



DR. KEESHA EWERS: Welcome to the Woman's Vitality Summit: Caring for Yourself, Body and Soul. This is Dr. Keesha Ewers, your host, and I am so excited to interview New York Times bestselling author, JJ Virgin, for this session.

She's a prominent fitness and nutrition expert, a public speaker, and a media personality. Her latest book **JJ VIRGIN: The Sugar Impact Diet** and her earlier New York Times bestsellers *The Virgin Diet* and *The Virgin Diet Cookbook*, have helped her be an internationally recognized expert in overcoming what she calls weight loss resistance. JJ was the nutrition expert for two years on *The Dr. Phil Show* and spent two seasons as a co-host of TLC's *Freaky Eaters*.

She's also the bestselling author of *Six Weeks to Sleeveless and Sexy* and creator of the *Four by Four First Training Workout*.

JJ is a board-certified nutrition specialist to the American College of Nutrition, board-certified in Holistic Nutrition, and a certified nutrition and fitness specialist. Welcome to the Summit JJ.

JJ VIRGIN: Thank you. Love what you're doing.

DR. KEESHA: It's really exciting to have you on because I love the fact that you help women shed what I call pounds of pain in so many different ways.

I always start the Summit interviews with circling back to the word vitality. It's *The Woman's Vitality Summit: Caring for Yourself, Body and Soul*. The word vitality, of course, means our life force, our life energy, our pizzazz, our dazzle, our sparkle, our juice.

In my clinical practice over the years, what's driven me to do this Summit is that I'm seeing vitality being drained more and more. I always ask every expert on the Summit what they see as a big drainer of female vitality in the era that we live in and I'm curious what the answer is for you.

JJ VIRGIN: Well, I did a little survey of my community and it was amazing to me, Keesha, what came up. What came up over and over and over again for people as to why they weren't living the life that they want to live, why they weren't losing



the weight that they want to lose, why they didn't have the energy, all that stuff was because they didn't feel good enough. They didn't feel worthy. And it broke my heart, really.

What I'd say, to me, the biggest drain of our vitality is our self-chatter. It's all of this stuff going on, the idea that we're not good enough, the idea that we have to do it all, have it all, be it all.

I think it's a very challenging time for women and for men and for a relationship. We have to really get into a lot of self-love and understanding that we're worth it and worthy right now; that everything we do beyond this in terms of our self-care comes from that place of knowing that we're perfect where we are right now.

And we're just making them ourselves a more perfect being rather than the self-loathing, like I don't look like that fashion model, right?

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DR. KEESHA: Yes.

JJ VIRGIN: These expectations we have of ourselves that we're going to be a full-time CEO and then we're going to be a full-time mom. It's craziness. That's why I think we're really setting ourselves up to fail. It has to come back to we're good enough right now, and then how we really practice self-care and self-love. That has to start first.

Then that will emanate out to our family, because we're really the healthcare CEO of our family. It really starts with the role model.

DR. KEESHA: It's so true. Research indicates that over and over again that it's the women that bring their families in, whether it's to a physician or to a functional medicine provider, a self-help group or a self-improvement program. It's the women normally that will get everything galvanized.

I know my husband is a meditation teacher and he says it's primarily women in there. We are the ones that are the change agents for our community, I think.

JJ VIRGIN: Yes, but so often we feel guilty taking care of ourselves.



DR. KEESHA: Right, yes.

JJ VIRGIN: Right?

DR. KEESHA: Yes, and that's the crime of it all and what this Summit is about. It's funny because every expert has said the same thing. And I love that.

JJ VIRGIN: Here I thought I was going to say something different.

DR. KEESHA: No. I know. It is fascinating to me that we are all seeing the same thing. I'm sure the listeners are feeling the same thing. They've heard this on over 40 interviews, me say the same opening. Whoever I'm interviewing, in one way or another, say that we have to bring home the bacon, fry it up in the pan, look hot at the same time, and keep our mental chatter positive, right?

JJ VIRGIN: Yes.

DR. KEESHA: It's really, really interesting. So you've written a number of amazing bestselling books that have been very pivotal in helping people change their lives from the inside out and you have this term that I just love called "overcoming weight loss resistance." I would love for you to talk about that.

