

# Your Nutrition Toolbox

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Learn how to optimise your nutrition  
from a leading doctor of nutrition

↳ Assoc. Prof Caryn Zinn



PREKURE™



Associate Professor Caryn Zinn, PREKURE's resident dietitian and leading academic, knows just how difficult it can be to wade through troupes of misinformation about nutrition. Read on as she shares her toolbox for how you can really optimise your diet and get better health outcomes for yourself, your family or your clients.

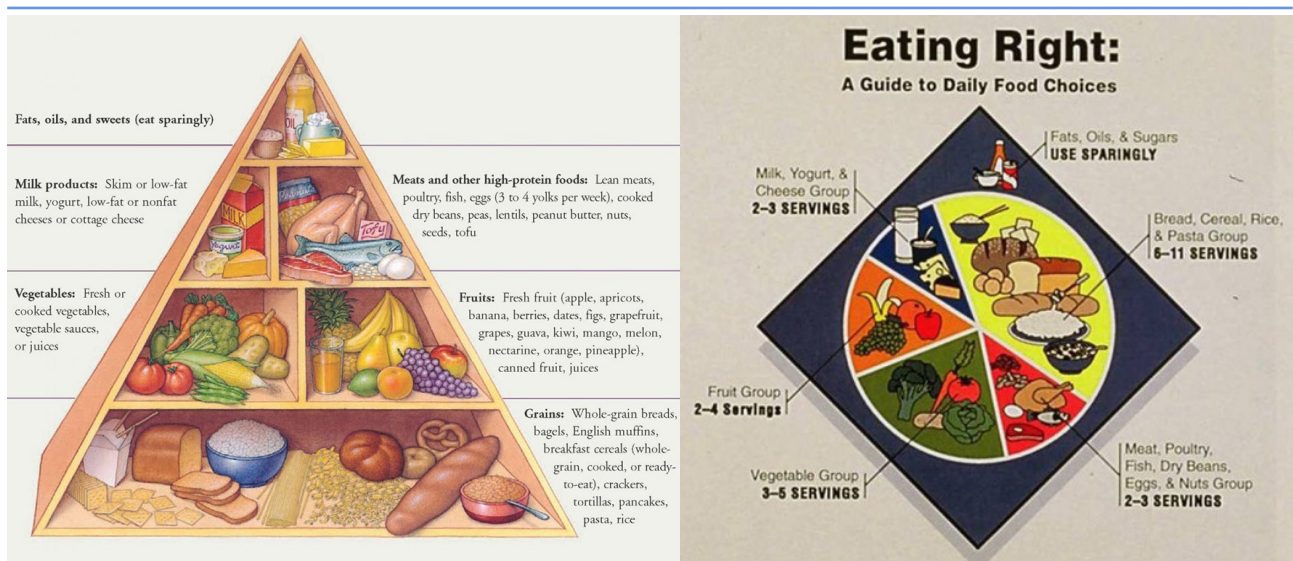
At PREKURE we believe in keeping at the cutting edge of evidence-based science to live a happier, healthier life. This nutrition toolbox is a treasure trove of tips and tricks to help you make the most of your food and is an example of just some of the types of resources we will arm you with in our Health Coaching Certificate.



## The problem and the solution.

First, let's take a moment to consider the dietary guidelines. In many countries around the world the dietary guidelines mirror those of the United States, while these were once presented as a pyramid (with grains and starches at the bottom being hailed as the most important food group that the diet should be based on) and discretionary foods at the top, they are now often presented as a plate. These guidelines don't seem to have served us much in the past 100 years, in fact, today humans are more sick than ever before.

The current nutrition paradigm widely accepted and promoted is therefore not beyond criticism and in fact many leading academics and clinicians (myself included) have questioned whether they are fit for purpose [6]. While we have managed to stave off communicable diseases quite well with medical advancements, non-communicable diseases like obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease and cancer are the most prevalent they have ever been (especially in Western countries) [1].



