired and add. In the small bowl with the lemon and orange juice, add the olive oil and ginger and salt, and whisk together for the salad dressing. Add the leftover salmon to the salad, and pour on the dressing.

GRIN Tacos with Cauliflower Rice

½ pound ground beef	1 small head fresh cauliflower
½ tsp oregano	2 T. coconut oil
¼ tsp. thyme	Salt
¼ tsp. basil	1 head of any lettuce with large leaves
¼ tsp. turmeric powder	1 medium lime, juiced
¼ tsp. garlic powder	2 avocados
¼ tsp onion powder	¼ tsp. garlic powder
¼ tsp. salt	Cilantro, if desired
¼ cup water or broth	

Take leaves off of cauliflower, cut the head into quarters, and cut out the large stem part. Grate the quarters of the cauliflower using a box grater, so that you get tiny pieces like grains of rice. Alternatively, you can toss the florets into a food processor, pulsing until you get rice sized pieces of cauliflower. Heat the coconut oil in your large skillet, and place the cauliflower in the hot skillet. Spread out the cauliflower in the skillet, cover with a lid, and cook 5-7 minutes over medium heat, stirring once or twice. Take off the lid, sprinkle with 2 T. of lime juice and about ½ tsp. salt. Give it a final stir and remove from pan, place in a bowl and cover to keep warm.

Brown the ground beef in the same skillet, breaking into little pieces as it cooks. After it is brown, add the oregano, thyme, basil, turmeric, garlic, onion, and ¼ tsp. salt, along with 2 T. water or broth. Keep warm on the stove while you make the guacamole.

Slice through the two avocados till your knife hits the pit, then score all the way around the other side. Twist the avocado halves until they separate. Pull the pit out, then spoon the avocado flesh out of the skin, and place the avocado flesh in a small bowl. Mash with a fork, then add ¼ tsp. garlic powder, ¼ tsp. salt, and 1 T. lime juice. Stir to combine.

Separate the lettuce leaves, rinse them off, and pat dry. Now you can assemble your “tacos” by filling the lettuce leaves with ground beef, cauliflower rice, guacamole, and cilantro if desired.

Day 6

Sweet potato and pork stir-fry

½ pound ground pork

2 leftover sweet potatoes

¼ tsp. cinnamon

Salt

Coconut oil

Brown the ground pork in a large skillet. When it is done, remove from pan. If there is a lot of fat left in the pan, you won't need any oil. However, if the pork is lean and not much fat remains in the pan, add 2 T. coconut oil. Peel the sweet potatoes and cut into bite-sized pieces. Place in hot frying pan and cook for about 5 minutes, turning once. When they are browned, add the ground pork back to the pan. Sprinkle in ¼ tsp. cinnamon, and ½ tsp. salt or salt to taste.

Tuna lettuce cups with berries

One, 6-ounce can of light/skipjack tuna, packed in water

2 T. olive oil

Squeeze of lemon juice, or ½ tsp. vinegar

½-1 avocado

2 T. chopped onion, if desired

¼ tsp. garlic powder

Large lettuce leaves

Open the can of tuna and drain the water. Place the tuna in a small bowl, and add the olive oil, lemon juice or vinegar, onion, and garlic powder. Mix as well as you can—it's a little hard to

get it mixed well. Now open the avocados, remove from the skin, and slice. You have the choice of either laying slices directly onto individual lettuce leaves, then covering with the tuna mixture, or mashing the avocado right into the tuna mixture for “tunacado” salad. Once your tuna mixture and avocado are on the lettuce leaves, roll them up.

Add 2 cups of fruit to your lunch, either fresh or frozen. Good combinations include blueberries with banana, raspberries and peaches, blackberries and mango, cherries with apple. There are lots of types of mixed frozen fruits you can buy. Putting 2 cups in your thermos is a good way to keep them cold and keep the juices contained.

Dilled Roast Pork Loin

1 pork loin, about 1 ½ pounds (look for plain pork loin that doesn't have flavorings added)

2 T. olive oil

Fresh (2 T.) or dried (1 tsp.) dill leaves (not the seeds)

1 tsp. thyme

Salt, if desired

Preheat oven to 350°.