JJ VIRGIN: Well, actually what happened was, and most people don't know this story, I was on Dr. Phil and he had this book and in the book he had a chapter called "Weight Loss Resistance." It was really just about insulin and how insulin packs weight. But what I did was I took it to be a much bigger thing.

It sparked something in me. I started out in college as a personal trainer, paying my way through college and then grad school and then I jumped grad school because I found nutrition. I started out in exercise science, went into nutrition, went into functional medicine, all of the sporty graduate doctor courses. I became obsessed with what things would get in the way of you being able to lose weight or cause you to gain weight, and got the name for it when I read that chapter in Dr. Phil's book.

I actually used it on the show when I had to move people along. It was like, "Okay, here's your area of weight loss resistance." I started looking at all the things that it could be and I discovered there were quite a few of them.

What really bothered me as I saw people trying so hard, exercising, eating what they thought was the right diet and not losing weight, and then beating themselves up about it, then giving up hope was 'I guess this is just my genes or I'm just a bad person or I don't have willpower.' It's ridiculous. We should never rely on willpower.

So I was looking for those things, really coming from this place of 'your fat is not your fault.' We're following the wrong set of rules. Food is information. So often, the things we're told are healthy are actually hurting us.

But then, there's also all of these things like poor sleep or too much stress, because you need some stress. But too much stress, creating insulin resistance, sex hormone imbalance as you go through menopause, thyroid issues, diuretic issues, toxicity issues, all of these things that could add up and create problems with weight. So that's what weight loss resistance is. It's looking at all of those things.

But you know, Keesha, it still comes down to before you can search and really look at those issues, the first thing you have to look at is your diet. The biggest needle mover for pain just can always start with what's at the end of your fork. What I realized early on is that this is not a calories in, calories out game. Your body is not a bank account, it's not a calorie lab.

DR. KEESHA: Okay, so hang on. I want to follow up on this because this is old news, just like fat is bad, the calorie in, calorie out has been around for decades.

JJ VIRGIN: It drives me crazy.

DR. KEESHA: Yes.

JJ VIRGIN: I've been getting yelled at for decades and I've finally has gotten to the point like I've started things these 30 years ago and people looked to me like I had horns. I go, "You know, this couldn't be because it was so clear to me."

I remember I took a bunch of clients with me to a retreat and I had them all eating the same and we all exercised the same. Some of those clients lost

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weight, some gained weight and some stayed the same. I thought how could this be calories?

DR. KEESHA: Right.

JJ VIRGIN: How could this be calories? Obviously, there's something more at play here, like what's going on with their metabolism? Is someone more insulin-resistant? I didn't know any of these at the time. I just knew there was an issue.

Then I started playing around with calories because I literally had a doctor tell me "It's calories in, calories out. You can eat whatever you want. You could eat all the pie or all the cookies as long as you count the calories." And I was like "I know that can't be right."

So that's why I started to look at this and I became super clear that it is not the calories in, calories out game. Your body is not a bank account because if it was, you could just create a caloric deficit either by eating less or exercising more and lose the exact amount of weight that you outlined. That's what would happen if your body was just a calorie burning furnace. But we know that doesn't work. There have got to be other things at play.

In reality, your body is a hormone chemistry lab and all of these things come from food. Food is the fastest place to start, but what about poor sleep. We know that people who eat perfectly and exercise well, if they're getting poor sleep, they're at a higher risk for obesity, right?

We know that people who eat no-calorie sweeteners have a higher risk for diabetes and obesity. But they don't have any calories. So there are clearly other things at play here.

That's why we have looked beyond that and we've been so misinformed. I mean, I think the thing that upsets me most about all this stuff is I know the psyche because I have the psyche.

I've helped hundreds of thousands of people with this psyche where they read something about eating more whole grains or having diet sodas because they've got no calories.



You follow those rules. They don't work. You think something's wrong with you. You give up. You beat yourself up. That just upsets me so much, right?

DR. KEESHA: Right. That's the thing that gets women into the yo-yo dieting which we know also destroys thyroid, ruins hormones, get your adrenals fatigued. Also, I think it was you who mentioned the mental burn out where someone says "Okay, I'm always going to be this way. If I'm going to go down in flames, I'm going to go down in big flames."

JJ VIRGIN: It's emotional. To me what's most devastating there is we know it thrashes your thyroid and adrenal. You lose your muscle mass. There are so many things that happen with people who do yo-yo dieting. It is devastating to your metabolism.

