

Fuel and Flow

A young woman's
Practical Path to
Wellness



SHANELLE CURTIS
NOURISH ME ABC

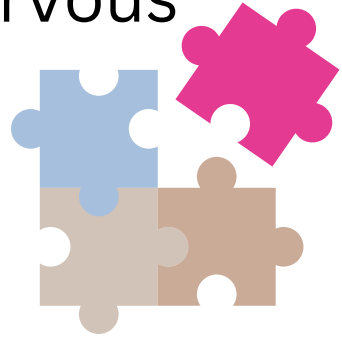
This is to support and guide you if...

- You want to make your health a priority
- You are lacking energy or feel tired in the mornings upon waking
- You experience an energy slump in the afternoon
- You feel uneasy in your body
- You are experiencing gut symptoms
- You have hormonal imbalances
- You are having skin issues
- You have irregular or painful periods
- You have been given a diagnosis of PCOS, endometriosis, or thyroid disease.
- You are confused as to where to start in becoming a healthier version of yourself.

This booklet is intended as a guide to healthy living. The information contained in this book is in no way intended to diagnose or replace medical advice. Please seek advice from a doctor or other specialist if you are experiencing symptoms.

There are **FOUR** key pillars to health

- Wholesome **FOOD** - reset your gut
- Managing **STRESS**-calming your nervous system
- Quality **SLEEP**
- **MOVEMENT**



THESE PILLARS work together like a puzzle for your body in maintaining **GOOD GUT HEALTH, ASSISTING TO BALANCE HORMONES**, and ultimately having **BETTER HEALTH OUTCOMES** throughout your lifetime. If one is out of balance, your whole system can suffer.

Addressing ALL of these four pillars are important to allow your body to re-set and re-balance.

In optimising your health with these key pillars, there are several important steps to take. Let's take a look at what these are...

NUMBER ONE

Master your morning

The morning sets the tone for your day and is an imperative part of your health journey. Become more mindful of the choices you make to start your day by focusing on the following steps.

STEP ONE:

Morning light - One of the most important things you can do for your health is to go outside and get natural light within the first half hour of waking. This first dose of natural light signals to your body it's time to be awake and alert, and regulates your circadian rhythm. It is essential for energy, hormone production, and importantly, sets you up for a good night's sleep. Try this simple step of getting outside first thing in the morning for a few weeks and see a noticeable improvement in your energy levels throughout the day, and your sleep quality.



STEP TWO:

Hydrate with purpose - After hours without hydration, your body craves replenishment. It cannot function effectively without it.

Begin with a warm drink that soothes and awakens the body. Warm or room-temperature water is better for your body first thing rather than cold. Warm water with lemon and ginger for VitC and to aid digestion, or a bone broth rich in collagen, amino acids and minerals is a great choice for those struggling with gut issues.

Sometimes, water isn't enough, so replacing electrolytes in the morning with a big pinch of sea salt in your warm water will help your body absorb water more readily, leading to significant benefits for your energy levels throughout the day. You can also try coconut water for natural electrolytes and minerals. Experiment and see what you enjoy most.

STEP THREE:

Morning movement – This is more about connecting with your body and tuning in to how your body feels. Some days it may be gentle movement in the morning and more intense movement later on, and other days you may have more energy for a full workout first thing in the morning.

Gentle could mean a short walk around the block, a dance to your favourite song, or a few moments of light yoga or stretching. You don't always have to start your day with a full workout, so go with what feels right for your body. Consistency is key to sustaining these healthy habits. Little habits, day in and day out, make enormous changes in the long-term. A routine each morning can help you sustain healthy habits. Try to wake around the same time each day and have some key habits in place that you aim to do every day.

