

My journey began in January of 2019 when I had a Hemoglobin A1C of 7.4. I was devastated that I had Type II Diabetes. How could this be? I actually taught medical students that rotated through our family medicine department at our hospital about the dangers of diabetes, how to prevent it, and how to treat it. I had always struggled with my weight, but was mostly vegetarian as I had grown up in the Seventh-day Adventist faith. At the time of my diagnosis, I had been working out 3-4 times per week on the treadmill and lifting weights. Here I was, diabetic.

At my office, there was a patient who had been coming in monthly for trigger point injections and acupuncture and I noticed she was dramatically losing weight. I remember asking her each month what she was doing, she would quickly and happily reply, "Keto". I remember just replying "OK" and not going any further with the thought. But this time, I looked into keto. I had such brain fog that my the extent of my research was to join a Facebook group and learn how to calculate my macros. I began February, 13, 2019 and have never looked back. Just two weeks later, I realized that my daily headaches, chronic knee pain, irritable bowel syndrome, extreme irritability, and brain fog had disappeared. That week I read three books on keto and low carb and have since immersed myself with podcasts, books, and have taken many courses to learn more about a Therapeutic Low Carb lifestyle. The first reputable site I found was Low Carb USA and from there I enrolled in all of Nutrition Network's modules.

The day I realized my ailments had "mysteriously" disappeared I immediately texted a patient of mine who had been struggling with his Thyroid Carcinoma. He then admitted to me that he had been hiding new metastasis from me and his family. I told him we have to start a ketogenic diet NOW. Since then, I have shared my testimony with all my patients, and have counseled many of them on the tenets of nutrition. Get rid of seed oils, refined sugars and refined grains. Eat real foods and real fats. Use real protein to build their meals around. They know me so well, that they don't give me snacks, alcohol, sweets and treats anymore. For Christmas, I got fresh caught fish, grass fed ground beef, and liters of organic olive oil.

My love for medicine has reached new levels since this new revelation. I remember a 73 year old patient who had been struggling with chronic knee pain for 2 years. Three orthopedists later, and being told he did not need surgery, he came to me for prolotherapy. The first thing I asked him was concerning his diet. He ate a "healthy" breakfast that was often oatmeal, maple syrup and fruits, snacked frequently and ate out frequently. I asked him to think back to how he ate when he was younger. I asked him to eat the way his parents ate. No snacking, eat protein, veggies, and the tenets I described earlier. His firm rotund belly began to shrink and within three treatments, the knee pain had gone. To see his belly flatten (he lost 4 belt sizes), and his inflammation resolve, was so inspiring!

I remember coaching a lady who had seen my interview with Jane Bullen on Nutrition Network and came to me to get off her diabetes medication. Her husband had tried keto in the past, and didn't do well, but agreed to join his wife and support her. While she did eventually get off her medications, her husband was the one who inspired me. It turns out that he was on 5 blood

pressure medications. By the end of 8 weeks, he had already stopped 3 of his medications. This was amazing!

I'll add one more patient experience of many. She came to me with extreme exhaustion and basic daily activities were now difficult. She was so depressed because she was reminded of her grandmother who would always just sit around. She would not interact with anyone, and just watched her children and grandchildren play as the days just passed by her and now it was happening to her. My patient had no joy in life. She was just watching her children and young nieces and nephews have fun, while she was too exhausted to even get up out of her chair. She was literally just watching life pass her by. When questioned about her diet, it was very obvious that she was hardly eating even 1000 kcal because she was trying to lose weight. It was also obvious that her metabolism had grinded to a halt. She had headaches, brain fog and exhaustion. I explained what was going on with her metabolism and what was going on with her body because of what she was eating. Her husband agreed to support her as well. Her energy returned, she is back to her bubbly self, but even more exciting was when she texted me on a Saturday morning... "John (her husband) had his yearly appointment with his heart doc (he had a silent heart attack about 8 years ago) and the doc found ALL his numbers had dropped crazy low. He's gonna keep him on the meds but have him cut the pills in half. Then he said: keep doing the keto and IF because obviously it's working!" How exciting is that! A few weeks later, my patient texted me again, because her sister (who had sat in on one of our classes) who had been on prednisone for 20 years due to her Rheumatoid Arthritis had changed her way of eating, and now was able to stop her prednisone!

I can never go back to my old way of practice. These are just some of the success stories. However, there have been some struggles as well. Most of them have been perimenopausal women to be honest. One lady came back to me complaining of terrible stomach pains which eventually turned out to be diverticulitis. She exclaimed, "I hate keto." A few months later, we visited therapeutic low carb again. I questioned more intently this time. Finding out that she could never tolerate "all the vegetables" that have to be eaten with keto. Upon deeper questioning, we found out that the vegetables that had higher fiber had always "wrecked" her stomach. I found out that iceberg lettuce, bok choy, onions and mushrooms did not hurt her stomach. So we are now on a new journey. She did not want to go carnivore, but is doing better with the vegetables that are low in fiber, because protein does not bother her.

Another struggle is with young ladies who have trouble with the texture and thought of eating too much meat. I have a 22 year old that struggles with gastroparesis and autoimmune issues and is just more comfortable with a more plant based diet. We have had to go slowly to find the foods that she can tolerate. She was always open to eating eggs and fish. So finding the right mix for her has been a challenge. She texted me that she found out that corn, which had been a mainstay in her diet, was really giving her a lot of trouble. I praised her for figuring this out on her own!

She is a senior biochemistry student and I explained that she needs to treat herself as a N=1 experiment. We are making headway, slowly but surely.

The other difficulty is just a general one. During my journey of teaching and coaching patients, I have found that the biggest hurdle (other than “what about my cholesterol?!?”) in helping one in their journey, is not the food. It’s the other stuff. I heard David Wolfe (@TriggerFree\_RD) say that the diet is only 5% food. I have found this as well. There is so much more to a healthy lifestyle than just a diet. Emotions, habits, social interactions, work, stress, sleep, addictions and activity are just some of the factors that can affect our ability to sustain a healthy lifestyle.

I am still trying to find the path of where my practice will go in the future. We have a weekly group support Zoom meeting for patients that are doing the LCHF lifestyle and that has been very powerful. I plan to create videos for my patients as well. My passion though is childhood obesity and the key to that is to reach parents. Eventually I would like to target school age children to slow the rise of childhood obesity. I am a work in progress.....