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SPEAKERS

Vicky, Lucia Tiffany

Lucia Tiffany 00:06

Well, hi, and welcome to Expert Secrets To Reversing Diabetes health summit. I am so glad that you have chosen to join us today. And I'm really excited that we are going to have a chat with an expert today, who is Vicki Shemer. Vicki is a registered dietitian. And she is currently working in Southern California. But her nutrition journey began in Greece, and it continued here in the USA, and where she works as a clinical and functional dietitian. In that job, she helps her patients to manage diabetes, weight problems, heart disease, and inflammation. And as we discussed today, you're going to see how all of these are pretty closely related. She's been working for over 20 years to use the healing power of whole foods to help with some of her own personal health problems, which included things like gestational diabetes, and postpartum weight. A lot of us as women can relate to that for sure, and other issues. So she loves working with people who want to prevent diabetes, who want to learn how they can eat to reverse diabetes, and keep healthy, learning how to eat mindfully under a variety of circumstances. She's also fluent in Russian and Ukrainian. And so she has a passion to reach clients cross-culturally, inspiring them to introduce more plant-based whole foods into their lifestyle. Why you might say she's taking that angle? Well, let's talk with her now. And ask her some questions. Let her share her expertise with us. So Vicki, I just want to say welcome, and I am so glad that you are here with us today. I would like to know, before we get started into the kind of nuts and bolts and research and all of that, how did you get interested in nutrition and lifestyle approaches to chronic disease?

Vicky 02:06

Thank you so much Lucia. It's an honor to be a part of this wonderful summit that you're putting together to help our communities. So how did they get started? I was young. And I was a single mom. And I was very stressed. And I ended up with a gallbladder dysfunction. And the doctors gave me one solution, just to you know, to make a long story short, they said, remove the gallbladder. And I said to myself, "no, no, there has to be another way. I'm just 25." And I found a dietitian. And she was also a holistic nutritionist. And she within three months, my gallbladder was working again, thanks to plant foods from her diet, which really did wonders to me. And I'm guessing it also helped my stress levels. And you know, some of those

phytonutrients just, you know, came to the rescue. And I said, I was looking at a dietician, and I said, I want to be like her one day. So when I came to the United States, that's what happened. And I believe that also living in Greece, you know, where abundance of Mediterranean fruits and vegetables and that olive oil was, you know, at my doorstep, that also helped me a lot.

Lucia Tiffany 03:24

Oh, that's really interesting, Vicki, so you've had personal experience with having to do some changes in your diet to help with health challenges. That's, that's really great. You know, I think a lot of our audience today, being either someone that's dealing with metabolic syndrome, or pre-diabetes, or some type of diabetes, maybe it's a family member, maybe it's not even themselves. But that means we're all very interested in what are ways that we can address this that isn't just based on popping another pill or taking another shot. So I'm so excited that you're here to share some of those secrets with us today. You mentioned when we talked earlier that there are quite a few risk factors for disease that are related to nutrition. And as we look at things like diabetes, and the very related chronic diseases of obesity and heart disease, tell me how do you see that connection between what we eat and our risk for developing or making these diseases worse?

Vicky 04:28

Yeah, we could probably talk about this all day, but but to put it all, you know, in the format of our discussion today, when I came to the United States, I was amused with variety that's available to us in grocery stores and convenience stores. But at the same time, I was scared when I was reading nutritional labels because I couldn't identify most of those ingredients in And I kept asking my husband who lived in the States. Before that, I said, "what what is all this?" So as I began, you know, studying as a dietitian, I, I was overwhelmed with statistics that were showing to us at the lectures was heart disease, statistics, cancer, diabetes. And that's when it all came together to me, if you know, for me in terms of probably when we're checking out at stores like Target, and seeing all that the abundance of packaged processed foods that you know, kids are so tempted with parents are tempted with, and it just creates that vicious circle, maybe something needs to be changed, maybe something has to be, we need extra education to, to begin, you know that to break in that vicious circle of processed foods, and that pathway to disease and not knowing how to balance our meals during the day or even go back to basics and start cooking more at home.

Lucia Tiffany 06:09

So convenience, processed foods, and sometimes cheap foods. All the as you learned as you were learning more and more about food and our bodies, you were seeing that this was really contributing to a lot of the diseases that we suffer from in this country, weren't you?

