

Sarah Hallberg interview 1

Can you reverse diabetes by ignoring the dietary guidelines that you get?

That is what my guest claims in a TEDeX talk that has been seen over 600,000 times.

I'm Dr. Andreas Eenfeldt from DietDoctor.com and I'm here with Dr. Sarah Hallberg.

-Sarah, welcome.

-Thank you, thank you for having me.

So as doctors we've been told that diabetes is a chronic disease, it can get worse and you should eat less calories and less fat.

But you don't agree with that.

-No, I don't.

-Why?

Well, diabetes is a chronic disease

and it's going to continue to get worse if you follow the guidelines.

The guidelines sadly put out by associations

that are supposed to be advocates for people with diabetes.

Look, eating carbohydrates causes your blood sugar to go up.

Your blood sugar being elevated is what diabetes is.

Okay, so if we want to solve the problem, we have to take away the cause.

So when diabetics remove at least a lot of the carbohydrates from their diet, their blood sugar goes down and then they are not diabetic any longer.

I'm very big on not using the word "cured",
because to cure someone means it can't come back.
But if someone with diabetes who has "resolved" their diabetes,
which is the term I prefer to use,
eats carbohydrates again, it will come back.
But the fact that the matter is, going back to your original question,
it doesn't have to be a chronic disease.
We can intervene here,
resolve the problems just by changing someone's nutrition.
That sounds incredible.
I actually know that it's working very well for lots of people,
but why don't everybody get that sort of advice?
Boy, the million-dollar question. Right?
And I think that the tides are turning.
I'm so optimistic that the treatment of diabetes
is going to be revolutionized over the next 5 to 10 years.
Because again what we see is a grassroots movement.
Diabetics don't want to be told
that they're going to be sick for the rest of their lives.
And the argument people give is that no one is going to follow that diet.
But, wait a minute, you told someone
that they have a chronic progressive disease that they will die from,
but before they die, they may go blind, they may have to go on dialysis,
they may lose their limbs,
and you don't think that that's motivating enough for people to want to change.

Because I argue it is.

And what we have done is not given people a chance.

Exactly, because you would think that that sort of life...

You know, changing decision would be up to the person and not to the doctors

if he feels like very sort of paternalistic sort of view of the world

where the doctor takes that decision away from the person who is affected by it. Right?

Absolutely, right.

I mean they say people can't change.

And so that's just again making the decision.

They've made the decision before even presenting the options. Right?

They can't change, they wouldn't be able to stick with the low carbohydrate diet,

therefore I'm not going to give them the opportunity to learn about that.

Well, people are getting smart

and the Internet and programs like yours are helping people

by allowing them to understand that there is a solution

and it doesn't mean you just have to take more and more medicine,

it doesn't mean that you have to, you know, face a life

with all of these comorbidities along with diabetes in your future

and you can take charge of it.

And people, once they understand that and they get themselves educated,

they do want to change.

They want to live a more productive and healthier life,

they want to feel better.

So you are a doctor, you treat diabetics with this sort of advice. Right?

Do you see anybody who can stick to it long-term?

Oh yeah, definitely.

Can you share any stories?

Absolutely, we have so many stories of wonderful changes that I could share.

But I mean people say that they can't stick with it,

but I have been using this treatment for diabetics for three years.

And I have plenty of my first patients that I still see regularly in my clinic.

So I can tell you right now that that's not true.

And people come in and they say... I couldn't even imagine...

They take a look at a piece of a bread and they say,

"I can't even now fathom that that used to be something that I might reach for."

They really do have this switch that flips in them

and it flips for many reasons.

Number one, I think, one of the first keys to actually having this switch flip

where they are going to do this as a lifestyle is educating them.

So you're not just telling them what to eat, you're helping them understand why.

Then they begin to do it and all of a sudden they start to feel better.

Their energy is better, I mean they get up and say,

"I didn't hurt as much as I used to, I haven't felt this good in 20 years."

Most of our diabetics are overweight, they are losing weight.

That's motivating, let's face it.

And then the other thing is all of a sudden they don't have to take all the medications

and that's not only a nuisance,

but that's a big saving for their pocketbook.

All these things together will tell us that yes, people can stay with it.

I mean, once we get someone off of 200 units of insulin,

they don't want to go back to that.

They don't want to go back to that.

And it's motivating every day to understand where they came from and where they are now.

So if someone with diabetes is watching now,
could you share some ideas about how do you get started,
what kind of resources would you recommend to people?

Books, you know, programs, whatever... Where should people start?

A very important thing if you have diabetes, you probably need to work with a physician.

Because one of the things that is most important in my job
is that I help patients decrease their diabetes medications.

