

# MN Health Plans Collaborative

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## Today's Presenter

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**Presenter: Lauren Plunkett, RDN LD CDCES**

- Lauren is a registered dietitian and certified diabetes care & education specialist with over 31 years of personal experience living with type 1 diabetes. Her professional experience includes pediatric endocrinology, performance nutrition, and diabetes health coaching with expert knowledge in Continuous Glucose Monitoring. In addition to her private practice, she serves as a writer, public speaker, indoor cycling instructor, and authored the award-winning book, *Type One Determination*. A cornerstone of Lauren's outspoken work is educating individuals on the benefits of plant-based nutrition for preventing and improving chronic conditions. She is also one of the hosts of *The Green Glow Lifestyle Podcast*. You can learn more about working with her at [www.lpnutritionconsulting.com](http://www.lpnutritionconsulting.com)

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# Nourishing the Mind and Body: Affordable Nutrition Approaches for Diabetes and Depression

Lauren Plunkett RDN LD CDCES

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## Presenter



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## Learning Objectives

1. Understand the relationship and opportunities between diabetes, depression, and nutrition.
2. Identify how your role supports people living with diabetes who have health goals and nutrition challenges.
3. Learn practical, affordable nutrition strategies to support mental and physical health in clients coping with both conditions.

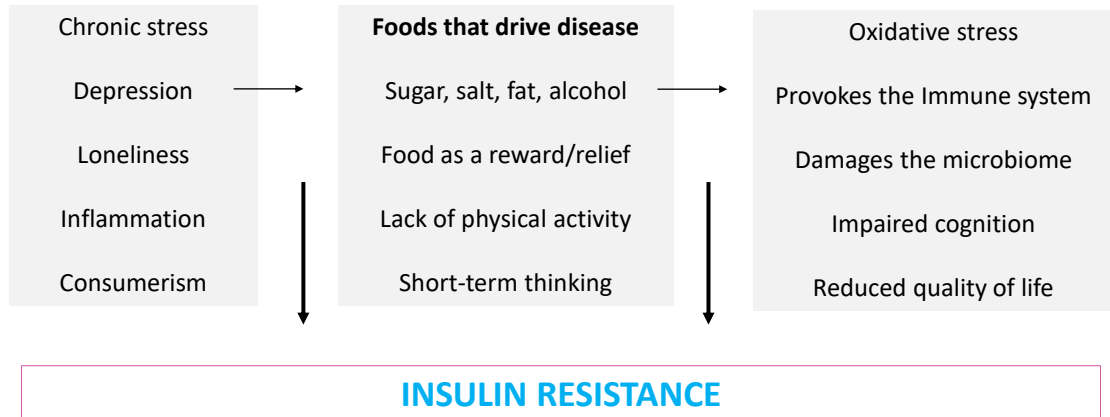
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Today, we will examine emotional challenges  
often experienced by PWD  
*to initiate nutrition strategies that can  
improve insulin sensitivity and quality of life.*

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## Why Are Americans Struggling?

Certain lifestyle choices increase the risk of developing metabolic syndrome.



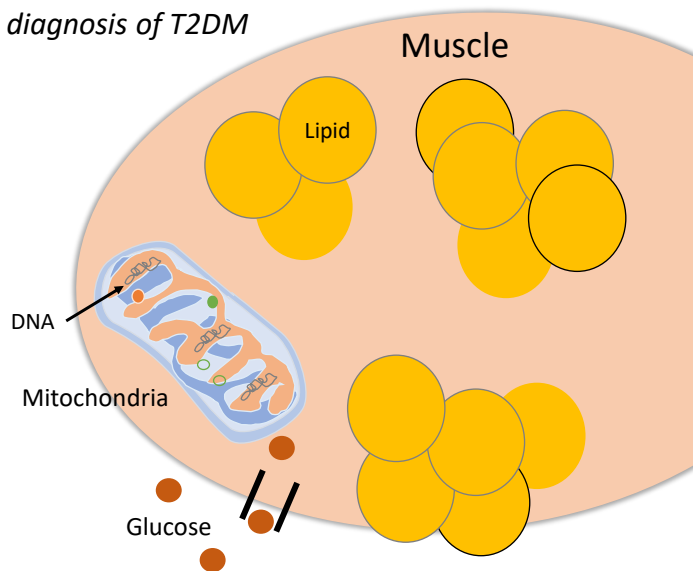
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## What is Insulin Resistance?