But it's even more devastating to your mindset. If your mental outlook goes down then you're really in trouble. That's where I really get upset. And you hear people go and they've just given up their hope.

DR. KEESHA: Yes. This is so important for women to hear. I get someone sitting across the desk from me and I'll do food sensitivity testing and say "You know, your hidden food sensitivities can make you fat. It can cause inflammation. It causes all this fluid build-up. It creates a whole cascade of issues that the bio feedback to you will be on your scale."

It doesn't mean that it's really fat. It could be that you have all this water that's in the wrong places. One of the things that makes me crazy is when someone loses a bunch of weight and then the response is "Oh that was just water weight." That wasn't supposed to be there!

JJ VIRGIN: Yes. We work just to retain 10 pounds of extra fluid.

DR. KEESHA: Right. "Oh, that's just water."

JJ VIRGIN: "It was water weight and my knees don't hurt anymore."

DR. KEESHA: Right.

JJ VIRGIN: But I was like "Yes."

DR. KEESHA: I'll have a patient that will actually say that to me "Well, that was just water weight." And I'll say "Yes, you just squeezed out your sponge and that's a good thing. That wasn't supposed to be in there." But they'll discount it and not take that and say "Wow! I just did this great thing for my body and my body is giving me feedback."

So I think one of the most important things that I see, and I'd love you to speak about this, is the disconnect between the mind that can sometimes be such a bully and the body that's just trying to get the attention of the mind. It has to turn up the volume step by step by step until it gets louder and louder and louder to get some kind of acknowledgement that what we're eating or what we're thinking, how we're processing our information is not serving us very well.

JJ VIRGIN: It is crazy because we are taught to create that disconnect, to not listen to our bodies early on. I had been on every diet out there, I swear, except for the last 10 years. I don't do that anymore. But up until then, you name it. I've gone on everything.

All of those diets taught me to count calories, but they never taught me to pay attention to what my body felt and it created this big disharmony, this big disconnect. I believe that we know best and our bodies are smart.

What we really need to do is go through a personal discovery process and learn to trust again, so that when you go and they sit down with you and do a food sensitivity test, you have faith.

I did that with hundreds of people and started to realize that the same thing showed up on the test. That's why with The Virgin Diet, I was like, "Okay, let's pull out the most common offenders. You may not be reacting to all of them but I'm pretty sure you're reacting to a few of them."

But you pull them out and then we take you through a couple of weeks where you do a reset, you just clean out. You find your new normal. Don't you find that for so many of us we've come to this place where we think that it's normal to be inflamed, have our knees hurt or joints ache? It's normal to be tired

throughout the day. It's normal to walk into another room and go "Why am I here?"

DR. KEESHA: Right.

JJ VIRGIN: "What was I doing? What was I going here to get?" And it's not normal. It's normal to be gassy and bloated. No, it's not normal. And so, so many of these things that we've come to accept can actually be signs of lifestyle choices and diet choices.

Why go through a reset clean out and then go back to fried foods? It doesn't matter if the popular literature is saying you need to eat whole grains. If you eat them and you feel bloated, or you eat them and your knees ache, you now know the difference because you've connected the dots. When we can do that, connect those dots, that's the most empowering thing that could happen because now, all of a sudden, you know.

Any adult goes "I shouldn't have that extra glass of wine because I'm going to feel like crap tomorrow." It's the same thing with food. "If I eat that pizza, my face will break out. My knees will hurt tomorrow." It's a different conversation and I'm going to have a cheap day. And that's why I think it's so critical for us to make those connections.

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DR. KEESHA: I wholeheartedly agree on this idea that you're not supposed to ride the detox-retox rollercoaster. I remember one time doing a detox. I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis about 20 years ago, but in a year, it was gone and it hasn't been seen since.

But at the time, I was going through this idea that what I was eating at the end of my fork was either causing inflammation, or it's not. There's no in between. I was coming to grips with that paradigm shift that actually yes, my food is affecting my body. My body is just giving me feedback. So it's learning all of this.

I did this first detox and I felt awful. There was so much sugar-craving stuff coming out of me. So I finished and I felt really good, no pain. My swelling was gone.



I was very proud of myself and I was again in my normal, happy, sunny mood and I wasn't snapping at everyone around me. Then my friend shows up on the doorstep with pizza and says "I'm the retox bad news bear." I was just like "Ooh."