Get out a baking pan or 9×13 pan and pour about 2 T. of olive oil into the pan. Sprinkle the dried dill or chopped fresh dill, thyme, and salt evenly into the pan. Open your package of pork loin, and place into the pan. Roll the roast around in the olive oil/herb combination so it's completely covered. Place in the oven for approximately 45 minutes. It is really helpful to have a meat thermometer to check for doneness. Pork roast needs to cook to an internal temperature of 145° F, which is very slightly pink in the middle. You don't want it to get much higher than this, because it quickly gets very tough. Because a roast will continue cooking as it rests, and the temperature will continue to rise about 10°, you can remove it from the oven when it reads 135-140° on a meat thermometer, and let it rest for 10 minutes before slicing it up.

Garlic-Mushroom Kale

1 large bunch kale or 12 ounce bag of pre-cut kale/baby kale

16 ounces of mushrooms (either sliced or whole, button or cremini, or any kind you enjoy)

3 cloves of garlic

1 T. coconut oil

2 T. olive oil

Coconut aminos, or salt

If you are using regular kale, wash it by immersing it in a bowl or sink full of water. Drain and cut out the center ribs of the kale, then roughly chop the leaves into medium sized pieces.

Rinse the mushrooms (yeah, lots of cooks swear by not rinsing their mushrooms, but a quick rinse to get off the large pieces of dirt seems wise), then slice if they aren't pre-sliced. Heat the frying pan over "high" heat, and add the coconut oil. Toss in the sliced mushrooms, and sear on both sides, until they are browned and have released their liquid.

Remove the mushrooms from the pan and save. Turn down the heat to "medium", add 1/3 cup water to the pan, and put the cut-up kale leaves in the pan. You'll have quite a pile, but they will cook down. Cover, and cook for about 5 minutes, or until the kale is tender. While this is cooking, mince the garlic cloves. Remove the lid and continue to cook the kale until all the water has evaporated and the pan is dry. Now add the olive oil, minced garlic, and cooked mushrooms. Sauté for a couple minutes so the garlic gets a little brown, stirring as needed. Remove from the heat and add about 1 T. of coconut aminos or ½ tsp. salt. Give it a final stir and serve.

Day 7

Fried Plantains

2 plantains, green or ripe

6-8 slices of uncured bacon

1-2 T. Coconut oil

Fry the bacon slices in your large skillet over medium heat, turning several times until they reach the level of crispiness that you prefer. While the bacon is cooking, peel and slice the plantains (if they are green plantains, you will have to drop them into boiling water for a couple minutes before you will be able to peel them). Remove bacon and save. Now, if you really like bacon flavor, just drop the plantain pieces into the hot bacon fat, and brown them on both sides. If you don't want your plantains to taste like bacon, remove the bacon fat and add 1-2 T. coconut oil to the pan before frying them.

Pork and Pear Roll-Ups

6-8 slices of leftover pork roast

1 ripe pear

½ cucumber

Large lettuce leaves, or nori (the sheets of seaweed used for making sushi)

Coconut aminos and/or salt

Slice the pieces of pork roast very thin. Peel the pear if desired, then take out the core and

slice the pear into 8-12 slices. Thinly slice the cucumber. Arrange some pork, pear, and cucumber on each lettuce leaf or sheet of nori. Season with a shake of coconut aminos and salt. Roll up. Take along some leftover kale and mushrooms, which are surprisingly good cold if you don't have a microwave for reheating.

Liver-N-Onions

This recipe makes enough for 4 instead of 2, but liver often comes in one-pound packages. Feel free to cut the recipe in half.

1-2 large onions (depending on how much you like onion)

2-4 cloves of garlic (depending on how much you like garlic!)

1 pound of beef liver

2 T. olive oil

½ cup unsweetened pomegranate or cherry juice

Rinse the beef liver and set aside. Peel and cut the onions into circles or whatever size pieces you want. Peel and mince the garlic. Place a frying pan on the stove over medium heat, and add the olive oil. When the pan is hot, add the onions and garlic. Cook, stirring, for about 5-7 minutes. Add the liver, and pour in the juice. Turn the heat to "low", and continue cooking for 15 minutes. Serve immediately.

Not sure you're ready to try liver? Fry up some ground beef patties instead, with slow-cooked onions on top.

Beet-Spinach Salad

2 medium beets	¼ cup olive oil
2 carrots	2 T. lime juice
4 cups baby spinach leaves	1 T. vinegar
1 avocado	Dried (1 tsp) or fresh (2 T. chopped) mint
	1 T. honey
	Salt

Peel the beets using a vegetable peeler and scrub the carrots. Shred beets and carrots on a box grater. Halve, pit, and peel avocado, and cut into chunks. Toss together the beets, carrots, and avocado with the spinach in a large bowl. Whisk together the remaining ingredients in a small bowl, and drizzle over the salad.