Why is this happening? Well, that's a tricky question to answer because it is likely a milieu of influences coming together that create the perfect storm for the overwhelming incidence of poor metabolic health that we see today [2] [3]. What research does show is that

eating more whole food and reducing the amount of carbohydrates in the diet (especially hyper-palatable ultra-processed carbohydrates) can have a profound effect on health resulting in reductions in weight, improvements in cardiometabolic profiles and even the

reversal of diseases like type 2 diabetes [4][5]. While science is constantly evolving there is a common theme everyone seems to be able to agree on: whole foods trump ultra-processed fake 'foods' and should form the base of the diet. Regardless of the diet pattern you follow.

Food is medicine. Every single cell in your body depends on what you put in your mouth. One size does not fit all in today's modern world. People eat from all ends of the food and nutrient spectrum, and still enjoy great health. What does that mean in practice? It means you can identify with any dietary pattern or none, as long as the base of your diet is real whole food you are setting yourself up for a long, healthy life.

A healthy diet is one that is low in human interference. In other words, it avoids the category of foods that we call ultra-processed foods. In most developed countries, more than half, possibly two-thirds, of what people put in their shopping trolleys at supermarkets, would be categorised as ultra-processed food. That's the target for getting people healthier-eating. You can do all the work about macronutrients and other components of nutrition, but it starts with this – a healthy diet is one which is less processed.

Moving with that philosophy of low-HI (human interference factor), a healthy diet, irrespective of what the macronutrients ratios are – carbohydrates, protein and fat – the micronutrients and fibre content need

to be satisfied. So, if you can choose a range of whole, unprocessed foods – such as meat, fish, chicken, eggs, milk and dairy, nuts and seeds, and fruit and vegetables, in the proportions that give you all the micronutrients – vitamins, minerals, phytochemicals – and fibre you need, that is considered a healthy diet. A healthy diet should also allow you to keep a stable blood glucose and prevent your hyper-secreting insulin – that's a more scientific answer. If your diet makes you get high glucose, for example, if you are insulin-resistant (if you have pre-diabetes or diabetes) and you consume a lot of fruit, such as bananas, apples and oranges, then you won't be able to sustain that. So, it is context-dependent.



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— *Assoc. Prof Caryn Zinn*

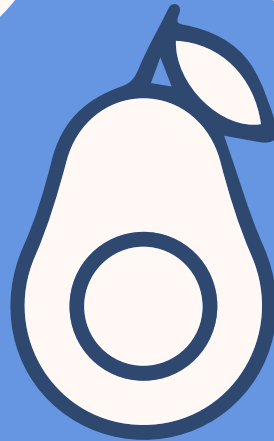
# Top Tools for Healthy Eating

**1**  
Set yourself up  
for success

**2**  
The Steve  
Jobs rule

**3**  
Look after your  
gut & it will look  
after you

**4**  
Follow the  
PREKURE food  
guidelines



# 1 Set yourself up for success

The first tool is actually quite simple and is a motto that I live by: diligence not effort. What do I mean by this? Consider, for example, how you look after your teeth: you brush them each morning and night, which can seem like an effort, but you do it to preserve your teeth. 'Dietary diligence' is just as important: every single cell in your body is dependent on what you put in your mouth. Make the effort to look after your cells, you're going to be looking after your health, and the health of your family by doing this. Think of this like making deposits into your health account – future you will be so thankful you took the time to invest today!

Think about the activities required to make this work: a little bit of meal planning, grocery shopping, storage of groceries, preparation of meals. Instead of viewing these as tasks or an effort, flip your mindset and look at this as an opportunity – the opportunity to set up for a well-organised week ahead in food and promoting health. Making these processes into a ritual helps them happen with greater reliability. Here are THREE tips you can use to set yourself up for success:

1. **Make the healthy choice the easy choice.** If you've downloaded PREKURE's Secrets of Behaviour Change, this tip will sound familiar to you. Essentially keep whole, unprocessed foods in your house

and leave the treats on the shelves at the supermarket. Out of sight, out of mind. The easier it is to do something, the more likely you are to do it. This means stocking your fridge and pantry with nourishing foods and spending some time planning and preparing your meals in advance. Believe me – you'll thank yourself on those days you get home and don't feel like cooking!