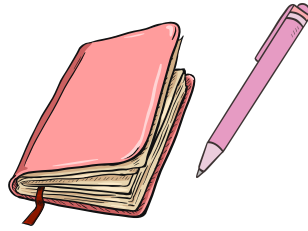
For teens and young women who are struggling with hormonal imbalance or feel anxious upon waking, starting your day with an intense workout can raise your cortisol levels, and be counterproductive. Everybody is different, so don't compare your routine to others. Do what feels right for you, your body and the stage of life you are in right now.

If you choose to do a full workout or have a sport first thing, it is important to fuel your body beforehand to help balance hormone production. This doesn't have to be a full breakfast; however, nourishing your body with at least a small snack before an intense workout sends a signal of safety to your body. This is vitally important for nervous system regulation and thus helps to balance hormone production. If you haven't had breakfast beforehand, be sure to have a sustaining breakfast containing protein to help refuel your body afterwards.



STEP FOUR:

Plan your day to help keep stress and cortisol levels down -



Take a few minutes to plan your day and get your head around what is really important to check off today. If you feel you don't have time for this in the morning, you can plan the night before.

Dot down 2-3 things you need to get done, and perhaps something you would like to get done if you have time. Be realistic about how long things may take you, and what you can easily fit into your day.

Rushing or creating endless to-do lists is not productive and puts your body into a sympathetic (fight-or-flight) state, raising cortisol levels and impacting other hormones in your body.

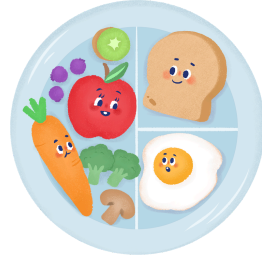
If you can fit in 10-20 minutes of meditation or breathwork here, it is a perfect way to calm your body for the day ahead. Use an app such as 'Insight Timer' or 'Calm,' which have quick and effective guided meditations and breathwork.

TIP!

It may seem like a lot to fit into your morning, however HABIT STACKING is a great way for new habits to feel easier to implement and more sustainable - for example pair your morning light with drinking your morning beverage, or get both movement and light in with a short walk around the block. A habit tracker can work well to keep you motivated to maintain a few healthy habits each morning.

NUMBER TWO - FOOD to fuel and nourish your hormones

FIRSTLY - Let's look at how we address the food piece of the puzzle.



LATER, we will explore the other crucial factors contributing to your health. Be mindful that your nervous system is a big driver when it comes to your body making the most of the food you are eating. If you are feeling anxious, always rushing, or in a heightened emotional state, your body will find it difficult to properly digest and utilise all the good food you are putting into it.

Focus on these nutritional guidelines...

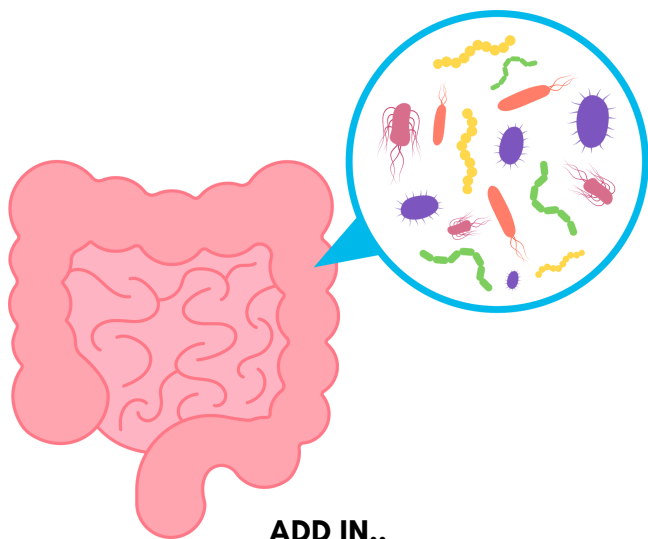
- Eat mainly **whole foods** (as close to their natural state as possible)
- Eat a diet rich in **colours and diversity** of plant foods - nuts, seeds, fruits, vegetables and wholegrains.
- Eat adequate **fibre**
- Include **lean proteins** from good-quality meat or an alternative such as tofu or tempeh.
- Ensure you add **healthy fats** to your diet.