Vicky 06:27

Yes, yes. And when I was, you know, doing my final examination at the university, we did research about diabetes, and type one and type two. And it just struck me that out most of, you know, population, our society, do not make that connection between what's in my plate, what's

in my hand, and then the next visit to the doctor. And the next thing I know, I have Metformin prescription,

Lucia Tiffany 07:02

oh, that is so key that there's that real strong connection between what's on our plate and our visits to the doctor. You know, one of the aspects that we hear a lot about some, at least some in the media today is the role of inflammation and how inflammation seems to be tied to so many disease processes, the development of heart disease, things like that. How does inflammation impact us health wise? How does it like increase our risk for diabetes? What can you tell us about that?

Vicky 07:42

Yeah, it's very interesting. And I began, you know, digging deeper into inflammation as I became a registered dietitian, and I was working in the clinical setting. The amount of heart attacks that I've seen, and just cardiovascular disease and strokes, I really wanted to understand how we can intervene it with nutrition. And I became a frequent visitor at a very interesting doctor. His name is Dr. Brewer. He's in Alabama. And he really dives into the nitty gritty of how insulin resistance there is a chain right insulin resistance leads us to inflammatory process and we're talking about chronic inflammation, not an acute inflammation when we cut our finger and it gets red, right? We're talking about chronic inflammatory process. That all that extra glucose that's nodine into our cells, insulin, because we have developed certain degree of insulin resistance right, leads to poor cardiovascular health because that type of glycosylated glycation process can actually lead to plaque in our arteries. So

Lucia Tiffany 09:09

you just get it right. Yes. So you know, it think it's important that we explain that word glycation, because I'm not sure everybody's going to know what that means. We're talking about this glycation is part of that process, part of the result of inflammation or contributes to inflammation. What does that actually mean?

Vicky 09:30

So, um, it's gonna be hard for me to actually, you know, get into the like microbiology of it, but just some, just simple let's say we have a magnet and we have all those little particles of iron, right, sticking with the same thing can happen with all that glucose that's floating around, and that's not being utilized, right, that could actually create arterial plaque if we're insulin resistant.

Lucia Tiffany 10:00

Oh, okay. So, you know, it reminds me of sometimes when I accidentally drop a little bit of fruit juice, like say orange juice on my kitchen floor. And if I don't clean it up right away, it gets like really sticky. You know, you step in it and your shoes go, you know, every time. And that stickiness is from the sugar in the orange juice. So does that stickiness kind of is the same thing that happens when there's too much sugar in our blood, that it makes our organs sticky. It makes our arteries sticky and that contributes to inflammation with would that be like a way to visualize that?

Vicky 10:37

Absent Yeah, I like your analogy better? Definitely. I am a mom of a little boy. So I keep thinking about magnets. But yeah. Yeah, stickiness of the orange juice. So pretty much if you know if there's anything sticky, right, that does the dirt will get sticky to it. Right? So yeah, yeah, definitely. That's the way to explain it. And this doctor, he got me so interested that I ended up taking his course. And this is where I really want to take my patients to understanding how under diagnosed insulin resistance creates that cascade of taking us to inflammatory status, that could lead us to diabetes type two, and cardiovascular disease and strokes. So my goal as a nutrition professional to really educate my patients, especially if there's a diabetes that runs in the family, we really need to take good care and understand how we respond to different foods that we are eating that you know, are at our convenience, right, or maybe fast food places as well, that are everywhere is so much in such abundance, abundance that we don't seem to have any other choice, right for us to find a healthy food restaurant. It's a challenge when we travel versus finding a fast food place. So that that also tells us something. Right.

Lucia Tiffany 12:06

Right. And that is such a pervasive aspect of American culture. So it sounds to me like some foods push this inflammation in our bodies more than others. Is that true?

Vicky 12:19

Absolutely. Any kind of processed foods, and we're talking about processed foods in the United States, we're talking about processed sugar, processed oils that are very high in Omega six, right? Like if we talk about canola oil, corn oil, some some other oils, I mean, I don't know all of them, because I don't use them. But if we don't talk about you know, I would say cold pressed olive oil, then we're probably talking about higher ratio of omega six, which is pro-inflammatory. And we have studies that show that to us, versus lower ratio of omega three, which is anti-inflammatory.

