

NLP and nutrition

We all know that certain foods and drinks are much better for us than others. But at what point do we decide that consequences like bloating, pain or bad skin are more important than taste? And how can we tell what our body is trying to tell us about certain food?

By Eve Menezes Cunningham



THE NUTRITIONAL THERAPIST

Sanna Anderson combines nutrition with coaching skills. She says, “It is useful as part of the nutrition consultation. It is often not enough just to tell clients what they need to change in their diet to achieve their goals. Some coaching and motivational work is also needed to ensure those changes happen.

“I’ve always been passionate about food – cooking and eating mainly. Being a nutritional therapist you get to talk about food a lot. But you can also make a huge difference to

someone’s health and wellbeing.”

Most of Sanna’s clients seek her out for help with “Stress related issues such as low energy, digestive complaints (the good old IBS, which is such an unhelpful diagnosis), skin complaints (such as acne that hasn’t responded to antibiotics) and hormonal issues.”

When it comes to her own health Sanna says, “I’ve never eaten really badly, but my eating habits have certainly changed since studying nutrition. Food used to be mainly about taste and texture. Now I also think much more about its nutritional content and what it’s providing my body.

“It has a huge impact on energy levels, can boost immunity, improve mood, help with chronic conditions like asthma, hayfever and eczema, stop you from feeling bloated and having indigestion – the list is actually quite endless.”

Sanna’s Top Tips

- Not everything that says ‘low fat’ or ‘diet’ in the box is good for you.
- Real food is often better when you know what you are looking for.
- Have a good breakfast – it can make a huge difference to your energy levels throughout the day. And often, it will stop you snacking on extra calories during the day.
- By “good breakfast” I don’t mean any of the commercial cereals, most of which are high in sugar and salt. Choose “real” food such as porridge, scrambled egg on rye toast or natural yoghurt with berries and muesli.

To find out more about Sanna, please visit www.thenutritioncoach.co.uk

THE AYURVEDIC NUTRITIONIST

Ayurveda is one of the worlds oldest medical systems. Literally translated, it means “the science of life” and it goes back more than 5000 years. Louise Cashin says, “Before people come along for a consultation I ask them to keep a ‘food diary’ for a week and complete a constitutional questionnaire and a short ‘lifestyle’ questionnaire. This gives me some background but it is really when I meet the person that I can get the full picture.”

Louise pays attention to the way they look and sound as well as what they say to identify their Ayurvedic constitutional type. She listens to “the depth as well as the speed of their voice. Sometimes I ask to look at their tongue. A lot of information is available if you know how to ‘read’ someone’s tongue. I take their pulses and sometimes look at their nails/hands and eyes.”

If the person can’t come to Louise, they can send a photo and do the consultation by telephone or, if they have the facilities, video conference. Louise says that when she knows their constitutional type, she can advise them on all sorts of things: “What foods to enjoy and those to avoid, times of day best to eat and things likely to disturb them (i.e. specific foods, stress, eating on the run and all sorts of things related to lifestyle).

“I provide general recommendations. Remember, in Ayurveda, it is not just food that we digest, but the air we breathe and the emotions we feel. Exercise to increase oxygen levels in the blood and lifestyle considerations are as key to a healthy digestion and absorption as the food we eat. I try and keep it simple and easy to fit into their existing routines as much as possible. Otherwise, even with the best intentions, it won’t be maintained.”

Louise uses some coaching skills, too. She asks her clients a range of questions about their health history, jobs, hobbies and lifestyle. She says, “I am trying to ascertain the levels of stress or conflict in their lives as this is often the source of the problem.” She also asks about what they’d like to improve and prioritise. That is, she says, “What’s their number one thing? Loosing weight, making more time to meditate? What are they happy about in their life, appearance or health? What are they not happy with? What would they like to change? I also ask lots of subtle questions to gauge their commitment. Ayurvedic nutrition is very much a two way thing. I can only help them if they are willing to work at it a bit too.

“Usually people come to me to find a better way to eat and be healthy. But actually, they hate their job or eat because they are bored. Or they crave sugar as they feel unloved and so on. Someone who came to me just wanted a bit of advice on managing her weight but actually she was desperate to get pregnant. So we worked on some ideas around that and yes you guessed correctly – a few years later she has two beautiful children!”