JJ VIRGIN: Wow!

DR. KEESHA: When I think about that, back then it was a complete lack of boundaries, first of all, to not just say "You need to take that pizza, put it in your car, and you come in for a little visit." Instead, I actually sat down and felt bad that she'd gone to the trouble of bringing me comfort food because she knew that in the first three days of this cleanse I'd felt crappy.

In her mind, she was in the old paradigm. She was doing something nice for me. At 51, I would just say "Turn back around and go put that back. And then you can come in and we'll talk over dandelion tea." But I ate a piece of pizza.

It's that retox-detox rollercoaster. I think people look at healthy eating as a cleanse. Then after that, you can revert back to whatever it was that got you into trouble in the first place. That causes a lot of problems.

JJ VIRGIN: That is why it's so important to connect the dots between what you're eating and how you feel, then you won't be tempted to do that. Literally, I can give you this story that's such a perfect example.

It was when my son was a victim of hit-and-run, literally left for dead in the street. I was in the ICU. He was in a coma. One of my friends blurted out "We are waiting. The Virgin Diet is coming out, right?" It's all about pulling out things like gluten and dairy. I have a gluten issue and a dairy issue. So if you want to hurt me, give me those.

DR. KEESHA: I'm the same.

JJ VIRGIN: She was like "You know what? Ease up on yourself. You need to take care of yourself. Why don't I come over and we'll have a pizza?" And I'm thinking "Ma'am, there's no margin for error right now. I've got to be on my total



game. I can't get sick. I'm in the ICU. I cannot have a pizza nor would I want one."

But there's still this whole idea of these comfort foods. So it's funny because to me, the last thing on earth that's comforting would be to eat like a piece of cake or a pizza. I'd be doubled over.

DR. KEESHA: Right.

JJ VIRGIN: It's just crazy. But I think unless you make those connections, you don't see food that way. You need to start to see food differently which is why it's so important to do that; go do that detox and reset and then see what works for you.

It's not about never having these things again. But you don't really want them once you know how they make you feel and you also realize that there are actually really good options in place of them so you don't even miss them.

DR. KEESHA: That's the key right there. I think it's easier than it has ever been. We went through a period of time where gluten-free became sort of the fat-free rage. So then a bunch of food industry people jumped on that and made a whole bunch of really crappy processed foods.

JJ VIRGIN: I know.

DR. KEESHA: And the co-ops around the world, that are labeled natural food stores, carried them by the thousands, so anyone could go in and buy their gluten-free muffins. Of course, they've got three or four times more sugar than they would if they had whey in them. It's just so awful for you.

But we've moved into this new space. So I'm really excited about the idea that you can swap food and that whole foods are way more readily available than they ever were before since I've been alive. I think that's really exciting. So I'd love to talk about some food swaps because you just segued right into that.

JJ VIRGIN: I've got say, it's like to me, the best gluten-free foods don't have to put gluten-free on the label because there is no label.



DR. KEESHA: There is no label.

JJ VIRGIN: There's no label, right? You remember back when the whole cholesterol thing became the big thing? I remember going into grocery store and there was a potato sitting there and with a little sticker that said 'no cholesterol.' And I was thinking when did the potato get a liver? Why does this potato have no cholesterol? What's going on?

Yes, so the best gluten-free foods, the best sugar-free foods, they actually don't have a label that says those things on them. I do believe that we're better off without gluten in our diet, but going out and eating gluten-free junk food, it's still junk food. A cookie is still a cookie.

DR. KEESHA: It's true. When I mention the top seven things I want people to stay away from, soda being really high, if they've listed that in their food diary, I'll tell them that I have what I call the 'great alternative yes list' that my nutritionist and I built together.

Sometimes the adolescent part of your brain comes up and says "Screw this. I'm going to be good for a while. And then I'm going to be really bad." That's the adolescent part of your brain. It has just come out and said "Don't tell me what to do and quit trying to control me."

I think most patients I work with, that will come up, that part of you that just says "I feel deprived. I feel victimized. I feel like I can't live like everyone else. How come this person can eat?" My son actually said this when he was getting acne. He's allergic to gluten and he says "How come all my friends can drink beer and eat Cheetos and they don't have acne but I do?"

