

Navigating Transplant Nutrition In the Modern Age

Lillian Kirry MS, RD, LDN



Topics of Discussion

01

**Short Transplant
Nutrition Review**

02

**The Modern
Mediterranean
Diet**

03

**Keeping up with
Food Safety**

04

**Modern
Carbohydrate
Management**

05

**Understanding
Social Media
Nutrition**

06

**Questions and
Discussion**

Ca



Zn



01

Short Transplant Nutrition Review

Ca



Zn



Zn



What is generally recommended?

1. General Healthful, Mediterranean Diet
2. Adequate Protein
3. Food Safety with Immune Suppressive Medication
4. Carbohydrate Management with Steroid Use
5. Organ-Protective Practices



Organ-Protective Practices

- Blood pressure management
 - Minding sodium
 - Stress
- Avoiding Herbal Supplements
 - St John's Wort
 - Ginseng
- Hydration Balance
- Avoiding food/drug interactions
- Maintaining medications

Different from organ to organ ...



02

The Modern Mediterranean Diet

Ca



Zn



Zn



Zn





The Modern Mediterranean Diet^{1,2,3}

Traditional

- Grains: wheat and barley
- Proteins: seafood and lean proteins
- Dairy: yogurt and aged cheeses
- Veggies: spinach, kale, artichokes, broccoli, zucchini, arugula, tomatoes
- Fruits: olives, citrus, stone fruits, berries, pomegranates
- Fats: EVOO, nuts and seeds, fatty fish
- Beverages: water, coffee/espresso, local herb teas, moderate amount of red wine





The Modern Mediterranean Diet

1,2,3

Traditional

- Grains: wheat and barley
- Proteins: seafood and lean proteins
- Dairy: yogurt and aged cheeses
- Veggies: spinach, kale, artichokes, broccoli, zucchini, arugula, tomatoes
- Fruits: olives, citrus, stone fruits, berries, pomegranates
- Fats: EVOO, nuts and seeds, fatty fish
- Beverages: water, coffee/espresso, local herb teas, moderate amount of red wine

Modern

- Grains: brown rice, quinoa, whole-grain pastas, oats
- Proteins: canned/dried beans, edamame, canned/frozen fish, soy products, meat alternatives
- Dairy: Low fat dairy, milk alternatives, wider cheese varieties
- Veggies: anything; Canned, frozen, dried
- Fruits: anything; frozen, preserved
- Fats: oils; avocado, canola, flax seed, sesame
- Beverages: Sparkling waters, sugar-free sodas, mocktails, water infusions



**Overall, more global, culturally
inclusive, generally
affordable/accessible with
modern preparations for easier
healthy eating patterns!**



03

Keeping up with Food Safety



Cooking

Meats to Temperature

- Poultry (Whole and Ground) - 165° F
- Whole Cut Red Meat - 145° F
- Ground Red Meats - 160° F
- Fish - 145° F
- Eggs - 160° F - No soft or runny yolks
- Leftovers and casseroles - 165° F

Washing

All Fruits and Vegetables

- 1-2 Minutes Under Running Water
- Including Rinds, Peels, Skins before preparing
- After Prepared, Eat 1-2 days or Freeze
- Shells of Nuts and Seeds

Pasturizing

Dairy, Eggs, Honey, Ciders

- Milk, cheese, yogurt, ice cream, etc.
- Cook moist/soft cheeses
- No Raw Dairy Products
- Honey can contain Botulism
- Fall time apple ciders
- No Blue Cheese

Additional Food Safety Tips

No Wood Cutting Boards

- Plastic
- Metal
- Glass

Clean Water

- City water is safe
- Well water, tested once a year
- Bottled Water



Zn

Left Overs, Buffets, Parties

- Leftovers: Eat between 2-3 days
 - Party Spreads
- Buffets and Salad Bars

Cook Fermented Foods

- Kimchi, Sauerkraut, Tempe, Miso
- *Kombucha*



Food Born Illness Monitoring^{4,5,6,7}

FoodSafety.gov

<https://www.foodsafety.gov/recalls-and-outbreaks>

FDA: Investigations of Foodborne Illness Outbreaks

<https://www.fda.gov/food/outbreaks-foodborne-illness/investigations-foodborne-illness-outbreaks>

CDC Foodborne Outbreaks

- <https://www.cdc.gov/foodborne-outbreaks/outbreaks/index.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/foodnet/index.html>



Zn

Ca

Food Born Illness Monitoring^{4,5,6,7}

FoodSafety.gov

<https://www.foodsafety.gov/recalls-and-outbreaks>

FDA: Investigations of Foodborne Illness Outbreaks

<https://www.fda.gov/food/outbreaks-foodborne-illness/investigations-foodborne-illness-outbreaks>

CDC Foodborne Outbreaks

- <https://www.cdc.gov/foodborne-outbreaks/outbreaks/index.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/foodnet/index.html>

How will you know?