2. **Full fridge, empty pantry.** This is a remix on the concept of shopping around the outside of the supermarket. Packaged foods are often nutrient-poor and laden with sugar, and have no place in your house. They simply need to go. Throw them out or give them away. Not just out of sight (as in at the back of the pantry) but gone from the house itself. Your new kitchen set-up is going to be built around the concept of "full fridge, empty pantry". Some pantry essentials are required, but probably less than you think.
3. **Shop & stock up regularly.** We know, grocery shopping can feel like a chore (and a maze of temptation) but when you shop around the outside of the grocery store (buying whole and unprocessed foods) you are going to need to visit the store more often. Plan one regular weekly food shop at least, and try to do this when you are not rushing (if that's possible these days in our busy lives).

Shopping at the supermarket is overrated as 90% of all the products on the shelves are packaged and processed. What's more, the cheaper and more 'unhealthy' products positioned at eye-level are designed to lure you in. If you're shopping with young children, we know this can be disastrous too with so many temptations and "no" items risking additional drama.

Make it easier for yourself by shopping at a local fruit and vegetable store (it will be cheaper as well) and the butchery. You can pretty much get everything you need from these two stores. Non-perishables can still come from the supermarket. Consider ordering online. If the hassle of shopping at several places instead of one place is overwhelming then stick to shopping around the edges of the supermarket without being tempted to venture down the middle aisles. Now you might think that once you've shopped you can shove the produce in the fridge and pantry and get on with the rest of your day's activities...

Not so fast! Another part of this 'making it easy for yourself' journey is to spend a bit of time organising your fridge. Time to use those storage containers! Wash your vegetables and place them all into storage containers, including emptying your leafy green lettuce or spinach from the package it comes in and chopping or breaking your cauliflower and broccoli into florets. If you make the time to do this, your vegetables will remain fresh for 2-3 days longer, plus you can enjoy opening your fridge and basking in its order. Trust me with this one...take pride in the orderly look of your fridge contents. Your food will look more appetising and you will quickly be able to identify some quick easy convenient wholefood options for snacks when you open it. There will also be minimal wastage this way, another great way to save your hard-earned money.

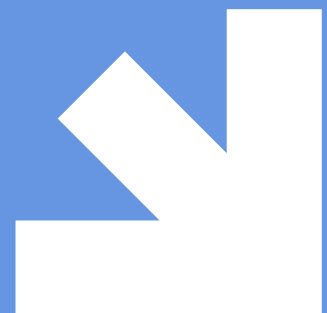


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## 2 The Steve Jobs rule

You've got good fresh, healthy food in your house and now you need a plan. People who eat well don't do it by accident, it takes planning and a set of guidelines (or rules if you like) that they follow to help them get the most out of their diet. Much like Steve Jobs wore the same outfit everyday, when you survey people who eat well they often have a few go-to meals that they eat on repeat. Save thinking and effort and allow yourself the time and space to have healthy food discipline on hand when you need it the most. Remember, it's when you have the least time to think and you are the most stressed when you will make the poorest choices and miss your goal. Start by writing your two go-to breakfasts, lunches, snacks and dinners and then write down your go-to meal when you eat out for any of those meals. There are many other interesting things to think about during the day – don't let your next meal bog your brain down!





### 3 Look after your gut & your gut will look after you

The gut microbiota is the complex community of microorganisms that live in the digestive tracts of humans and other animals. The gut microbes, and the effect they have on our health, is a fascinating area that is really progressing in the research space. Over the years to come we'll learn a lot more about the little critters that reside in our small intestine. What we do know is that the microbes perform several tasks that are relevant to our physiology, health and ill-health.