So there's going to be that process that you have to go through where you can accept and love and be grateful for the feedback that your body is giving you. The other guy, maybe he doesn't have that feedback mechanism and he's having this silent inflammation happen inside anyway but just in a different way.

So these swaps, what are some of the things that people can do for some of the worst foods out there that cause inflammation?



JJ VIRGIN: I don't believe people can walk around eating a bunch of sugar and gluten and feel great.

DR. KEESHA: No.

JJ VIRGIN: I'd be up to find one.

DR. KEESHA: No.

JJ VIRGIN: You know?

DR. KEESHA: If they do it's in a different way. I think if you wear it on the outside with psoriasis, eczema, acne as a teenager - teenagers tend to feel quite picked on if their counterparts are not having those things, right?

JJ VIRGIN: Right. And it is interesting. One of my sons is 19. For his whole high school years, he had migraines. I'm like "I notice, I'm just suggesting that every time you have a pizza, you have a migraine. I'm just thinking that there could be a correlation." I'm just trying to be careful here because, you know?

DR. KEESHA: I know.

JJ VIRGIN: It's funny. He goes off to college and he's like "You know, if you sent me some vitamins, I'd take them." I'm like "Ha?!" So next thing I know he's taking his fish oil. He's taking his vitamins. He's gone gluten and dairy-free. He's eating my pizza. He's doing my shakes. He's doing everything. And he had no migraines.

DR. KEESHA: My son did the exact same thing at that age, the same thing. He even called and apologized "Mom, I'm so sorry. I should have listened to you."

JJ VIRGIN: I know. It is so funny.

DR. KEESHA: I know.

JJ VIRGIN: If anyone is listening who's a parent who's going "Haaaah!" – they'll come around. I always put it out there but I never pushed because I knew that then I would just spray the big wall. I just put it like "Well, you might want to think



about what's available." He went off to college and I got the same thing, a thank you text.

DR. KEESHA: Right.

JJ VIRGIN: Wow! That's incredible. But the cool thing is, about what we said before, is it's never been easier. You do have to be careful about falling into the gluten-free trap, just like the old fat-free trap, because all we've done now is created an era of new junk food.

Any diet, whether you're doing paleo or vegan or gluten-free, it's like they all have their share of junk food. They'll just figure it out. So just be aware of that.

But there are simple solutions. Look at pasta. If you're eating regular pasta or whole wheat pasta, there's light pasta, there's quinoa pasta, there's lentil pasta or even better there's shirataki noodles, miracle noodles or vegetables. There's squash. You can use spaghetti squash or you can just use the spiralizer and make your own noodles from zucchini. So this is a simple one.

I just had a bunch of people over the other day. I always have a ton of stuff in the fridge for impromptu meals. I have this really cool house in San Diego so we end up with a lot of people over at odd times. I had these coconut wraps from Julian's Bakery and they're amazing. I mean, people were putting sliced turkey and avocado in them.

I love using Kite Hill almond ricotta cheese. If you love cheese, Kite Hill makes the most amazing almond ricotta cheese. You can make your own cashew cheese at home. It's cheap, easy to do and yummy. It makes amazing cream cheese and cream. It's incredible. So those are simple ones for gluten-free.

Again, there are so many non-milk alternatives now. It's so simple to do. Remember when it was a battle trying to find some coconut milk? Now you've got coconut milk, cashew milk, almond milk, flax milk. It's everywhere. But the easiest thing is still at home. You can make cashew milk, cashew cream, cashew cream cheese. It's incredible.

Those are the biggest offenders I saw as I was doing food sensitivity testing. Obviously gluten is a different type of a test. But dairy and eggs were the things that showed up the most on all the tests for me. And I looked at tons of them and then I looked at other doctors' tests.

I love eggs. I think they're one of the most amazing foods. But the challenge is it's not 'you are what you eat', it's 'you are what you ate.' And we're doing evil things to chickens.

I also think that for a lot of people, when they decided to stop eating dessert for breakfast and lose the muffins, which are just cupcakes without frosting, and some of the other stuff, they went to eggs. So they ate too many of them and there just wasn't enough food rotation. Or they went straight to egg whites, and if you really want to get everything you need from an egg and absorb more of the protein, you need to eat the whole egg anyway.