Lucia Tiffany 13:00

Oh, that's a great point right there before you go on and don't lose your thought. So they're different. They're different individuals in the family of fats. They're like Omega sixes in their omega threes. And it sounds like the Omega sixes are more inflammatory. And the Omega threes help to decrease inflammation.

Vicky 13:20

Exactly.

Lucia Tiffany 13:22

Yeah. All right, good. And then it? Am I also making the correct connection that most processed and refined foods tend to be much higher in the Omega sixes and lower in the Omega threes is that?

Vicky 13:34

Yes, that's, that's true. Because if we pick if we pick up a pack of chips, we will see the oil that it was fried, and was it was either canola or safflower sunflower, and we definitely only have a higher rate of domestic. Also, that's something to keep in mind. When we buy french fries from, I guess, McDonald's or other places. I don't know so many other names of the fast food places. But that's, that's what we're gonna deal with. We may be eating it thinking it oh, well, it's food. It's potatoes. But actually, that's something that will cause inflammation response over prolonged periods of time.

Lucia Tiffany 14:12

So can you give us some examples of where we might find more of the Omega threes that will help us with our inflammation and decrease our risk for diabetes, pre-diabetes, metabolic syndrome, all of those sorts of things. Where would we find more omega threes?

Vicky 14:29

Oh, well, definitely, you know, if we're plant-based eaters, we could go to a supplement that's also a vegan supplement, and that would be derived from things like chia seeds, chia seeds, chia seeds, flax seeds, walnuts have good ratio. I actually, you know, when I work with my patients, I always give them a little handout and I say, hey, look carefully, you know, not all the nuts are great, but We also need to understand should they be eating a bowl of nuts? Or should it be? Should they be eating a handful of nuts? Right? So I'm not like I believe, like sunflower seeds, they're a little bit higher in Omega six, right? Even though they're good for us. And we do should, we should incorporate all kinds of nuts and seeds variety in our diet if we can tolerate it. But we should be cautious about that ratio, right? Because if we eat sunflower seeds for breakfast, lunch and dinner for long periods of time, that could create that imbalance. So yeah, definitely. And olive oil like good quality, cold-pressed olive oil, which we could have a whole different talk about how to choose the right olive oil could actually be anti inflammatory, because it has those polyphenols and it has Omega three, it's actually you know, again, everything should be used in moderation. I don't believe that we should be drinking olive oil in shots. But that's that's something you know, to think about and incorporate?

Lucia Tiffany 16:03

Yeah. Do you have like a list you could share with us of foods that will be better for inflammatory reaction or by like, they would really decrease inflammation versus increasing inflammation?

Vicky 16:17

Yeah you know, that's, that's when you know, when I talk to my clients, I always tell them, think about rainbow diet about phytonutrients that are available to us. So we know the colors of the rainbow since we were kids, right? Let's, let's create the same pattern. And it doesn't have to be done in one day. But we can do it when it comes to our weekly menu, right? Because that's easier to plan versus per day. So let me just share my screen very quickly. Here.

Lucia Tiffany 16:46

That's good news that I don't have to eat all the colors of the rainbow in one day. I can spread it out over a week. Right, exactly.

Vicky 16:52

And we have right we have seven colors. We have seven days. We can we can go that way. Right. Okay,

Lucia Tiffany 17:00

That's good. Eat the rainbow. So red and yellow, and orange, and green, and blue, and purple. Oh, all of those colors we want to think about in our food.

Vicky 17:13

Let me just quickly, we're going to we can talk about this later. But I would like to show you this slide right now. So yeah, and it's called phytonutrients to the rescue. So where do we have those phytonutrients that can actually help us to combat inflammation?

Lucia Tiffany 17:32

So I believe the three would be a phytonutrient.

Vicky 17:37

Well, that would be definitely that would be more like a beneficial fatty acid, right? Yeah.

Lucia Tiffany 17:44

So phytonutrient what does that mean?