An Intra-myo-cellular event leading to a diagnosis of T2DM

- Lipids (fatty acids) enter the blood  
*food source: dietary fat, saturated fat*
  - Lipids enter the liver & muscles → →
    - Where we do not want them!
    - Tissues become inflamed
    - Beta cells become toxic/lipotoxic
- \*beta cells make insulin in the pancreas

**QA: What hormone MUST glucose have to enter our cells?**



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# Western Diets & Chronic Disease

*Food is often calorie-dense as opposed to nutrient dense.*

## High in nutrient-poor fast foods.

- Convenience driven society + snacks.

## High intake of added sugars.

- Soda, sweets, candy, and pastries.

*\*Half the calories from chips and pastries come from fat.*

## Excessive intake of saturated fats.

- Oils, fried foods, meats, dairy, eggs.

**Low in fiber.** Diet fads and fear of fruits, vegetables, legumes, and whole grains.

**High sodium content.** Repetition trains our brain to crave a combo of salt, fat, and sugar.

**Large portion sizes and frequent overeating.** Restaurants normalize gluttony and organize their menus protein and fat forward (while vegetables are an oily \$15 side item).

*\*TV shows glamorize excessive protein intake, overeating, and binge drinking.*

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## Lifestyle Therapy

*Addresses habits and opportunities : acceptance, commitment, and accountability*

Lifestyle medicine focuses on prevention and root causes of disease.

### Evidence-based lifestyle therapeutic approaches include:

- plant-predominant whole foods
- regular physical activity
- adequate sleep
- stress management
- avoidance of risky substances
- positive social connections

### **Medical Nutrition Therapy**

considers mental and emotional wellbeing related to food choices

**Counseling – Coaching - Communication**

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## Lifestyle Medicine: A Brief Review of Its Dramatic Impact on Health and Survival

Bodai B., et al. *The Permanente Journal* (2018)

**“80% of the population wants to live in a better state of health *but doesn’t know how to pursue it.*”**

- **Diabetes Management:** Adopting lifestyle interventions can improve insulin sensitivity, with some patients achieving remission of type 2 diabetes.
- **Mental Health Benefits:** therapeutic lifestyle techniques are associated with decreased symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- **Healthcare Cost Reduction:** By focusing on prevention and reversal of chronic diseases, lifestyle medicine can lead to significant reductions in healthcare spending.

### What is type 2 diabetes remission?

A1C less than 6.5% without diabetes medications for 3 months

### CDC Reports as of 2023

- 60% rise in depression over the last decade
- 1 in 5 adults have been diagnosed with either depression or anxiety

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## What Do GLP-1 Medications do?

Combine appetite suppression with \*glucagon receptor activation

### Glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1 RA) receptor agonists

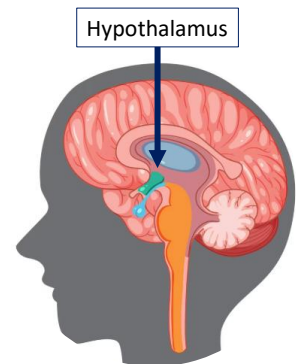
- receptors play a role in regulating blood sugar by stimulating insulin
- receptors suppress glucagon secretion to lower blood sugar
- receptors in the brain promote weight loss via the hypothalamus

\*Hypothalamus is the satiety center - hunger, thirst, sleep, mood

- enhanced feelings of fullness including poor appetite and discomfort
- delayed gastric emptying → feeling full sooner resulting in smaller portions

\*Glucagon is a hormone that is released to prevent low blood sugar

\*The hypothalamus is one part of the “pleasure center” in the brain



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The World Health Organization

How?

