**In conversation with**

**Mark Hyman, M.D., author of**

**The Blood Sugar Solution 10-Day Detox Diet**

1. **In your book *The Blood Sugar Solution*, you shared your proven six-week plan for preventing, treating, and even reversing diabetes and pre-diabetes. Now, with *The Blood Sugar Solution 10-Day Detox Diet*, you have created a fast-track plan that will enable readers to shed pounds and radically reboot their entire system in just ten short days. What is the value of the fast-track plan?**

Most people don’t connect the dots between what they’re eating and how they feel. Most of us don’t realize how bad we feel until we start feeling good. The best way to do that is to do a quick-start reboot. Completely change your diet for 10 days and notice how you feel. What you’ll notice is that, not only will your cravings get better, not only will your energy improve, and not only will you lose weight—which is actually a side effect of getting healthy—but a whole list of health problems may improve or disappear entirely. The power of *The* *10-Day Detox Diet* is that, in a very short time, you can use a scientifically designed program to regain your health and discover how great you can feel when you take away all the junk and eat real food. Most people have never ever done that, and most people are simply a few days away from feeling well.

1. **Why is it so important that we “detox”? Why can’t we just change our eating habits?**

Food addiction is a real scientifically proven phenomenon. Brain imaging studies show that Oreo cookies cause the brain to light up the addiction center more than cocaine. In fact, sugar is eight times as addictive as cocaine. You can’t do just one line of cocaine, or cut down. Addicts require a scientifically designed detoxification program. It is necessary to minimize withdrawal and rebalance the hormones and neurotransmitters that drive addiction. Our physiology needs a reboot and a comprehensive detoxification program is necessary.

The 146 pounds of flour (with addictive gluteomorphins) and 152 pounds of sugar that trigger the nucleus accumbens reward center of the brain are driving this epidemic of obesity, and not just because they spike insulin levels, the fat storage hormone, but because they are biologically addictive. The food industry has hijacked our kitchens, our taste buds, our brain chemistry and our metabolism and *The 10 Day Detox Diet* is a simple plan to take them back. Once we have our biochemistry back our cravings disappear and we lose weight automatically by eating real food.

The trick to getting healthy is not going on a diet, because a diet is something you go off. *The 10-Day Detox Diet* is really a misnomer. It’s a 10-day restart for the rest of your life. It teaches you the principles of healthy eating and self-care that are at the foundation for a lifetime of wellness. If you want to go on a fad diet, you may lose weight quickly, but most people who go on fad diets will often regain the weight they lost and more. Even gastric bypass surgery isn’t foolproof. Only 50 percent of those who have the surgery keep the weight off. It’s not just about losing the weight. It’s about radically changing your life while you can, regaining health, and understanding how to work with your body rather than against it.

1. **You call yourself a “wholistic” doctor, because you take care of patients with a “whole list” of symptoms. How would you describe *functional medicine* or *systems medicine*?**

In conventional medicine, we try to suppress symptoms. In Functional Medicine we don’t treat symptoms. We treat the patient. It is medicine by cause, not by symptom, medicine by organism not by organs, medicine by mechanism not by geography (or where the symptom is in your body). We remove the impediments to health (toxins, microbes, allergens, stress, and poor diet,) and help patients restore balance by providing the ingredients for a healthy human (real food, nutrients, water, air, sleep, movement, rhythm, love, meaning and purpose).

Then, the symptoms go away as a side effect of getting healthy. I take care of people with a whole list of problems. That is why I call myself a wholistic doctor. Rather than send a patient with diabetes, a rash, joint pain, reflux and headaches to five different doctors, I connect the dots. It doesn’t matter what disease you have. If you create health through the principles of Functional Medicine, most chronic symptoms and conditions will just go away. You don’t have to treat them directly. That’s the power of Functional Medicine. It is the single biggest game changing paradigm shift in medicine in our lifetime.

1. **You have said that our whole idea of “disease” itself is wrong; that in fact health is a state of balance, and disease is a state of imbalance. Does *The Blood Sugar Solution 10-Day Detox Diet* help us achieve a state of balance, or jump start the process?**

*The Blood Sugar Solution 10-Day Detox Diet* is the first step toward getting people connected to what is possible, to the abundant good health and well-being that is only a few days away. Most people have never experienced balance. It is not something we are taught and our society and our food system fosters just the opposite. In ten short days, by profoundly shifting what you eat – eliminating non food substances, processed food, addictive mounds of sugar and flour and inflammatory foods, and adding real whole fresh low glycemic food, and combined with simple lifestyle practices designed to reset brain chemistry and balance hormones, most people experience not only effortless weight loss and cessation of cravings, but a profound sense of well-being and health. And most chronic symptoms improve or disappear. In our online community, those who did the program had a 62 percent reduction in all symptoms from all diseases in just 10 days. There is no drug on the planet that can do that. And all the side effects are good ones.

1. **What do you mean by “what makes you fat also makes you sick”?**

Most of us of think you can be overweight and healthy, but very few people are overweight and healthy. In fact, the thing that makes us fat really is a sickness. What makes us sick makes us fat. And what makes us fat makes us sick. It’s a vicious cycle. The biology of obesity is the biology of disease. It is the biology of aging, inflammation, fatty liver, high levels of insulin, dangerous small cholesterol particles, and brain shrinkage.

About 25 percent of normal weight people have skinny fat syndrome – they are skinny on the outside but fat on the inside with all the same metabolic abnormalities as an obese person. Even though the junk and sugar doesn’t make them fat, it makes them sick. We need to focus on health, not weight, because there are a lot of quick ways to lose weight that are very unhealthy. When you focus on health and not weight, weight loss happens as an automatic side effect, and you feel fantastic.