Vicky 17:46

So phytonutrients are all those like chemicals that we may have, for example, in blueberries, they're called anti cyanide, right or in purple cabbage. So they will, they will help us to reduce the inflammatory response in the body, they could scavenge some of the free radicals that may also be causing, like inflammation in the body or, you know, this is what certain cancers may be caused by as well.

Lucia Tiffany 18:15

So the question, you know, like, if I get ground beef at the market, it's red. So it's got color in it? Does it have phytonutrients?

Vicky 18:24

No, we're going to talk about phytonutrients only when we talk about plants because the Greek word which means phyto, or in Greek, it would call it we'll call it would be called phyto, right? Okay. That means a plant.

Lucia Tiffany 18:41

Oh, so that they you can only get phytonutrients from plants only from

Vicky 18:46

plants? Yes. Hey, that's good. Maybe some disappointment of you know, we cannot get it from beef. And, you know, beef discussion, we're gonna just not touch it right now. Unless you want to, of course,

Lucia Tiffany 19:03

Let's finish talking about phytonutrients. And then maybe we can look a little bit at the animal product piece.

Vicky 19:08

Absolutely. So here's, here's what I would like, you know, for someone who's watching this to take away with them today, and I don't know maybe fill out their grocery cart. If they're going you know, grocery shopping today. Or if they're planning like a New Year's feast with their family. They can have all their favorite things, but on the side, they can also do a family of carotenoids, right that are in carrots, pumpkin, kale, yams, tomatoes, spinach. There is a good group of flavonoids that can help reduce cardiovascular disease by again, decreasing inflammation and we'll talk about beans, legumes, there's a little bit of coffee, apples, onions, ginger. The good news for coffee drinkers, right?

Lucia Tiffany 19:52

And other hand, you know, Vicki, a lot of times I see that well asterisk buy coffee. I think it's a good thing to have there. Because although it may have some phytonutrients, we do have quite a variety of other plant foods that can give us phytonutrients. Without the drawbacks of caffeine, you know, don't get addicted to things like apples and onions generally. So we can get the benefits of phytonutrients even if coffee is a part of our menu, can't we?

Vicky 20:21

Absolutely. And I always you know, I always want to make this point when we're talking about this, you know, general just general factors, okay, here is here is for example, tomatoes and yams and kale. Someone could be allergic to tomatoes, it doesn't mean they should go and start eating them. Right? Someone would have bad response to coffee and in general coffees and addictive substance, we know it right. So we all react differently. It's all should be individually tailored, we should learn how to listen to our body and maybe talk to a specialist to help us to understand exactly how to tailor our diets so we could reach our health goals.

Lucia Tiffany 21:01

Okay, that's good to keep in mind. And then we had one more list one more kind of our family of phytonutrients.

Vicky 21:09

Well, there was there was another slide, but I wanted

Lucia Tiffany 21:13

a ledger at the bottom. We didn't talk about this last group on this slide.

Vicky 21:16

So yeah, glue glucosinolates okay,

Lucia Tiffany 21:21

I'm glad you said it because I wasn't sure how to say it.

Vicky 21:23

Okay, and some people may pronounce it differently. But again, I'm trying to divide it you know, into pronounceable parts, cruciferous vegetables, and, you know, it's it's really amazing what cruciferous vegetables can do for us. There is been a lot of studies coming out lately about sulforaphane. Hmm, I hope I'm pronouncing that correctly, which is, which is a huge part of cruciferous vegetables, like broccoli, and broccoli sprouts. And sulforaphane has been showing amazing effect on on malignant developments in the in human buddy, right.

Lucia Tiffany 22:08

Right. Oh, so that's really very good for preventing cancer, as well as like, seems to be providing all that great fiber and things that directly affect our blood sugar's as well.

Vicky 22:21

So I have a different slide about fiber. So I just too much for mentioning that. Yes, fiber fiber is, I would think it's probably like, I would call it like a weapon number one, when it comes to managing diabetes or preventing diabetes.

Lucia Tiffany 22:42

So let's talk about what are some of the best ways to help us control our blood sugar using food?