The following pages will explore these foods more in depth.

It is always more about what you **ADD** to your diet, rather than what you **TAKE OUT**! The more nourishing food you add to your diet, the more you will crowd out the less healthy options.

How do we know we are eating well?

Wholesome food - for a healthy gut



ADD IN..

COLOUR :

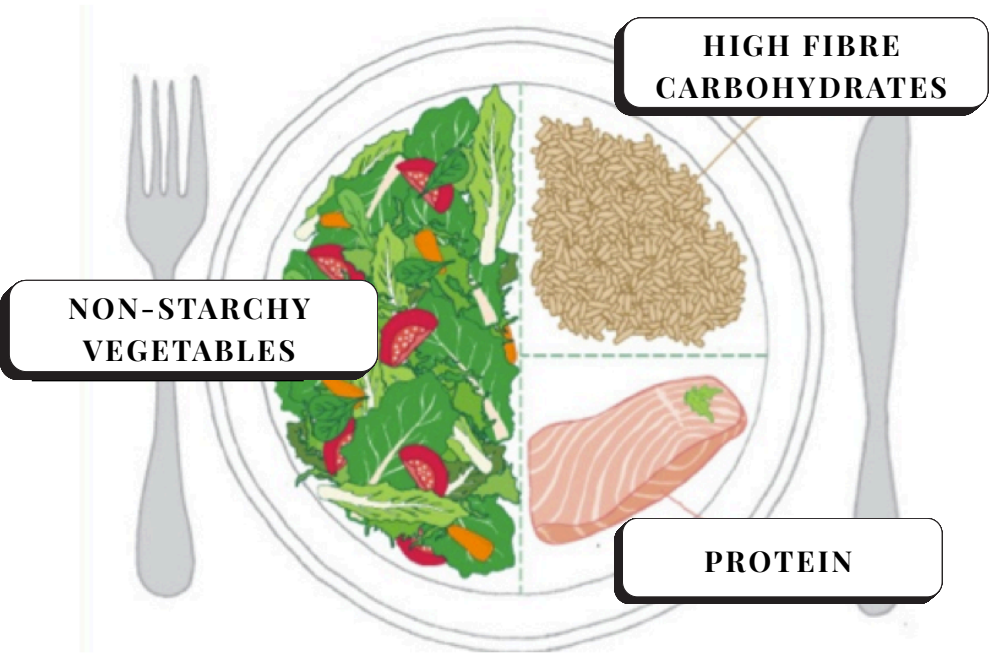
Every different colour of plant-based food adds diversity to your gut microbiome and feeds a different part of your gut flora. This allows your good gut bugs to thrive, and crowds out the bad gut bugs.

Think about your gut as a garden. The more of the good food you eat, the more it thrives. Eating the rainbow, including lots of greens as well as vegetables and fruits in a variety of different colours, is the best way to add diversity.

DIVERSITY:

Every wholesome food you add means you are feeding more of your good gut bugs. Feeding more good guys allows them to multiply and leaves less room for the bad gut bugs. This ensures more balance in the gut and improved health outcomes all round.

The balanced plate - Use this as a guide



AS WELL AS THE ABOVE, healthy fats are sprinkled throughout your plate. Examples are olive oil, nuts, seeds or avocado.

High fibre carbohydrates can include any wholegrain, beans, legumes, chickpeas, or high-carb vegetable such as sweet potato, pumpkin, corn, beetroot, parsnip, or peas.

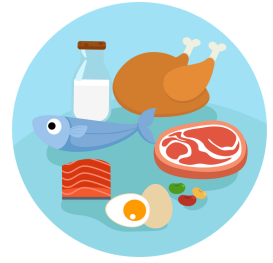
Your plate does not have to look exactly like this. It is simply a guide as to how much of each macro and micronutrient your meal should contain. See the following pages for examples of foods from each category.