There are a few things that upset the gut microbe balance like stress, obesity and insulin resistance, the Western diet (laden with ultra-processed food and sugar), circadian rhythms and liver function (as a result of chronic antibiotic use). So what can you do to build up a strong microbiome with diversity?

First, a healthy lifestyle – eating whole, unprocessed food, doing regular exercise, becoming mentally resilient, reducing stress, getting enough sleep, and having good-quality relationships with people plays an important role.

Second, you could look to increase the prebiotics in your diet. Prebiotics are the nutrients that nourish the bugs in the microbiome and they include fruits, vegetables, seaweed and fermented foods like kefir, kombucha, sauerkraut and kimchi. If the fermented foods feel daunting just start by increasing the number of servings of green leafy vegetables you have each week.

Third, you can increase the amount of probiotics in your microbiome (or the bugs) by taking a supplement that serves to repopulate your gut with good bacteria. These sorts of supplements should be taken under the advice of a registered nutritionist or dietitian and diet and lifestyle modifications should always be your first approach.



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*Microbes perform several tasks that are relevant to our health & ill-health.*

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## 4 Follow the PREKURE food guidelines

At PREKURE, we believe it's critical that our outdated and ineffective dietary guidelines are overhauled to a model that is evidence-based and backed by science to lead to superior health outcomes. Our PREKURE food guidelines are simple:

- 1. Enjoy nutritious foods every day that are whole and unprocessed.** Choose vegetables, fruit, eggs, meat, seafood, poultry, organ meats, dairy, nuts, seeds and legumes (as tolerated). Favour traditional oils fats and spreads over refined and processed versions. Keep total sugar – especially added sugar – to a minimum in all foods and drinks.
- 2. Think less packaging.** Make the majority of your purchases foods that don't come in packages. If you do buy packaged foods, choose items with less than 5 ingredients.
- 3. Shop local.** Choose mostly locally-grown food.
- 4. Shop ethically.** Choose ethically-sourced food where possible.
- 5. Plan ahead.** Plan your time to make food and eating important in your life.
- 6. Emphasise connection.** Prepare, cook and eat minimally processed traditional foods with family, friends and your community.
- 7. Slow down, don't rush.** Eat your meals slowly and consciously with no distractions.
- 8. Treat yourself.** Enjoy treats on special occasions and without guilt.
- 9. Befriend water.** Keep well hydrated: drink water mainly and other drinks with minimal added sugar.
- 10. Minimise alcohol.** Keep more than half of your week alcohol free. Don't drink alcohol if you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant.



## Prevention is Cure. Lifestyle is Medicine.

PREKURE is a health education & training provider championing a Lifestyle Medicine Movement. Our society spends billions on sickness and very little on health. It's time we changed our 'medicine'. We see a new world of medicine as preventative, customer-centric and future-focussed. One where people thrive, not just survive.

### Are you with us?

The current health system is failing sufferers of chronic disease – we need passionate people to help solve the problem. By studying with us you can help yourself and others to make the critical lifestyle changes required to dramatically improve health and wellbeing.

## Do you want to cut through all the nonsense and understand the latest science-based nutritional knowledge?

In our PK102 Nutrition as Medicine short course you'll learn how to navigate the myriad of contradictory information and understand the latest science-based nutrition knowledge and tools. In this course we'll arm you with a university-level education in nutrition at a fraction of the cost so you can help yourself, your family and your clients gain lasting health results.

Together we can change medicine for good. Learn more at [prekure.com](https://prekure.com)



This course is crammed with so much valuable information and resources. Constructive and informative ways to aid in real health change via nutrition. Loved it. Thanks, PREKURE!

— Alice, PK102 Student





**PK102** *Your Nutrition Toolbox*

Prevention is Cure | Lifestyle is Medicine

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