Vicky 22:49

Yes, definitely. Let's, first of all, I think that we, since we're talking about it, you know, we're all individually. Or we are all biologically unique, right? We all have, someone may react one way to a bowl of sweet potatoes, and some and someone else's blood sugar may react a different way. Right? So I think monitoring glucose, when we get into, I would say after the age of 45, if there's any kind of overweight or family history, or maybe the lab work is not looking perfectly. I think monitoring glucose is very important. When we talk about, you know, preventions.

Lucia Tiffany

Absolutely.

Vicky

and how we react to different foods, right, and how we combine different foods. So I truly believe in that approach, but definitely having vegetables pretty much at every meal during the day, I would encourage that to do in healthy individuals as well. Right? To kind of I think about it, this is my health insurance, every serving of vegetables. It's a little bit you know, it's a coin in my health insurance jar.

Lucia Tiffany 24:06

Oh, that's such a great image. I love that because it is it's an investment in your health. And I think that, you know, I've heard people say things like, "well, fresh fruits and vegetables are so expensive." because maybe they're more expensive than a carton of mac and cheese. But if you think about it in terms of an investment in your future health, it really changes that paradigm, because a head of broccoli doesn't even compare to a single doctor's office visit does it?

Vicky 24:36

And you know what? I've heard it you're trying to such an important topic right now as well that if only we could foresee the future and how what diabetes does to people's lives eventually when it comes to neuropathy, and eventually amputated toes or limbs. I had patients who when I was giving them a handout to take home how they could you know, improve their Nutrition. But that was after the amputation. They said to me, "I wish I knew this before, why didn't my doctor tell me about this?"

Lucia Tiffany 25:09

Yes, I think that is that is really vital. I think we can stop sharing till we're ready for your next slide.

Vicky 25:15

Yeah. So

Lucia Tiffany 25:18

That's, that's really great. And, and so it sounds like there's a lot of protective factors in plant foods, when it comes to helping us with blood sugars and so on. Did you want to share something with us about managing and working on reversing that kind of journey to reversal using nutrition? What are some of the tips that we could take away from take with us today?

Vicky 25:46

Um, you know,

Lucia Tiffany 25:48

didn't you have a slide on that?

Vicky 25:49

Um, I actually, I do have a slide on that. And that's, um, you know, we, again, I think that everyone will react differently to let me just quickly share my screen. Okay. Okay.

Lucia Tiffany 26:06

And while you're doing that, it, it is important for us to become more aware of how our bodies react to foods, we need to know ourselves, we need to understand that for ourselves. And I think that's really important. Okay.

Vicky 26:23

Definitely. So you know, as, as, as a as a prevention as management of diabetes. And when it comes to reversal, I think, oh, that's when someone wins a lottery when they can reverse their diabetes.

Lucia Tiffany 26:36

and really random, is it really by chance that they reverse their diabetes?

Vicky 26:40

No, no, I don't think so. I think what, what's happening here, it happens when someone is really motivated and dedicated and consistent, huh. And I also think it also depends how far are we gone by, you know, that our pancreas is not efficient anymore, as well, right? So to what degree of our beta cells from pancreas not been functioning and producing the insulin as well.

Lucia Tiffany 27:12

right, we can't always reverse all of the damage we may have experienced from years and years of high blood sugar's. But it's amazing to me how much improvement people can see even if they aren't completely reverse. Like, maybe they need a little bit of medication or a few pills to maintain their blood sugar's it can really affect the amount of complications they have if they get onto a nutritional plan that really helps them support their body's health and healing.

Vicky 27:45

Absolutely, you know, I feel like if, if, as a dietitian, I can help patients to prevent any kind of amputations or neuropathy progression. That's, that's a big win for that patient, you know, and only a patient can make the difference in their health. We're, you know, we're just guides. We're just, we're just helping our patients to navigate what can be done. But actually, we're doing that. So up to the patient. It's all about what am I putting in my grocery cart? What am I cooking today? Oh, what am I ordering when I'm going to the restaurant? Those

Lucia Tiffany 28:22

choice? Personal choice? That's where the power is? Yes, exactly. Yeah. So tell us about these tips.