Stock up on these foods to give you good quality...

Protein

Animal products...

- Lean cuts of meat – beef, lamb, pork
- fish (fresh or canned, preferably wild-caught)
- eggs
- dairy (milk, yoghurt, cheeses such as cottage cheese are high in protein, whey)



Plant-based foods...

- Seeds – hemp, chia, pepitas, flaxseed, sunflower, pinenuts
- quinoa
- buckwheat
- nutritional yeast
- soy products such as tempeh, tofu, edamame beans and soy milk/yoghurt.
- nuts (almonds, cashews, brazil, walnuts, pecans, pistachios)
- nut butters

Typically we don't think as vegetables as being a form of protein but many of them have proteins that can be paired with a variety of other plant-based foods to create a balanced diet. So go ahead and load up your plate with a variety of vegetables.

Proteins come in the form of **complete** or **incomplete** proteins. Complete proteins contain all nine essential amino acids. Incomplete proteins only contain some of the essential amino acids. Our body needs **all nine essential amino acids** from protein every day.

All animal products contain ALL nine amino acids. Combine non-complete proteins from plant-based sources over the day to get your quota.

If you are vegan, vegetarian or prefer a predominantly plant-based diet, it is essential to combine a variety of the above plant-based foods to ensure you get all nine of these amino acids from protein every day.

Stock up on these foods to give you good quality...



Fats

Monounsaturated fats such as...

- olive oil
- avocados
- nuts (almonds, peanuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamias, pecans, pistachios, pinenuts)
- seeds (flax, hemp, sunflower, pepitas, sesame)
- fish

Polyunsaturated fats such as...

- sunflower seeds
- tahini (sesame seed paste)
- oily fish such as salmon, mackerel, sardines, and anchovies.
- walnuts
- flaxseeds

TIP

We should focus primarily on getting Monounsaturated and Polyunsaturated fats into our diet.

Saturated fat still plays a part, but we should be careful not to overconsume it. Examples include fatty cuts of meat, butter, cheese, and coconut oil/milk/cream. Processed/fried foods are also a source of saturated fat. These should be kept to a minimum.

Stock up on these foods to give you good quality...

Carbohydrates

Distinguishing between refined and unrefined carbohydrates is important. Rather than refined carbohydrates such as white pasta, rice and breads, concentrate on high-carbohydrate vegetables, fruits, and whole grains such as...



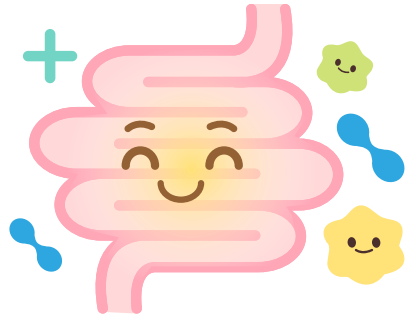
- High carbohydrate vegetables – potatoes, sweet potatoes, corn, peas, pumpkin, parsnips
- Beans such as cannellini, black beans, kidney beans, lima beans, butter beans
- Lentils
- Chickpeas
- Wholegrains such as brown rice, quinoa, buckwheat, amaranth, barley, soba noodles, oats, wholegrain breads and cereals
- High carbohydrate fruits – bananas, mangos, grapes, pineapple and dried fruits

The blood regulation section of this book will explain carbohydrates in further detail.

What your gut needs...

THE THREE P's

- Prebiotics
- Probiotics
- Postbiotics



Prebiotics are typically high-fibre foods that contain simple, non-digestible carbohydrates. They serve to feed and nourish the good bacteria in your gut and hence positively modify the environment of the gastrointestinal tract.



Probiotics are living bacteria that are beneficial to the gut. They assist to diversify and colonise the gut, and in turn can help to reduce the bad, harmful bacteria.