Unfortunately, companies and food distributors are not required to contact or access customers.



Where to look?

- Check the websites, follow the news, follow social media pages of local health officials
- Packaging dates and serial numbers



Check out @baltimorehealth on Instagram

04

Modern Carbohydrate Management

Ca



Zn



Zn



Why are we managing our carbohydrates?



Why are we managing our carbohydrates?

Long-term steroid medication, and other medications one may be on, can increase one's appetite, intake, and blood sugar levels.

This can lead to something called **steroid-induced diabetes** which can increase risks for decreased vision, neuropathy, and other issues related to long-term elevated blood sugars.

1. **Diet**
2. **Devices**
3. **Medications**



Carbohydrate Management: Diet

Tips:

1. High-fiber Carb Options
 - a. whole-grain products like pasta and breads, vegetables, brown rice, quinoa, etc.
2. Mixing Macronutrients
 - a. Mixing carbohydrates with proteins and fats, with extra fiber, slows big sugar spikes after meals
3. Physical Activity After Meals
 - a. Movement for minimum of 10-15 minutes can help reduce blood sugar spikes
 - i. walking, folding/putting away laundry, exercise, playing with children, movement of ANY kind
4. Carbohydrate Counting
 - a. 1 Carb “Choice” = 15 grams of carbohydrates
 - b. Aids in having overall understanding of how many grams you are getting in a day

Resources

1. The American Diabetes Association Website
 - a. <https://diabetes.org/>
 - i. Great recipe ideas, carb counting help, handouts, and articles
2. Appointment with Registered Dietitian
 - a. Check with insurance as appointments often can be covered
 - b. Aid in personalized care taking into consideration all complexities of daily life
3. MyPlate Management for Diabetes
 - a. Helpful way to visualize plate
4. Speak with your provider team!

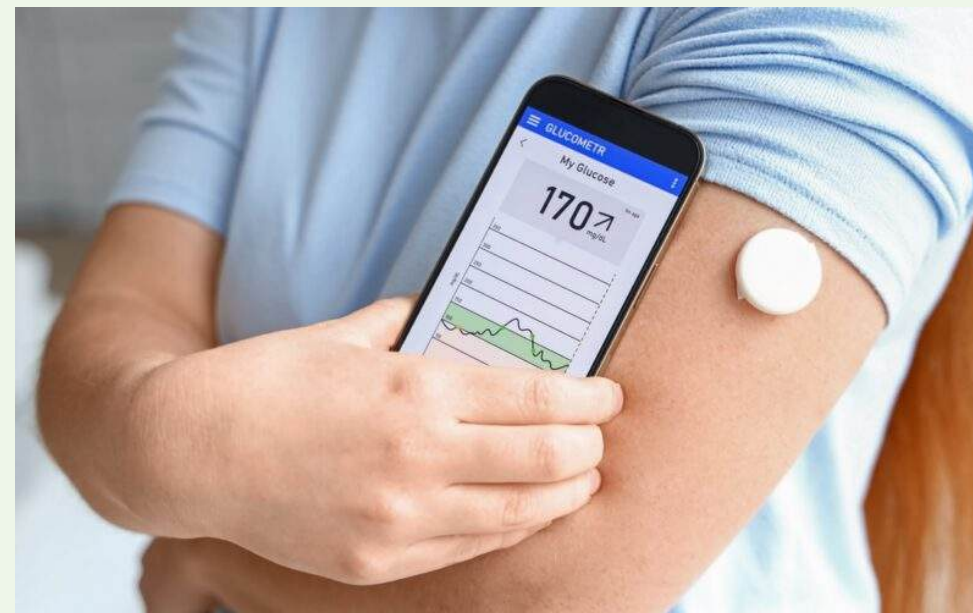


Carbohydrate Management: Devices

Continuous Glucose Monitor (CGM) and Glucometer

CGM: Small, discrete monitor placed on the back of the arm for continuous measures of blood sugars provides over time measurement and provides trends as well as notifications for elevated or low blood sugars.