Vicky 28:30

So yeah, that's that, you know, that's what I tell all of my patients who come to me there with, you know, insulin resistance or weight issues or diabetes. First of all, we always need to look at the labs will always I always encourage, you know, people who even want to prevent diabetes, as we eat, let's say 4550 It's always good to understand how am I responding to this regular foods that I'm eating, whether it's meat and potatoes, or whether it's, you know, a big salad and the steak on the side. It doesn't matter. Let's let's try two weeks and do glucose monitoring, right? And see where where am I sending just like we're doing once a year to general health checkup, right, and we're looking at our lipid panel and we're looking at our, you know, general, metabolic panels. I think that's important. And then after that, I definitely always advise Where do I stand with my vegetables? What what is actually the center of my diet? Is it meat, dairy, is it

I don't know process cereals, is it you know? And from there, this is when I started educating my patients about benefits of plants. So I if someone comes to me and tells me "No, I'm not giving up my steak." That's totally fine. But can we put more vegetables in that plate right? And as we know now and as many quite quite a few studies are showing us that saturated fat when it's really predominant in our diet, it could actually lead us to insulin resistance. And we know where insulin resistance will take us if it's not addressed.

Lucia Tiffany 30:15

Yep, diabetes, heart disease, obesity, Alzheimer's and many more

Vicky 30:19

exactly. Alzheimer's type three diabetes, right? That's what is this whole right now. So I would encourage pretty much anyone who is able to adjust their diet. Let's start with low glycemic plants, and it's everywhere. It's avocado, its broccoli, seeds, legumes, it's, you know, it's fruit, like simple Apple or half cup of blueberries. Institute of functional medicine, one of the practitioners they're recommending this a trip, half cup of blueberries as a medicine in your diet and not as a luxury. Right, right. Or it's something Oh, my God, do I have to go and eat those blueberries? Well, if we're, you know, it's probably easier to eat half cup of blueberries today versus you know, being on Metformin 10 years from now.

Lucia Tiffany 31:11

Exactly. Yeah, prevention is such a key. And so I noticed that you have a classification of low glycemic vegetables. So there's those are vegetables that raise our blood sugar less than certain maybe root vegetables, like potatoes and carrots, is that correct?

Vicky 31:29

He Well, you know what, again, I don't want I would never demonize any of the vegetables. But I think if we're coming from a place of I am pre-diabetes, then it's really worse to start with low glycemic vegetables. And as we heal our body as we heal this inflammatory response, and as we improve our insulin sensitivity, right, I think we can safely move, you know, to the, I actually have a list for my patients, I have a green color column, yellow color column and red color column. And it's in I don't think we can find any vegetables, or well probably just like maybe banana, right? It's going to be a high glycemic index, but then again, are we going to eat that banana that it's overripe or underripe right, so all these little details,

Lucia Tiffany 32:24

right, so for is it part of a bigger meal with fiber and so on? Right,

Vicky 32:28

exactly. And if we're eating our banana, you know, with a small handful of almonds or walnuts, that's gonna make really a big difference and I've seen it in myself, I've seen it in my patients and what are we doing after that meal that we just had I was sitting on the sofa and watching TV and snacking on something else, or are we actually going for a 30 minute walk that will improve our glucose utilization in the body so it really isn't. Yeah, definitely just food

Lucia Tiffany 33:00

but food is so important. And then I noticed here you talk about fiber and how that helps to lower our hemoglobin a one C levels, which is average blood sugars and dairy substitutes so why is dairy an issue I we only have a few minutes but let's Let's just touch on that

Vicky 33:18

just just a quick touch on dairy because I have seen in my patients when they reduce dairy like whole milk, or for example, yellow cheeses and and sometimes they decide we don't want dairy anymore because they did some of their own education. They did some of the reading dairy, it has galactose in it right? So that's that's lactose, right, which is there later on broken down into galactose and glucose molecules. So it's important to understand that it's also sugar. Lactose is also sugar. It's very, it's very low in sugars, but it's still a sugar and the way that modern dairy is being processed and things are being added to it and I just think that as we reduce our lactase which is an enzyme that helps us to deal with you know, dairy when we were kids I think it's worth trying and see where do my blood glucose levels stand when I avoid dairy and where do I stand when I take introduce dairy back?

Lucia Tiffany 34:29

So trialing going without dairy products for one or two weeks might give you some good information on?

