

## Hi Everyone.

This week I learned about Nutrition and cardiovascular health, nutrition and stress response, nutrition and immunity, and nutrition and renal health.

Cardiovascular disease is a group of diseases and conditions that affect the heart and blood vessels. Right now, across all racial and ethnic groupings in the US, it is the primary cause of mortality for both men and women. Concerning coronary heart disease, diet is a major risk factor. High blood pressure, uncontrolled diabetes, obesity, and diets heavy in saturated fats are risk factors associated with food. The risk of heart disease can be significantly decreased by eating a diet high in fiber, and plants, and low in saturated fat.

Consuming foods high in nutrients is necessary to maintain good health. A nutritious diet lowers the risk of chronic disease and promotes growth from the time of birth. According to the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (2022), "adults who eat a healthy diet have a lower risk of obesity, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers" (para. 1). They also live longer. Furthermore, eating a balanced diet can help people prevent complications and manage long-term conditions.

The topics did not pose any challenge to me. It was easy to understand.

### **Discuss the impact of dietary factors like saturated fats, cholesterol, sodium, and added sugars on cardiovascular health.**

Consuming a diet heavy in cholesterol, trans fats, and saturated fats has been linked to atherosclerosis and other disorders including heart disease. Furthermore, eating a diet high in salt (sodium) might cause blood pressure to rise (Four Simple Steps to Food Safety, 2023).

**Added Sugars:** Diets high in added sugars have been associated with obesity, type 2 diabetes, and an increased risk of heart disease. High sugar intake can contribute to weight gain and obesity, which are risk factors for cardiovascular problems. Moreover, consuming too much sugar can lead to insulin resistance, inflammation, and dyslipidemia (abnormal levels of blood lipids), all of which can negatively affect heart health. Foods and beverages like sodas, sweets, desserts, and sugary snacks are major sources of added sugars in the diet. Cutting back on these items and choosing whole, unprocessed foods can help reduce sugar intake and promote cardiovascular health.

Risk of heart disease. Healthy fats are essential for your body's energy and other processes. However, an excess of saturated fat can lead to the accumulation of cholesterol in your blood vessels, or arteries. Your LDL (bad) cholesterol is elevated by saturated fats. Your risk of stroke and heart disease is increased by high LDL cholesterol.

**Cholesterol:** excessive consumption of dietary cholesterol can contribute to the development of atherosclerosis, a condition characterized by the buildup of plaque in the arteries. High levels of LDL cholesterol in the blood are associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular diseases. Therefore, it's important to limit the intake of foods high in cholesterol, such as egg yolks, shellfish, and organ meats.

**Saturated Fats:** Foods high in saturated fats, such as fatty meats, dairy products with full fats, and some types of oils (including coconut and palm oil), can raise blood levels of low-density lipoproteins (LDLs), or the "bad" cholesterol. Raised levels of low-density lipoprotein (LDL)