Glucometer: Finger-stick, rapid blood glucose test, measures fasting in the morning and pre-meal measures and 1-2 hour post-meal measuring



Phone Applications

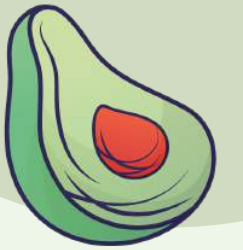
Apps are helpful ways to track meals, see nutrition trends, and become aware of carbohydrate content of foods

Baritastic

Figwee

Myfitnesspal

...and many more



Carbohydrate Management: Modern Medications

Metformin and Insulin Pens

- Metformin is our first-line medication for blood sugar management. A once-daily pill that assists in increasing insulin sensitivity, decreasing the absorption of sugar in the intestines, and even decreasing the release of sugar stores in our bodies
- Insulin Pens are updated easy to use ways to administer insulin with accurate dosing, decrease risk of unsafe sticks, and easy storage and transportation



GLP-1 Agonist Medication

The “Not So New” Diabetes Medication

Semaglutide or Tirzepitide medication are actually not new medications although seem to becoming very popular. They mimic the naturally occurring hormone that creates appetite.

They are a once weekly injection (with new pill option) that helps increase insulin release, slows stomach emptying, and reducing appetite.

Becoming popular for its rapid weight loss properties, which may not be ideal situations for transplant patients, especially recent recipients.



05

Understanding Social Media Nutrition





**Social Media is
for Everyone!**

Zn

Zn



Social Media is for Everyone!

Even the unqualified people...

All people can post “what I eat in a day” videos, everyone can have an opinion on what food is the new poison to our bodies, and anyone can get paid to say anything on the internet → None of this makes them qualified, accurate, or helpful!

How to be a nutrition social media detective!



1. If they are making blanket statements !
 - a. “Seed oils are bad!” , “Carbohydrates are what are killing you!”, etc
2. Are they showing off their body before giving nutrition advice?
3. Check for signs of AI !
4. Are they being paid? Check to see if there is an ad!
5. Do they have qualifications?



Look for signs and question everything!

Can I use AI?

Yes and No ...

- **Social and Environmental impacts**
- **Access to personal data**
- **Do not use for medical advice**
- **Just a mix of all available information**
- **A helpful way to make recipes!**



**So who should I
actually follow?**

**Who do I
believe?**



**Registered
Dietitians**

- **Abbey Sharp**
- **Dr. Jessica Knurick**

**Medical
Providers!!!**

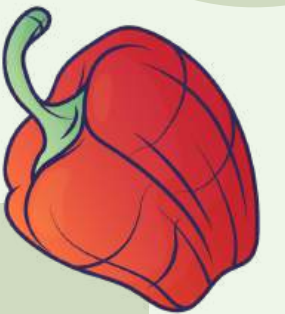


In Conclusions ...

General, Healthful Mediterranean Diet is backed by research, has many benefits, and is recommended and safe for Transplant patients!

- General, Healthful Mediterranean Diet is backed by research, has many benefits, and is recommended and safe for Transplant patients!
- Food Safety can be easy!
- Carbohydrate management comes in many forms and it is important to be mindful with long-term steroid medications.
- Social Media can be entertaining, a great way to connect, can be a place for education and learning, but also has the potential to be dangerous! Be careful!

Ca





Zn

Zn

THANK YOU!

Resources

1. Kiani AK, Medori MC, Bonetti G, Aquilanti B, Velluti V, Matera G, Iaconelli A, Stuppia L, Connelly ST, Herbst KL, Bertelli M. Modern vision of the Mediterranean diet. J Prev Med Hyg 2022;63(suppl.3):E36-E43.<https://doi.org/10.15167/2421-4248/jpmh2022.63.2S3.2745>
2. Restivo J. Guide to the Mediterranean Diet. Harvard Health. February 6, 2026. Accessed October 7, 2026. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/healthy-aging-and-longevity/guide-to-the-mediterranean-diet>.
3. Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research. (2026, July 23). Mediterranean diet for heart health. Mayo Clinic. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/mediterranean-diet/art-20047801>
4. Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (ASPA). (2025, July 17). Recalls and Outbreaks. FoodSafety.gov. <https://www.foodsafety.gov/recalls-and-outbreaks>
5. Program, H. F. (n.d.). Investigations of foodborne illness outbreaks. U.S. Food and Drug Administration. <https://www.fda.gov/food/outbreaks-foodborne-illness/investigations-foodborne-illness-outbreaks>
6. Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (ASPA). (2025a). Current Outbreaks. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/foodborne-outbreaks/outbreaks/index.html>
7. Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (ASPA). (2024, June 20). FoodNet Homepage. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/foodnet/index.html>

