

NUTRITIONAL ADVICE TO HELP “CURB THOSE URGES”

Efforts to establish and maintain proper nutritional balance is, of course, essential to physical and mental health. This is especially true in the initial stages of changing any addictive behavior. More than likely nutrition has suffered. Part of Lifestyle Balance is to place proper attention to diet and exercise and maintain motivation and effort to these ends. As with any significant change in physical activity or diet... Consult the proper Professional.

One Person's Experience and Suggestions from SMART Member, Kristin

Hello people,

I want to share some of my experience with "nutritional therapy" in case anyone would like to try it. I am all for challenging addictive thinking and identifying irrational beliefs. But I've found my cognitive changes run more smoothly when I put my brain and body chemistry back in balance.

I don't advocate anyone following anything blindly. I posted MY experience with vitamins, and YOURS might be very different.

I do recommend seeking further information before trying anything. In my case, I had an exhaustive series of tests performed prior to beginning my vitamin therapy. These tests concluded among other things that I was hypoglycemic and that I had a very healthy liver which was functioning normally. Niacin, as well as the Depakote I was previously taking, both can do extreme damage to the liver over long periods of time. Again, my experience with megadoses of vitamins was over a very short time period (no longer than 6 weeks at a time).

For the past year I have been studying nutrition and vitamins and the effect of alcohol and drugs on the body systems. I will try to keep the medical terminology to a minimum, but my discoveries have totally changed the "withdrawal" period of abstinence, in many substances (including alcohol, cigarettes, and narcotics). I picked up an excellent book called "7 weeks to sobriety" and also read many holistic healing books. I heartily recommend "7 weeks to sobriety." It gives you a vitamin plan for sobriety that helps to put your body back into balance. A lot of the cravings in withdrawal are caused by low blood sugar; your body is used to 1,000 calories or more of empty sugar from alcohol and has adjusted to working with that every day, and suddenly it's not there anymore. Which

is why former drinkers often consume huge amounts of sugar and coffee, experience shakes, nightmares, and depression. I changed my diet a lot, substituting whole wheat pasta and breads for white pasta and breads, and staying away from processed foods and sugar. I can't even stress to you the difference it made in the way I feel. My depression (which landed me in the hospital on suicide watch) subsided and I was able to focus. The cravings were present, but they were not this gnawing, horrible thing.

Even if you're not ready to make the nutritional leap, there are a few supplements that you can use that helped me a lot. All of them are available at CVS or Brooks or any local pharmacy. One is vitamin C -- I use Ester C because it doesn't irritate the stomach in large doses and is more easily used by the body. Another is Niacin, which controls blood sugar. I've found Niacin can kill a craving pretty quickly when coupled with Glutamine, an amino acid which also controls blood sugar. I also take a multivitamin and a Choline/Inositol supplement which supposedly weaken addiction.

I still rely heavily on cognitive therapy and SMART "tricks of the trade" to get through cravings. But I've found the cravings much more manageable with the help of proper eating, and why go through more pain than you have to? I also have a lot more energy now and can exercise, which makes me feel even better than drinking and drugging did.

If anyone is interested I have a bunch of other books I can recommend. Hope this helps someone.

Kristin