So I've pulled people off of eggs for three weeks. If they find that they can tolerate them, I make sure that they're getting pastured eggs. Ideally, eating duck eggs would be great. If you can get duck eggs, they're better. But the thing I substitute for breakfast is I start every day with a shake and I've been doing that for over 25 years now.

DR. KEESHA: Same here.

JJ VIRGIN: Yes. The big thing to do there is to make sure you're not starting the day off with an adult milkshake. You really need to have a clean protein source. I use either a concentrated bone broth beef protein source or pea protein source. It just depends.

I've got, in my world, I'd say people can be vegan, paleo, pegan. I don't care. I'm not going to die in any of those worlds. I'm going to make things that can work for anybody whichever their slant is.

My personal slant is what I call paleo plus, starting out with a good clean protein source and then some good healthy fat, something like coconut milk or almond milk. I throw in an avocado. I love that. It makes it like a mousse.



Then some spinach, and then depending on what I'm doing, I either just throw in a little bit of berries or I don't. But shakes are the easiest way to get a good healthy breakfast going and get your healthy fats and fiber and protein, which is really the trifecta for blood sugar control. That way, you can skip those eggs.

DR. KEESHA: It's also a great way to get a whole bunch of calories. I was working with someone who's trying to lose weight. She told me what she put in her smoothie in the morning – she's putting a whole can of coconut milk, an entire avocado, a bunch of mango, and a whole banana.

JJ VIRGIN: Whoa! Whoa! Uh-oh. Uh-oh.

DR. KEESHA: Just trim down that smoothie just a little bit here.

JJ VIRGIN: Yes. Well, the mango, I'd argue with her putting in all that high sugar impact too. I tell people two to three fat servings. A whole can of coconut milk and an avocado is a little too much. What I do is about a third of an avocado and some almonds or coconut milk, and spinach. I do add some extra fibers, some chia seeds.

With anything you're doing, I always tell people that they want to eat healthy food, but too much healthy food is not healthy. So you still need to watch what you eat. Not in terms of counting calories, but in terms of looking at how much protein should you be eating in a meal so you can really assimilate it, how much fat you need, and then really fill up with fiber.

Fiber and especially large amounts of starchy vegetables are going to be some of the key things. Even just half an avocado is going to give you 11 grams of fiber and that's just amazing.

DR. KEESHA: It's funny. When we just circled back to where we started and mentioned the calorie-rich smoothie, it's because we did start by saying it's not calories in, calories out. We don't want you counting calories or the clock. But do be aware of the sugar that is being put into your body when you eat a ton of fruit in your smoothie.

JJ VIRGIN: Yes, I take it out actually.



DR. KEESHA: Yes.

JJ VIRGIN: When we do the Sugar Impact Diet, I take people off of fructose altogether for two weeks to do a reset.

There's this idea out there that fruit is free food. And in fact, I do a lot of media interviews and that's where you see that this stuff is still out there and we still are living by these urban legends of eating every three to four hours, counting calories, having a little fat, eating whole grains. All this stuff is making me crazy.

But they were saying "We're talking about great diet strategies. So one of the things we're telling people to do is eat fruit after their meals for their sweet tooth." I'm like "I'm not going to go along with that, guys." That is not what you want to do. It's not free food. You don't want to keep your sweet tooth turned on. You want to actually get rid of your sweet tooth altogether.

You can dial that down. One of the ways to dial it down is to get fructose down as low as possible. Obviously, we're getting sources of fructose from high-fructose corn syrup in all of these processed foods, so you can pull that out. Another way is we're getting it in a lot of these smoothies that people are going out to get. There's juice and then things like pineapple and banana, all of this stuff in there. It's just a big sugar load.

DR. KEESHA: Oh, my goodness! I went into Jamba Juice years ago when it was new. It was right next door to the favorite bakery that I used to go to, Great Harvest Bread. I was a marathon runner and I would go for a long run and then I would hit Jamba Juice and Great Harvest to get a bagel, a chunk of bread and have my juice.

Then one day I thought to ask "Do you guys have the nutritional information on these smoothies and juices that you have?" They handed me this notebook so I started perusing through while I was sucking the straw. Then I stopped and I threw it away and I never went back again!



If you think about it, four grams of carbohydrates is a teaspoon of sugar. There are at least 24 teaspoons of sugar in any given size of the juice that we walked out of these juice places with, what they call smoothies. It's crazy.