*Lifestyle changes*  
are the best way to  
prevent or delay  
the onset of  
type 2 diabetes



*Insulin sensitivity*  
*supports metabolic*  
*health by reducing risk*  
*and delaying disease*  
*progression*

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# The *Link*

## Between Diabetes, Depression and Nutrition

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Which came first, the diet or depression?



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## Mental Health

*Diabetes and depression each increase risk and severity of the other.*

### **Depression reduces motivation and consistency**

medication use, glucose monitoring, diet, physical activity, quality of life, and appointment attendance.

### **Symptoms differ across lifespan**

—younger adults may experience more emotional distress, while older adults may show cognitive or somatic symptoms.

### **Nonpharmacologic treatment are beneficial**

Interventions like cognitive-behavioral therapy, exercise, and stress reduction improve both mood and glycemic outcomes.

Collaboration between diabetes care and mental health services is vital for improving overall outcomes in patients with diabetes and depression

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## The Emotional Depth of Diabetes

**People with diabetes (PWD)** - the consequences of pessimism, hypercriticism, & comparison to others:

- Declining physical & mental health
- High rates of depression, anxiety and burnout
- Disordered relationship with food
- Medication avoidance
- Isolation

Chronic anxiety can lead to depression  
Conversely, **depression can increase anxiety**

### A Range of Feelings

- Diabetes distress
- Isolation
- Disabled
- Distrust
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Obsession with control
- Perfectionism
- Self-worth tied to data
- Failure

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## Emotional Health

*Diabetes distress can be the greatest barrier*

1. ↑ inflammation
2. ↑ insulin resistance & blood glucose
3. ↑ blood pressure & heart disease risk
4. Weakened immune function
5. Disrupts sleep, appetite, and exercise patterns
6. Impairs mental health and self-care behaviors

**Food for thought:**

*is your stress mostly acute or chronic?*



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# Microbial Diversity & Intestinal Integrity

*The environment inside of you – The Microbiota*

- Gut microbiota is one of the key components in human health including metabolism.
  - influenced by genetics, health status, lifestyle, environment, antibiotics, and culture
- Biota diversity of the digestive tract strengthens the immune system.
- Diets high in either fat or sugar can impair cognition in humans.
- *Short Chain Fatty Acids* provide the widest range of disease fighting microbes.

## Disturbances in microbiota composition cause dysfunction

IBD, autoimmune disorders, depression, anxiety, obesity, cognitive disorders, eating disorders, migraines, anger.

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## Short-Chain Fatty-Acid-Producing Bacteria: *Key Components of the Human Gut Microbiota*

Fusco. W., et al. *Nutrients*. 2023

“One of the most relevant therapeutic pathways of microbiome modulation includes the restoration of the levels of short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs), microbial metabolites that are essential for human health.”

### Gut-brain-axis

Research indicates that gut microbiota can help regulate brain function through the gut-brain-axis

*What we absorb internally and externally influences metabolic health.*

*Consuming allergens and poor quality food persistently challenges intestinal integrity.*

**So, how do we consume more SCFAs??**

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## RESEARCH SAYS: *Eat More Plants!*

### **Lower inflammation with FIBER → SCFAs**

vegetables, fruit, legumes, whole grains, nuts and seeds

- critical for regulating blood lipids and glucose metabolism
- reduction of compounds linked to cardiovascular disease
- food sources of SCFAs provide a range of antioxidants and vitamins

### **Prebiotics** do not break down - this bacteria grows and thrives

- Veggies, fruit, beans, whole grains
- Supplements are available, not necessarily better

### **Probiotics** are live microorganisms that feed on prebiotics

- Fermented foods, *sauerkraut*, *kombucha*, *miso*, *some pickled foods*
- Supplements are available, not necessarily better



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**How to Support People  
Living with Diabetes to  
Engage in Health Goals**