She says, “I am continually surprised by how many people are so unaware of their physical body and how they react to certain foods. They keep eating things that clearly upset their stomach or irritate the bowel. Certain foods can also affect our moods - chocolate being the most famous. If you are serious about wanting to improve your health and wellbeing, manage your weight or fight fatigue, you must take more notice of what’s going on in your body and your mind.

“Watch out for the affects of caffeine, alcohol, excess sugar, really salty foods and things like wheat and nuts. Just take note of what you have eaten next time you feel down

and depressed or have tummy upset. You may be inadvertently causing yourself illness. I know I am a little intolerant of milk but often love to have a few flat white coffees from my favourite coffee shop. Yet so many times I then suffer from irritable bowel!”

VATA, PITTA AND KAPHA

There are three constitutional types in Ayurveda. Louise says:

Vata, in general, will feel happier eating little and often, they tend to have variable appetites and need to eat wholesome, warm foods. Cooked foods - things like a hearty stew are good for them with lots of vegetables and rice. Breakfast

In Ayurveda, it is not just food that we digest, but the air we breathe and the emotions we feel

is very important for Vata and a cooked breakfast is recommended or a nice warm bowl of porridge. (Unfortunately they are the least likely to want it.) Skipping breakfast is not good for Vata. Things with little calorific value are not helpful for Vata. Eating cold salads all the time aggravates Vata.

Pitta, in general, can eat most things without upsetting their constitution. They can eat at any time of the day, even late at night. Pittas have good appetites generally but can’t skip meals. They get very irritated if they miss a meal. Cool drinks are better than hot drinks. Too much spicy food can give Pitta too much heat – they don’t need to be heated up – they are hot enough to start with! Too much tea and coffee is bad for Pitta as they don’t need much caffeine.

Kapha in general needs to eat things which are ‘dry’. Avoid rich, saucy food and cooking in oil. They can skip breakfast and get away with it. Hot spicy food can be helpful for Kapha loosing weight. Kapha should avoid sweet things, processed foods with a lot of sugar and fizzy drinks. Avoid fried foods at all costs. Kaphas are inclined to water retention so should not drink excessive amounts (and especially not lots of beer!).

Louise’s Top Tips

- Eat seasonal fresh food rather than irritated/ processed/preserved food.
- Prepare it lovingly. Consider the place and atmosphere.
- Don’t eat when you are upset and always sit down to eat.
- Eat only when you are hungry.
- Don’t talk while you are chewing food. And don’t talk about business or important decisions.
- Wait until one meal has digested before eating the next.
- Don’t “stuff” yourself. Leave a third to one quarter empty to aid digestion.
- Sit quietly for a few minutes after your meal.

To find out more about Ayurvedic Nutrition, visit: www.yoga-yoga.co.uk and contact Louise to ask for details about her online questionnaire.



THE KINESIOLOGIST

Kinesiology is often known as “muscle testing” or even “the arm thing”. You’ve probably seen it demonstrated when someone gets a volunteer to raise their arm and hold it firm while they push it down. When saying something true, the arm holds steady but when

they’re lying, it’s very easy to push down.

Andrea Ward became interested in kinesiology through a yoga workshop. She says, “We did kinesiology in the afternoon and it was jawdropping.” When Andrea sees clients, she suggests having a full treatment as it may involve more than nutrition.

She says, “All the meridians link to muscles. If someone comes to me with digestive problems, I start with some basic checks and then ask about digestive muscles, large intestines, small intestines, digestive enzymes and so on. My role is to decide what to look for. To ask the right questions. I try to narrow it down to find out what the problem is. Once narrowed down, I check by asking the body if that is the priority to fix.”

To find a qualified kinesiologist in your area, visit the Kinesiology Federation www.kinesiologyfederation.org

If you’d like to find out more about Andrea’s practice or book with her, please email: andrearward@hotmail.com



Andrea’s Top Tips

- If you’re buying any vitamins or supplements don’t always go for the cheapest one. The nutrients aren’t always easily absorbed and some (e.g. cheap vitamin C) might be hard on the stomach.
- Be careful, particularly if you’re taking individual supplements. Taking an all round mineral can be pretty good but when you start taking high doses of certain vitamins, they can have side effects.