So I never went back to that and I did the same thing with Great Harvest Bread. Now that I'd just had my world ruined next door, I said "I'm curious, do you have any nutritional information on your bread?" Again, I read it and I just left.

My goodness! I think we love to go with 'ignorance is bliss.' If we don't know it, if it's called health food by the marketer, then we're going to go with that. That is a sure way of not being healthy I think.

JJ VIRGIN: The challenge is a lot of labels now just do things to distract us, like they'll use the word natural which means nothing.

DR. KEESHA: Right.

JJ VIRGIN: Or they'll put 'no added coloring' but there'll be artificial sugars in there. Or they'll say 'no added sugar.' There are all different ways they'll do stuff like that so that you don't pay attention to the issues. I see it time and time again.

Here are the little ways that a label can lie that makes me crazy. Take apple juice concentrate. It's actually higher in fructose than high-fructose corn sugar and pretty much anything.

With fruit juice concentrate, they can legally say 'no added sugar' like that's all it is that they're adding. They can say it, right?

Take jam. All jam is sugar. Dried fruit is candy. Juice is soda. Jam is sugar. It's like spreading honey on something.

Honey, just because it's all natural as are all these other things, is sugar. Then you take jam and you spike it with fruit juice concentrate and put 'no sugar added.' Now it will sound like "Oh my Gosh!"

DR. KEESHA: You just said some really great things right there. I want everyone to really hear that little pithy thing you just said – 'dried fruit is candy.' I say this all the time – dried fruit is just candy, it's like sugar cubes.



JJ VIRGIN: I still remember in college going to the health food store. I went to health food stores at age 12. I'd switch my chocolate for carob. I switched my ice cream for frozen yogurt. I started having panda black licorice because I didn't want to get too fat.

I thought I was doing all these healthy things but I wasn't. There was no change at all, right? There's no change in the sugar intake or anything else. I wasn't having cupcakes, I was having bran muffins. That's what's so frustrating is you're trying to be healthy. And one of the things I got completely hooked on was dried papaya and dried pineapple – that's candy. It's crazy.

DR. KEESHA: Yes.

JJ VIRGIN: So that's when I looked at juice. Dr. Amon says this and I'm going to make sure I credit him as he says "When you do juice, you just unwrapped the fruit." He was like "You unwrapped the fruit, threw the fiber away which is the whole point of it. And now you're left with the sugar, right? No one's going to sit down and eat six oranges. But you could easily have six oranges in orange juice."

DR. KEESHA: Right.

JJ VIRGIN: So that's why I say wouldn't it be easier if we just call it what it is? Dried fruit is candy. A muffin is a cupcake.

It's interesting. When I was doing a morning show, I was looking at the sugar and carb content of a Hostess cupcake and it was the same as this muffin at a local Starbucks that was like a healthy breakfast morning muffin. That's how it was being sold.

A woman was in line and she's going to get the skinny latte, which has artificial sweeteners, which we know impact your gut microbiome and sets you at risk for diabetes and obesity, but she's going to have the skinny latte because she's being good. Then she's going to have the healthy morning muffin.



She would never stand there and say “I’m going to have a Coke and that package of Hostess cupcakes.” Never. So that’s what she did, and that’s what’s so sad. She started the morning with a diet soda and a Hostess cupcake but she thought she had a little halo over her head because she was having this skinny latte and a whole grain muffin.

That’s why I say call them all what they are. That’s a cupcake, not a muffin. That salad that you just had with the fat-free raspberry vinaigrette, the glazed walnuts, and the dried fruit, that’s a sundae. The glaze on the salmon, you just shined it with sugar. You just put syrup on it.

If you look at it that way, you’re not going to order the juice if you thought it was the same as a soda. There are vitamin waters out there that have more sugar in them than a soda. There’s a green drink out there that’s got 44 grams of sugar in 16 ounces. That’s more than a soda and you’re buying these things to try to be healthy.

This is where we get into trouble because unless you’re reading the labels and looking beyond the deception, they’re saying that it’s packed with green power, it’s all natural, no artificial flavoring. You’re thinking you’re doing a good thing.

I just went and I busted them! I went to a pool party for my team at the home of one of my marketing directors, she helps put the programs together. I went to have a look in her pantry and I promptly said “Get this into the trash!” Then we did a pantry intervention right in her house and we went through everything. She’d been duped by misinformation and she’s like “Oh my gosh. This is so embarrassing.”