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## Reframing Objections

*Statements often begin with: “I don’t”, “I hate”, “I can’t”*

- Objections are often self-limiting beliefs and important to address
- Discussions need to revisit objections routinely

Healthy food is too expensive	→	<i>Can you tell me which foods you want to buy that seem out of your budget?</i>
I don’t cook or know how	→	<i>Do you have a microwave at home? How comfortable are you with frozen and canned foods?</i>
My family won’t eat healthy food	→	<i>It sounds like you really want your family to support you – can you tell me more about how you eat as a family?</i>

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## Reframe self-blame: *mindset coaching*

*“I can’t lose weight.” (failure)*

*“I’m so bad with food.” (distress)*

*“My parents are diabetic; I’m doomed.” (hopelessness)*

*“My A1c is bad. Diabetes sucks.” (seeking confirmation)*

***“Negative language drives poor outcomes”***

Dickinson, JK., et al. *Diabetes Care*. 2017

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## What if you have a bad day?

Stressful day at work.  
 Skipped lunch.  
 8 voice mails from your family.  
 Over an hour stuck in traffic.  
 Missed your favorite class at the gym.  
 And you need gas.



Food for thought: (Conversation starters)

1. Do your emotions drive your appetite?
2. Are you an all or nothing thinker?
3. Do you shame yourself about food choices?
4. What is your hunger like on a stress-free day?



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## External Influences → Internal Blame

How do we break free from negative influences to make way for new habits?  
*Help your patients see the problem and create solutions together*

**Determine *boundaries* about what you allow to influence you.**

- social media, podcasts, apps, food rewards programs, family food choices
- establish a nutritional moral compass
  - declare what you are willing and *not* willing to put into your body

### Education & Discussion

1. grocery lists and home kitchen assessment
2. create your own weekly *menu and movement* calendar "M&M"
3. focus on abundance of nutrients rather than restriction
4. anti-inflammatory foods that promote healing and insulin sensitivity

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# Reframing Nutrition Language

## “Eat low carb”

- results in high protein & saturated fat intake
- portions of fat & protein are undetermined
- sugar cravings often increase; shame sets in
- Nutritional confusion – *veggies ARE carbs!*

## “Eat more protein”

- increases calories from meat, eggs, dairy and often oil (zero fiber foods)
- increases intake of inflammatory foods; decreases disease fighting foods
- protein is individually based; age, activity level, desired body weight

## “Eat more plants, Eat more fiber”

- Addition of foods rather than subtraction
- Eaters focus on food quality & colors
- Increases variety & nutritional value
- Food as energetic nourishment
- Biodiversity expanded

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# Identifying fiber-rich foods

## ZERO FIBER FOODS

- Meat
- Dairy
- Eggs
- Oil
- Pastries
- Chips
- Syrup



**Pastries:** a food made from a mixture of flour and water with a **high fat content**



Language check!

## FIBER-RICH CARBOHYDRATES

- Fruit
- Legumes/beans
- Vegetables
- Whole grains
- Nuts
- Seeds



**Whole Foods Plant-Based:** grown & harvested from soil

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## A Twist of Perspective

Introducing “revelation work” and developing a positive passion

### Visualization

If you woke up tomorrow in your ideal state of health

- what would you look like?
- what would you feel like?

Help your patients **SEE**  
the changes they want

### Reframing Lifestyle Activities

- excitement about the daily pursuit
- small and achievable wins
- “feel good factors” reminders

**“80% of the population wants to live in a better state of health but doesn’t know how to pursue it”**

### Encourage self-awareness

*diabetes can teach us more about ourselves than we’ve ever had the chance to learn before.*

- meditation
- emotional outlets
- support groups for reflection
- develop barriers and standards

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**Affordable Nutrition  
Strategies that Support  
our Health Holistically**

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# High fiber intake reduces the \*risk of type 2 diabetes by 20-30%

\*reduce insulin resistance = reduce risk

Weickert MO, Pfeiffer AFH. *J Nutr*. 2018

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## Fiber foods categories

LEGUMES	WHOLE GRAINS	VEGETABLES	MORE VEGGIES & FRUITS	NUTS & SEEDS
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Grocery Lists can be saved and delivery is often an option.