It is best to concentrate on getting your probiotics from food, however a good probiotic supplement can also be of benefit.

A balanced ratio of good to bad bacteria in your gut is 80%-20%

Postbiotics are short-chain fatty acids produced by beneficial bacteria in your gut.

Eating a high fibre-rich diet full of diversity and colour is key. Adding foods into your diet that are high in RESISTANT starch bypass digestion in the small intestine and assist in fueling these SCFAs.

Prebiotic food list

- Garlic, onions, and leek
- Cooked and cooled green apple
- Asparagus and artichoke.
- Foods high in **RESISTANT STARCH** that feed our microbiome -
- Green bananas
- Oats
- Rye
- Lentils and legumes
- Cooked and cooled potato, rice and pasta (ok also if you reheat)
- Good quality bread that has been cut and frozen

Probiotic food list

Some probiotic foods are...

- Fermented vegetables such as kimchi or sauerkraut
- Sourdough
- Fermented dairy such as kefir
- Fermented cheese
- Natural yoghurt
- Fermented soy products such as Miso or Tempeh
- Kombucha

Not all products are created equal, and some products have cultures added at the end of production. This does not give you the same benefits as the live cultures occurring naturally during fermentation. Look out for words such as RAW, ACTIVE, LIVE or UNPASTERISED.

If you do not normally eat fermented foods, add them to your diet slowly. Your gut can take a little while to get used to them. They can also worsen symptoms if you have gut-related issues. If so, these foods may not be for you just yet. If you have ongoing gut issues, it is advisable to see a naturopath or a nutritionist who can work with you to do targeted testing and specific gut protocols.

In short ...

PREBIOTICS feed PROBIOTICS (the good gut bugs) and produce POSTBIOTICS (Short-chain fatty acids)

All play a critical role in maintaining our gut health.

PREBIOTICS → PROBIOTICS → POSTBIOTICS

Some of the main reasons your gut may be out of balance that relate to nutrition are...

- Eating a diet with too much sugar and/or too many highly processed foods
- Eating a diet that does not contain enough diversity or colourful plant-based foods
- Eating a diet low in fibre
- Food intolerances. Gluten and dairy are common; however, any food can cause intolerances to an individual, depending on their unique microbiome. Listening to your body and how you feel after consuming different foods is very important here. Keeping a food diary may be necessary to see patterns of particular foods.

Nutrition is a major part of feeling well and regulating hormones; however, it is not the only reason that our health can suffer.

Other reasons your gut may be out of balance aside from the food equation...

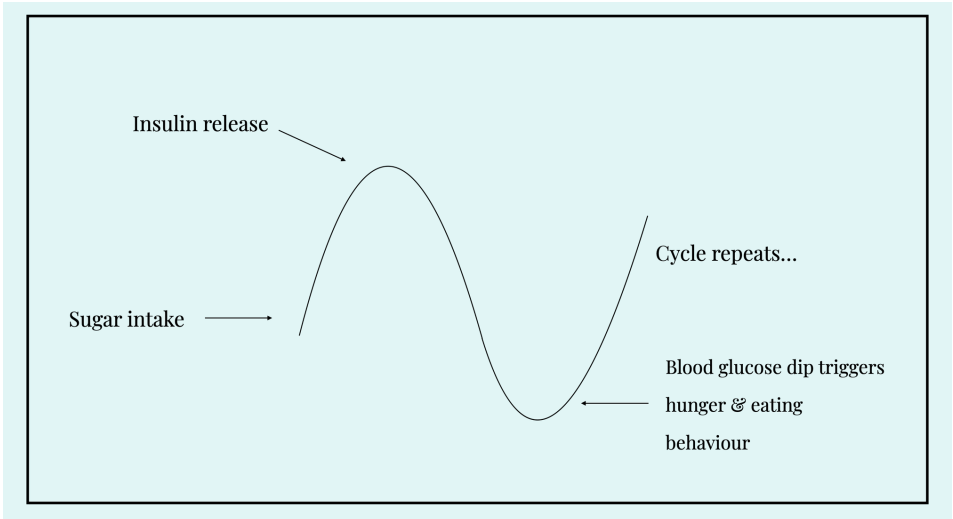
- Chronic stress (ongoing day-to-day stress or major life events)
- Poor sleep quality
- Medications (past or present)
- Infections or pathogens in the gut
- Overload of toxins from things such as mould exposure and other environmental toxins, cleaning products, or self-care products