DR. KEESHA: I’m sure she was horrified.

JJ VIRGIN: Here she is, she bought something because it said 'all natural' and it contained veggies. I'm thinking, gosh, if she's getting duped, what hope do any of us really have?

DR. KEESHA: It’s true. Like we said already, if it has a label on it then you’ve already taken one step away from whole food and non-processed.



JJ VIRGIN: Yes. We want to unprocess your diet. I love that Natalie Joel has a thing about unprocessing your diet. It's so key.

But then you end up getting clients who say they've spent five hours in the grocery store. That's why I love that you said you have a list because you just go into the grocery store armed with the list and know what you're looking for.

Again, I started out with swaps. If you've been doing all these soy things in an effort to be healthy, stop it because soy is not a health food. Look at what they do. In order to make soy healthy, you have to process the heck out of it because that has to be totally fermented. If it's super-duper fermented, you have to start with organic. The chances of getting organic soy that's highly fermented is unusual.

By the way, I'm looking at soy ice cream, soy hotdogs, soy cheese as just processed junk food. It's crazy. They have bad hormonal effects that can thrash your thyroid. So I look at all that stuff. Just do the great cashew cheese and do coconut milk, not the soy milk.

If you're doing these vegan things, switch over at least to stuff like clean pea protein. Ideally, start to look outside of that unless you're doing it for a religious reason. Look at how you're going to incorporate some clean protein. One of my big challenges I see with the vegan diet is that big argument about factory meat.

No one's suggesting to eat factory meat. Go get grass-fed, pastured and wild. The protein source is out there.

Corn is one that makes me crazy, Keesha, because if you look back, what do we feed cows and pigs to fatten them up? We feed them corn.

DR. KEESHA: Right.

JJ VIRGIN: Corn and soy are the most genetically modified crops. Yet 'skinny pop' is this great thing that you should be eating on a weight loss plan. If you look at what corn does the minute you start chewing it – it's just turning straight into sugar. It's high sugar impact.



I've never met a person, especially me, who can have one cup of popcorn and be satisfied. It is one of the ultimate trigger foods. There's nothing positive about it.

Yes, there's a little fiber, but there are way better sources of fiber. It's pro-inflammatory, high in fatty acids, chloroacetic acid. It's one of the higher sensitivity foods.

It basically has high sugar impact because it's turning straight to sugar and it's a bingy food. So if you're doing a corn tortilla, again go over to a coconut tortilla. The corn is an easy one to replace.

For sugar, there are so many alternatives. My favorite thing for people to do who are adding any kind of sugar in is to just start using things like cinnamon or vanilla. But there's erythritol, there's glycine and there's stevia, there's monk fruit, there's xylitol.

There are so many simple sugar replacements if you have to use something a little bit to sweeten things up. I always try to get people to use the least amount and get back in the natural taste of savory and spicy and sea salty. But you can use them, these ones that actually have health benefits rather than health detriments.

DR. KEESHA: They work great too. Alright, we are out of time. JJ, thank you so much for sharing even a tiny little bit of your wisdom in a short period of time. For our listeners who are wanting more, again, JJ has got several books out.

Her latest one is The Sugar Impact Diet and she's going to offer some bonus materials on her speaker's page at the website along with the way to LinkedIn to get a downloadable copy. What is it that you're offering the listeners?

JJ VIRGIN: Ha?!

DR. KEESHA: Oops, sorry.

JJ VIRGIN: You got me. It's a surprise to both of us.

DR. KEESHA: Okay.



JJ VIRGIN: I was thinking I'm not sure what we're offering. But it's super awesome, whatever it is.

DR. KEESHA: It's so awesome. I know. I got excited and that's my bad. I just started throwing something in there. I think it's actually a swap sheet. But we have a really wonderful tip sheet that your team sent over to us. It's on the website.

So you can see more about what JJ's up to and again read her books. Tons of really wonderful information here. Thank you so much.

JJ VIRGIN: Oh, thank you. My pleasure. I love what you're doing. It's super cool. We need more of you out there in the world.

DR. KEESHA: Well vice-versa. Alright everybody, remember to live, love, laugh, keep learning and be the most fantastic version of yourself, until next time.