Vicky 34:36

Absolutely yes. And I don't think that you know, we grew up we are fully developed adults is dairy and essential nutrients. Even if we look at the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics the dairy glasses on the side right now is not a part of the plate anymore, which I think is definitely a good recommendation in you know, preventing that insulin resistance and being healthier, right? We can absorb calcium from so many other, you know, plant-based sources spinach, arugula, kale there. Almonds, there's so many other good absorbable calcium that are not in dairy.

Lucia Tiffany 35:19

Right? A lot of people I think, worry about that if I don't have dairy, where will I get my calcium. But I think it's so interesting as well, that much of the time, our calcium deficiency comes from the calcium we lose through the high sulfur animal proteins, rather than from a lack of intake, where's, like, our body will recycle calcium. So it's our biggest problem is losing calcium. And we do that as we increase animal proteins in our diet. So it's really interesting, like you say, There lots of other sources of calcium. And if we're not wasting it, we don't even need as much. So our whole, like requirements change based on what we're eating what's on our plate.

Vicky 36:08

And I also think that if we go back to BlueZone diet, right, yes, that shows us Do Do we really need dairy in our lives, we could probably do very well without it. Right? Unless, you know, if something cultural, I tell my patients, you know, their yogurt, their Kiefer's, there's cultured dairy,

that will not give you that big of an impact as drinking, you know, two glasses of milk a day whole milk,

Lucia Tiffany 36:36

right? So there are ways even to increase the quality of what we're taking in, even if we don't completely cut out dairy right away.

Vicky 36:43

And the frequency how frequently we eat that. Yeah, absolutely. Yeah.

Lucia Tiffany 36:47

So before we go, I would really love to hear you address how, what's a like a sustainable way to make changes in our nutrition? Like, maybe I'm looking at my plate, and I realized that maybe I'm not getting enough vegetables or not getting enough fiber or enough phytonutrients? Do I need to throw everything out of my pantry right now? And just, you know, go to the produce section of the store and fill up? Or is there you know, is there a process that can help me with my health, but be something that is going to work for me long term? Like what how would you help someone to figure out what's the next step? Or what's a process I can go through for this?

Vicky 37:29

Just as a quick tip, right?

Lucia Tiffany 37:32

Yeah, just a couple minutes?

Vicky 37:34

Absolutely. Yes. That's a great question. Lucia, and you know, I wish we could answer it and you know, just just in two minutes, but but I would definitely encourage someone who has already stocked pantry with whatever they have. Probably don't throw it away, unless you want to donate it, you know, to like a food pantry or something. And again, I think, start learning how to create a balance in your plate and just just a general rule that we always, you know, try to give it to our patients in our practice. Fill 50% of your plate with vegetables, right? It could be your favorite vegetables. It could be zucchini, it could be broccoli, whatever tastes good to you, right? Dress it with Gaida no lemon drizzle. Oh, good. Yeah, that little bit of olive oil, or some seeds and nuts, or polluted air fryers, they stormed into our life to the rescue. And they made everything so delicious, right? Or you we can even bake vegetables. I lived in Greece, and they just bake their vegetables, they love baked vegetables, you know, and fill 50% of your plate was different colors, vegetables, try and see new things. Maybe your taste buds will like it. It takes about 21 days to change a habit right or get into those new habits. So I think we can start challenging ourselves guy like New Year's coming. Let's see what's going to happen to our to us and see how our energy levels maybe we'll start sleeping better if we will start introducing at least 50% of our dinner and lunch plate to be vegetables.

Lucia Tiffany 39:16

Right? I know there's a term you use sometimes plant forward. Do you want to share with us what that concept is? Yes, yes.

Vicky 39:25

Lucia. So I always you know, some patients told me Oh, you're a plant-based dietitian. Does it mean that I can never eat another egg or another steak? So of course not. I would never say that to any of my patients unless they came to me and they want to become plant based eaters, right? So I help them balance that concept and I help them to understand how to balance their meals in order to get everything that they need, but plan forward is a great way to start as well. Or if someone is transitioning from keto diet for example, right? So flat plan forwards, let's let's start eating more low glycemic foods because people who come from keto family, they're very scared of carbohydrates. So this is how we start introducing low glycemic vegetables, you know, at the bigger amounts, and they find that they actually feel very good with increasing, you know, those low glycemic vegetables.