1. **You write that *The Blood Sugar Solution 10-Day Detox Diet* is not a magic cure or a gimmicky weight loss scheme. It a comprehensive, science-based approach to ending food addiction, and creating rapid, safe weight loss and long-term optimal health. What is the biology of food addiction?**

Food addiction is very real. It’s not a metaphor. It’s not a psychological problem or a moral failing, or lack of willpower. It’s a biological fact. If I were to say to you, hold your breath underwater for 15 minutes, I’ll give you a million dollars, would you be able to do it? Probably not! We are wired to crave oxygen, and we’re wired to crave sugar. When you eat sugar or flour products, they spike the activity of an area of our brain called the nucleus accumbens, which is ground zero for addiction. When that happens, we have very little control over our behavior.

It’s a primitive response that is very difficult to control, which is why we see people binging on sugar and binging on flour products, because they are driven by unconscious behavior. Even though they know it’s hurting them, they still do it. That’s the power of addiction. The way to fight it is to restart, to detox, which is why I created *The 10-Day Detox Diet.*

1. ***The Blood Sugar Solution 10-Day Detox Diet* is informed by cutting edge, new scientific research. What is the most striking information you have gathered since the publication of *The Blood Sugar Solution* and how has it been applied to the new book?**

Over the last few years, abundant research on the nature of food addiction has emerged. A new textbook was published, *Food and Addiction*, documenting in great detail the biology of food addiction. And the deep investigative journalism of Michael Moss in his book *Salt, Sugar and Fat* profoundly exposed the intention of the food industry that used “craving experts” to find the “bliss point” of food to create “heavy users” and gain more “stomach share”. All terms used by food industry insiders.

The other reason this book is so important is that it refutes the propaganda of the food industry and our government that tells us that beating this obesity epidemic is simply a matter of energy balance, of calories in/calories out. That there are no good or bad foods and moderation is the key and that if people just ate less and exercised more, we would beat this problem. This blames the fat person, and implies they are lazy gluttons. The reason we have failed to make progress in battling obesity and diabetes is the simple fact that these messages are myths. Try asking a crack addict to have just one pipe, or a cocaine addict to have just one line of cocaine.

Facing the reality of food addiction head on is the only path out of our mess. Would we allow vending machines for cocaine, heroin or even nicotine in schools? Would we give our kids heroin lollypops or morphine muffins when they come home from school? Would we tolerate industry and sport figures promoting the consumption of addictive substances on television or the Internet. If not, then why do we allow this to happen with sugar and flour, proven to be even more addictive than cocaine. This is a hard conversation we must have as a society.

1. **You describe an emergence of a whole new breed of mad “food scientists.” Their job is to invent addictive, hyper-palatable, processed and junk foods to ensure their employers (**the $1 trillion food industry **or “Big Food”), get the biggest market share, or what industry insiders call “stomach share.” With a nation struggling profoundly with obesity, they are making people sick. So, can we litigate like we did the tobacco industry?**

The science of food addiction is very real and the implications for it are enormous. If it’s true—which it is—that sugar, flour, and processed foods affect our brains in ways that drive addiction just like cocaine or heroin or tobacco, then we must face the moral question inherent in feeding our kids and our adults, for that matter, substances that kill more people than smoking, alcohol, cocaine and heroin combined? Big Food and Big Tobacco are very similar in their behavior, and in fact, they often are the SAME companies such as Philip Morris/Kraft now called Altria.

Once we recognized that this is true, we have a moral obligation to create initiatives that change things. We have to change our food policies. We tax alcohol and cigarettes to account for their true cost. We prohibit their advertising on television and sports venues. We create clear labeling to warn potential consumers of their health risks. Why should addictive, deadly foods be any different?

We have to litigate if policy changes don’t work, because we cannot be advertising these foods to children, who see 30,000 ads each year for junk food. We cannot allow these harmful foods in schools. We cannot allow inadequate labeling on foods purposefully designed to confuse and confound rather than inform. Our only choice in the face of the science of food addiction is to regulate, legislate and, if that is not sufficient, to litigate.

1. **How does the *10-Day Detox* program work? What foods are eliminated? What foods do we stock up on? How are results tracked? And where does one get support?**

*The 10-Day Detox Diet* eliminates foods that contribute to inflammation and blood sugar and insulin spikes. It is a very low glycemic diet using good quality protein—fish, chicken, grass-fed animal protein, nuts, seeds, even things like non-GMO whole soy foods like tofu or tempeh—lots of fruits and vegetables, no grains, no beans, no dairy, and no gluten.

I eliminated those foods to allow the body to reset completely. We also eliminate caffeine and alcohol, as well as artificial sweeteners, chemicals, additives, and non-food substances. By doing that and adding in good foods, lots of fruits and vegetables, good quality protein, nuts and seeds—powerful anti-inflammatory healing foods— we reset the body and allow the whole system to restart.

It’s also important, if you want to change your behavior, to notice it. Those people who track their results by writing down their weight, what they eat, how much they exercise, how much they sleep, and how they feel lose twice as much weight as those who don’t track it, even while doing the same program. So, we have tools to help people track results at our website. It’s actually a very simple, powerful tool that can be used to track all your results over time and get support.

You’ll also learn that it’s easier to get healthy together. So, we’ve created an online community where you can join with others doing *The 10-Day Detox Diet* and support each other. You can also get support from my nutritionists who will coach you through the whole program. We get better together.