*Foods can be budgeted by food group rather than by macronutrient.*

Walmart.com

Target.com

Plantstrong.com

Aldi

IN THE FRIDGE	IN THE PANTRY
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## Quick Start Fiber Foods List

Grain bowls • veggie tacos • stir fry • bean chili • green smoothies • soup & salad • food prep & microwave chef

Bran flakes	All the beans*	Bean or wheat-
Oats	All the lentils*	based pasta
Wild rice	Peanuts	Banana
Quinoa	Almonds	Squash
Barley	Chia seeds	Artichokes
Farro	Flax seeds	Beets
Grain blends	Pumpkin seeds	Asparagus
Broccoli	Whole grain blends	Berries
Cauliflower	Whole grain tortilla	Apples
Brussels sprouts	Baby red potatoes	Pears
Bell peppers	Sweet potatoes	Oranges
Dark leafy greens	Carrots	Avocado
Cabbage	Green Peas	Popcorn (low-fat)
Peach	Mango	Wasabi peas

### Flavor is important

- Herbs
- Spices
- Savory or Sweet
- Hot or cold (raw)

### STRATEGY

- Determine your daily food budget
- Shop at multiple locations for deals
- Stock canned and frozen foods
- Buy fruit in season
- Start a small garden at home
- Store a grocery list on your phone

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## LET'S GO SHOPPING *communication techniques*

### Set up the kitchen for success

- Where do you grocery shop?
  - do you make a list?
  - How do you choose what to buy?
- What is your food philosophy?
- Do you like to cook?
- Does your family eat together?
- How do you plan meals for work?
  - Do you get breaks to eat?

*Can I help you make a grocery list based on the foods we talked about?*

### Goals of effective communication

- Break down the steps for small changes
- Shows empathy for personal life
- Celebrates strengths and effort
- Encourages taking realistic actions
- Shared problem solving
- Food Swaps for healthier items
  - Add fiber-rich foods
  - Add sugar-free beverages

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# Habit Tracking Tools

*For accountability and staying within budget*

## Menu & Movement Planning (M&M)

### Individual or family meal organization for all to see

- general outline of meals to rotate
- nutrition goals are heard and acknowledged
- picky eaters are included, not catered to

### Weekly division of responsibility

- who is grocery shopping, cooking, cleaning up

### Movement milestones

- walking after meals, class reminders
- celebrate active days after 1 month ✓

## Meal Prep

- budget by following the weekly menu
- only purchase the necessary ingredients
- *cook once eat twice theory!*



*DOLLAR TREE white boards*



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# Reviewing the Pillars of Lifestyle Medicine

*Therapeutic interventions*



American College of Lifestyle Medicine

- Nutrition is often the problem and the solution in diabetes care. Solutions-based language leads to positive outcomes.
- Be prepared to pivot to other lifestyle pillars based on patient progress or concerns.
- Circle back to previous goals and check in on healthy coping strategies.

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## Free Resources

The American College of Lifestyle Medicine  
[lifestylemedicine.org](http://lifestylemedicine.org)

ADCES  
[diabeteseducator.org](http://diabeteseducator.org)

Physician's Committee for Responsible Medicine  
[PCRM.org](http://PCRM.org)

Video library at [Nutritionfacts.org](http://Nutritionfacts.org)



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# THANK YOU

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# Questions and Open Discussion

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## Thank You!

**Evaluation** – <https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/8377916/Nourishing-the-Mind-and-Body-Affordable-Nutrition-Approaches-for-Diabetes-and-Depression>

**Certificate of Participation** –upon completion of Evaluation

**Recording** - [Performance Improvement Project \(PIP\): Improving Care for People with Co-Occurring Diabetes and Depression - Stratis Health](#)

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