Lucia Tiffany 40:28

That's great. I don't think we need our slide anymore. Okay. This one anyway. But yes, I like that idea of as you change, you can change by starting to add those vegetables that aren't going to really affect your blood sugar to get more vegetables. And some people that are on keto do do quite a few vegetables, because they're also they can be part of a keto diet. But if they add more of these low glycemic vegetables, how do you encourage them to cut back for example, on the fat?

Vicky 41:06

so again, everyone comes, you know, with their own goals, and when it comes to, again, where the fat is coming from, is it coming from, you know, cheese and eggs, and maybe you know, big steak that's, you know, a size of a whole hand instead of being the size of a palm? So we just tried to balance right, we keep the ratio if you're eating your steak, let's make it grass fed, right? Let's make it pasture-raised that is the size of your palm, right? And some men, they have very big palms, right? By big. And then what about your carbohydrates? Well, we can go to low glycemic carbs as well. We can even go to buckwheat buckwheat is amazing. It's actually it's a berry buckwheat is a berry. So I'm coming from a country of buckwheat Ukraine. And exactly, and we hardly we don't have that much of an epidemic when it comes to cardiovascular disease and diabetes in my country. But we're still eating carbs. So I always tried to, you know, kind of dissipate that myth of all carbs are bad. They're great carbs, even white potato can be good for our gut health, right? Yes, yeah. So we, we slowly work with our patients to get rid of that fear of, you know, carbs. And it's also about how we combine and how we, when we have a sweet craving, we try to give options for that too. Let's eat the fruit first. And if you still craving that dark chocolate, it's okay to have it too. Let's just make better choices when it comes to all this variety that we have in front of us.

Lucia Tiffany 42:50

And that is so true that there's such a variety to pick from, we're not really stuck when we're looking at what can we pick from the plant kingdom to put on our plate?

Vicky 42:59

In California, especially right actually, right?

Lucia Tiffany 43:02

That is very true. And I know we have listeners that are many different places, but many places have varieties of locally available fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, legumes, and they may vary from region to region or country to country. But I have done a lot of traveling and I love going to like the open markets and you know, countries around the world. And it's amazing what you can find in fruits and vegetables and legumes and grains. And, and I just I'm very thankful that God has provided such a variety of tasty and beautiful foods for us to choose from. Almost anywhere we live. There are some extremes like you know, maybe Alaska, northern Alaska and some of the Scandinavian countries. It's hard to get some of those things all year but there are ways. For our last question today, I would like to ask you, what do you think, is the most overlooked truth about optimizing blood sugars and insulin sensitivity? It's something I'm asking each one of our presenters, what do you think is the most overlooked truth? And we know that there's more than one so there's no wrong answer to this

Vicky 44:18

overlooked truth? Oh, gosh, I really don't want to be, you know, talking about how our how patient comes to, you know, general medicine practitioner, with, you know, when it comes to insulin resistance and diabetes, and all they're given is a medication prescription. Instead of, well, here's the medication that I believe you need, but how about you go and see a dietitian or you go and see a registered nurse who specializes in nutrition or at least even Look at what you eat because I have heard it from many of my patients. They said, Why didn't my endocrinologist or whoever was, you know, taking care of their diabetes process, mentioned anything to me. And that's that's I think that's the really sad part. And I think another overlooked truth is that we're not talking about insulin resistance as much as we should be talking about it.

Lucia Tiffany 45:23

And you know, I know we haven't talked about a lot today, but in this series, we have Robbie Barbero joining us, and he's all about insulin sensitivity. So that's the presentation where I think we're all going to be really learning a lot about how insulin sensitivity is such a key and it is an overlooked truth. I totally agree with you, Vicky, it our time has just flown by. And I have really, really appreciated you taking the time to be with us on this summit. I want to say thank you. Thank you and to our listeners. I am so glad that Vicky has brought you some expert secrets today, things that you can implement and go forward with even if it's just putting a few more vegetables on your plate. Every little choice makes a difference. You know, I like to say health is wealth. And with every good choice, you are getting richer. Thank you.

Vicky 46:22

It's a pleasure. Thank you Lucia. Bye bye. Bye bye