Condiments: Pepper, mustard, ketchup, commercial mayonnaise and salad dressings, hot sauces, soy sauce, and almost all other commercially available condiments are NOT on this food plan. Unfortunately, they all contain ingredients such as seeds, grains, oils from grains, nightshades, and gums/thickeners. When you are reintroducing foods, it is important to make

sure you have successfully reintroduced EVERY ingredient of a condiment before you resume using that product. Honestly, many of these products will likely be off-limits long-term in order for you to maintain your health. Therefore it is a good idea to find some easy recipes to make your own salad dressings, mayonnaise, etc. Right now, at this most restrictive level of the food plan, even that can be challenging. Here are a few suggestions:

Salad dressings: It really is not difficult to make your own oil-and-vinegar based dressings. The basic recipe is 1 part acid: 3 parts oil. The acid can be vinegar, lemon or lime juice, or you can partially replace acid with fruit juice. The oil can be olive oil or avocado oil. Now spice it up by adding salt and any herbs you want, such as dill, basil, mint, tarragon, oregano, etc. You can reduce the tartness with a little honey, but remember that it counts toward your daily limit of 1 T. sweetener.

But the simplest (and pretty darn delicious) method is to sprinkle some good olive oil on your salad, squeeze a lemon or lime wedge over it, and salt to taste.

Mayonnaise is tough to make without egg. The easiest method of replicating mayo's creamy texture is to blend a couple ripe avocados in the blender, then add about 4 tablespoons olive oil, 1 tablespoon lemon juice or vinegar, and some salt. There are versions of mayonnaise that use equal parts olive oil and coconut oil, and some vinegar-free to experiment if you want to try this approach. Coconut milk (full fat, canned) whisked with equal part olive oil makes an acceptable creamy mayonnaise.

Commercial *horseradish* almost always has ingredients such as dairy added, so it is not allowed. However, you can buy horseradish root and grate it yourself if you want the pungent flavor it brings.

Coconut aminos are a reasonable substitute for soy sauce or tamari sauce, and taste pretty good.

Make sure to take full advantage of the allowed herbs to add flavor and zing to your meals (page 6).

Smoothies

Smoothies are a great way to increase your intake of vegetables and fruits. Make them part of a meal, or drink them as a snack. Some people like to make enough in the morning to drink some for breakfast and then refrigerate or freeze the rest for a mid-morning snack. Here's the basic formula for 2 servings:

- 4-5 cups fruit, fresh or frozen (some of it berries, if possible)
- 2-4 handfuls of greens (spinach, collards, kale, Swiss chard, etc.)
- 1 T. or more of healthy fat (avocado, full-fat coconut milk, even olive oil or coconut oil)
- Water or juice if needed for a thinner consistency
- Protein (1-2 T. collagen protein powder) Later, if you are able to add back nuts or dairy,

you can use these for protein. If your smoothie is part of a meal where you are eating meat, you don't need to add the protein. But if you are drinking it for a snack, some protein in the smoothie will help keep you full and keep your blood sugars from spiking.

- Other veggies, if desired. Depending on the flavor of your smoothie, experiment with adding beets, ginger, fennel, kelp, cucumbers, etc. Green tea powder is another good addition.

Resources for Further Reading

Karyn Shanks, MD. [*The Liftoff Foundational Intensive Nutrition Food Plan*](#). 2016.

Karyn Shanks, MD. [*Nutritional Testing: How to Guide Wise Food and Supplement Choices*](#). 2017.

Amy Myers, MD, *The Autoimmune Solution*

Susan Blum, MD, *The Immune System Recovery Plan*

Sarah Ballentyne, *The Paleo Approach*

Terry Wahls, *The Wahls Protocol*

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Karyn Shanks, MD, is a physician who lives and practices in Iowa City. Her work is inspired by the science of Functional Medicine, body-mind principles, and wisdom gleaned from the transformational journeys of thousands of clients over her twenty-five-year career. Her work honors each individual and the power of their stories, their inner wisdom, and innate healing potential. She believes that the bones of healing are in what we do for ourselves. She is the author of *Liftoff*, a manual of energy recovery and healing through essential self-care practices.

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