If you're not working with a physician, that could be very dangerous,
because people can get very low blood sugars.

So they need to reduce their--?

-Medications.

-Like insulin.

So they need to find someone who is going to help them do that
and I think more and more we are finding more physicians willing to do this with patients,
so I think that's probably the first key.

And then the second key is reducing the carbohydrates in their diet.

So realizing that we don't need refined carbohydrates,

I find the simplest way to explain that to patients is through GPS.

-That's what I always tell patients. -GPS?

No grains, no potatoes and no sugar.

It's a simple way to tell everybody what they need to be avoiding.

They can take a look at any food and say, "Is there a GPS in there?"

"And if there is, I'm not going to eat it.

If there is not, it's probably something that's going to be reasonable for me."

And then the next thing is getting over the fear of fat.

And for a lot of people this is actually the biggest struggle.

"What do you mean eating fat?" -

that is probably the single most common question that I get.

"What does it mean to eat fat?"

What does it mean?

What does he mean to eat fat? - It means for example let's take vegetables.

I always put vegetables at the top of the list.

When people tell me, "How do I get more fat?"

People would say, "How are the vegetables at the top of your list?"

Well, because vegetables are a great way to get your fat in.

All vegetables should come with fat, it's a rule in my clinic.

If you eat a veggie, it comes with a fat.

So it's covered in butter, it's cooked in olive oil...

Cream, I mean... why spinach? Have cream spinach. There you go.

If it's raw that you're eating it... Fantastic.

But dip it in something.

There are just a ton of ways to increase the fat even through something like vegetables.

Heavy whipping cream.

The other thing I always say in my clinic is,

"Every healthy kitchen has about six containers of that in their fridge." Right?

-Right, sounds like my fridge.

-There you go, that's right.

So heavy whipping cream, cream cheese,
coconut oil, cooking with coconut oil.

Not always having to get the more expensive leaner cuts of meat.

Have something with a little fat on it.

So again, it's just getting people used to this idea.

I mean a lot of times in my clinic I'll have to introduce people
to the concept that heavy whipping cream comes in a carton.

Because all they think of is the can.

And I always tell everyone Cool Whip does not count.

They didn't even realize that some of these foods were out here.

But again, there there.

So sort of the number one thing is to eat more fat, how you do that...

Do you have any other tips and tricks that you find very useful for people in their journey?

As far as eating fat goes?

Yeah, well, as far as reversing diabetes goes.

If there are difficulties that are common and ways to overcome them.

Yes, I think probably one of the other ones is that people eat too much protein then.

So, again, the fear of fat often creates that scenario,

where what they will do is they'll be cutting their carbs, they get that,

but that fear of fat continues to creep in

and so what they wind up doing is having too much protein.

And it depends on the length of time you've had diabetes, how severe it is.

But many of our longer standing diabetics,

they will have glucose reactions even to a large protein load.

So they have to be cautious of that, that would be one thing.

And the other thing is boredom.

So, I mean, meat and cheese, you know, meat and cheese is great.

But if that's all you see as part of a well formulated low carbohydrate diet, you'll get bored.

So how do you get variation?

Boy, I mean use a lot of the wonderful websites that are out there for recipes.

And we encourage people to try new things.

One of the foods that I always push on people is try hemp seeds.

Hemp seeds, I always say everyone should have hemp seeds on almost anything.

There's a great way to increase your fat, it increases fiber and they're wonderful and tasty.

And who's ever tried them before? Right?

You can use hemp seeds in so many different ways - you cook the shelled ones as rice...

I mean just the limits are endless...

the limitations are endless on what we can make.

That is delicious, has tons of variety and can keep people happy.

Not for a week or a month or six months, because that's a diet. Right?

Keep people happy and enjoying what they're eating for the rest of their lives.

So they've got to get out there and try new things.

They think they can't have ever bread again, but have you made low-carb bread?

Because it doesn't take three hours like our grain-based bread.

You can make some delicious low-carb bread in 10 minutes.

Maybe it's using ingredients you haven't heard of before,

maybe you're not quite sure where you get flax meal,

but those are the kinds of the things that you need to find out

so that you can experiment.

Find a new repertoire if you will of food, a rotation of recipes at your house that everybody can be happy with.

Cool! So for people who want to know more, we're going to put up a link to your TEDeX talk for sure.

And do you have other links, do you have a website of your own?

I have a Facebook page, so you could definitely put that one up.

-So we'll put a link to it under this page. -Okay.

There's tons of information out there

and I think you're giving people a good kind of start on this.

-Thank you very much.

-Absolutely, thank you so much.