NUMBER THREE - Regulating blood sugar levels

Keeping blood sugar regulated and therefore keeping the insulin hormone from being over-activated is vitally important in maintaining good health outcomes.

Insulin is a hormone that is released into the bloodstream to decrease blood sugar levels. Eating a diet high in refined sugars or simple carbohydrates over-activates this hormone, leading to a myriad of hormone imbalances and health challenges.



What to do to keep blood sugar levels in check -

1. Choose complex carbs over simple carbs - ensures a much more stable blood sugar level and will help the body to avoid excess insulin release. (See note below on complex vs simple carbohydrates.)
2. Eat adequate protein (a good rule to follow is 1g of protein per kg of body weight per day) e.g 70grams of protein if you weigh 70kgs - this helps slow down digestion and lessen the intensity of the blood sugar rollercoaster, hence less stress on your body.
3. Consume healthy fats - they help to regulate hormones, absorb certain vitamins, and reduce inflammation, having a positive effect on our blood sugar levels.
4. Reset your nervous system if you suffer from anxiety, a busy mind, or the tendency to 'have to do all the time' High cortisol raises blood sugar levels.

Consume Complex carbohydrates instead of simple carbohydrates-

Both simple and complex carbohydrates are turned to glucose for the body to burn as energy, HOWEVER the difference is that in complex carbohydrates the sugar molecules are strung together in long, complex chains meaning they are not absorbed into the body as fast and don't spike blood sugar dramatically. They also provide vitamins, minerals and fibre that is essential for a well-functioning gut.

Simple carbohydrates found in refined sugars and processed foods have little to no nutritional value, and spike blood sugar leading to a bigger crash on the other side. This means more cravings and a reliance on more of these foods to keep energy levels up.

Remember, we do not want these big highs and lows consistently happening throughout the day as it leads to more insulin being secreted, imbalanced hormones, and poorer health outcomes.



NUMBER FOUR-

Managing stress

It is unreasonable to expect that we are going to eliminate stress from our lives; however, we can learn to manage stress and become more stress-resilient. It is natural for our body to respond to stressful circumstances, however being stress resilient means that our bodies are more able to return to a state of balance quickly and efficiently.

The micro-habits mentioned above in your morning routine will be extremely helpful in balancing your nervous system. Habits such as having a warm drink first thing, getting natural light, and putting your feet on the grass all seem insignificant; however, they are some of the easiest ways to calm your nervous system for the day ahead.

Other ideas for nervous system regulation include...

- Mindfulness activities such as meditation or breathwork
- Writing in a journal
- Exercise that you enjoy
- Spending time in nature as often as possible
- Grounding - taking off your shoes and standing on the earth or grass
- Chiropractic - find a woman's chiropractor who is knowledgeable about the Vagus nerve
- Kinesiology or intuitive healing- these modalities can help address emotional imbalances, current or past traumas
- A psychologist who can help you process thoughts and assist in applying helpful strategies
- Spending quality time with family and friends
- Prioritising a small amount of time in your day to sit without any distractions

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Shanelle is a certified nutrition, health and wellness coach specialising in women's health. She has three daughters of her own, two teenagers and one now an adult. She spent over two decades in education, and after battling many autoimmune conditions and cancer, made the transition to nutrition, guiding others to stay well through a prevention rather than cure approach.

COME AND SAY HI 

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