

David Roberts:

Hey everybody, it's David Roberts and this is the [Maralabs 00:21:24] podcast. And today, we're going to be talking about how to survive Thanksgiving. The holidays coming up, and it is synonymous with friends, family, lots of Turkey, good food. And if you're like me, you have a tummy ache at the end of it. Inevitably, I overeat. I'll just admit it right now.

And so I asked Martin to talk some, he actually has an amazing game plan that he follows every year. I have a few things that I've learned through trial and error, and we're just going to throw out how to be thoughtful, so that you don't tank your health over Thanksgiving, but really it's the start of the holiday season. And so you may or may not have Christmas parties and there may or may not be alcohol at the Christmas parties, lots of rich food. So let's just dive in and Martin.

Martin:

Thanks for having me.

David Roberts:

Yeah. Good. Glad you're here.

Martin:

Here. Seems like I'm always here.

David Roberts:

So what do you do? We were talking earlier, you have this really thoughtful game plan as far as, how do you navigate really not tanking your health over Thanksgiving?

Martin:

Yeah. I mean, again, let's not say I don't overeat at times, and let's not say that this hasn't evolved over years, because again, my whole game plan revolves around prevention and health and that's not a day to day thing. This is an overall plan that is really important to me going forward. I have young kids, I'm at least half a decade, a little more than half a decade old.

And so I'm going to be an older guy where my kids are graduating high school. I'm certainly going to be an older granddad and I want to be having that health span. So everybody talks about lifespan, but I really am focused on health span. And I know it's a new buzzword, but it's a very important buzzword for me. And so this plan has developed over time, but let me focus on the very positive things about the holidays.

Certainly love being around community, love being around family. And those are things that we should not take for granted. And we should really enjoy and go into with a positive heart and a thought on blessing. Let me also say that if you decide, because of the unprecedented times, we've heard that word a few times, that we're in, if you choose to not be with family or if you're unfortunate enough to be alone, let that not stop you, and have you have a whole bunch of negative thoughts.

Maybe you can consider going on a hike that you've wanted to go on for some time, and who knows, you'll meet some people out there. Maybe you can go buy a new album or something that you've thought about wanting to do for some time, cooking something different that you'd be like, well, nobody's ever going to try this. Just something different to put a more positive spin on what can be thought of as a more negative time, if you're alone. But again, fantastic time to be with family, friends,

certainly spending time outdoors, if you're concerned about COVID, is a great way to approach the holidays, have a fire, something warm outside and gather with friends outside.

So that could be another option, but I think where most of us fall short is probably in three categories, and nutrition would be one. So again, there's a lot of high salt, highly rich foods that we may not, on an everyday basis, eat. And there's a lot of it. And so, if we're outside running around or in side, and it's a little bit warmer and we're not necessarily thinking about hydration, one of the things that we as Americans and certainly our co-conspirator, John, is very focused on, is salt, and salt becomes a problem in two ways.

One, is if you're eating a lot of sugar. So if you start the meal with a lot of sugared beverages and then go to a high-salt food, that fructose in the beverages can have a negative effect on the kidneys, through a mechanism of uric acid. And so we don't process the salt as well, and we can have a really negative effect on our blood pressure and possibly our pulse.

And the other way is if we're not well hydrated. So if you take two groups of people and feed them the exact same amount of salt, one group, you hydrate better, the other group, you don't, the group that's well hydrated is not going to have a negative response in blood pressure. The group that was not well hydrated can have an increase in their blood pressure, systolic of 10 to 20 millimeters of mercury, which is pretty significant, especially if you're borderline anyway. So certainly ensuring that you're hydrated.

So going into the meal, thinking about a couple things, one is being hydrated. So getting some water. That does not mean alcohol, probably doesn't mean coffee. So, enjoying some water before, that ensures that you'll also be a little more satiated and also trying to start the meal with some soluble, insoluble fiber.

And so when you look at what's being served, maybe focus on the salad first, certainly vegetables, cooked vegetables. That's going to help you with soluble and insoluble fiber, which can then help coat the gut, feed the bacteria to help you also break down the products, not absorb as much fat and cholesterol and sugars, and have a much more gentle response to the things that you're taking in.

And certainly understanding eating slowly, not standing around the food table. So find a seat, enjoy the seat, enjoy your company. Maybe think 10 minutes before standing up and going for another plate, just allow that to satiate you and enjoy. As a family, we always have activities planned. So the second thing that we do is sit around, so lack of exercise.

So we're sitting around, we're talking to family, certainly there's no reason that we couldn't go outside and enjoy a walk with family, enjoy the beautiful outdoors. We have a fairly large family. So we sometimes play kickball or we do a little flag football outside. And on Friday, we generally plan a new hike or a hike that we previously enjoyed.

And then the third thing we do only tend to do is drink too much. And unfortunately, that probably includes not only alcohol, but also sugared beverages. Those have significantly negative effects, but the alcohol can have other negative effects. We talked about how it can play with salt, but alcohol unfortunately can have an effect on our sleep. So then we're eating, we're drinking, we're full. If we go to bed full, we can have reflux, we can have a whole lot of things happening. And if we're drinking alcohol, it can disrupt our sleep architecture and how well we sleep?

So we can certainly have a negative effect from just one meal, which can last the next day. And then if we're not feeling well the next day, fatigue sets in. We maybe start the holidays on a fairly negative footing, which again, for me is just not ideal. Your health is not something to be taken for granted. It's always important. Again, as you said I think, David, at the beginning, that one meal isn't going to kill you, but at the same time, you don't want it to start on that pathway.

David Roberts:

Yeah. And yeah, one meal isn't going to kill you, but it's really not just one meal, is it?

Martin:

Right.

David Roberts:

Because you have the leftovers and then the Christmas season is right around the corner. We have our company Christmas party on the next weekend. And so, you could be having parties every weekend. Excuse me. And then that's leading up to Christmas and the Christmas meal, which may not be the same extravaganza as the Thanksgiving meal, but it can be close cousins. And so it is important to have a game plan.

If you're like me, and you just wing it or have done the winging in the past, having a specific game plan in terms of, hey, this is coming up, so we need to be thoughtful, I think. And just hearing you, like drinking water, being hydrated, eating veggies as a first course.

Martin:

Yeah. And that can include calling your host, if you're not hosting, certainly calling your host and asking them if you can bring a plate of vegetables or a salad, if you're not sure that there's something like that's going to be available. And if you don't want to call somebody and suggest that maybe there should be vegetables or salads, maybe just making a small plate for yourself before you leave to go to the party, so you can arrive somewhat satiated and then you can pick at the table, a few of the food that are there.

And so if somebody says, hey, I made that, what did you think? You can be like, that was absolutely delicious. And you didn't have a huge portion of it, you had a smaller portion. You felt pretty good about that. So again, planning, thinking ahead is always important.

David Roberts:

And I think that's for every party really. I mean, with Mara's cancer, we would always, for whatever party we went to, we would bring a dish or dishes that we would eat.

Martin:

Right.

David Roberts:

We brought something we knew we could eat. For Thanksgiving, I'm going to make the Brussels sprout recipe that's on our blog, that have made that the last several years. People tend to like it.

Martin:

Got cranberries in it?

David Roberts:

You can.

Martin:

Yeah.

David Roberts:

This is just salt, pepper and fried.

Martin:

You can certainly add cranberries or pomegranates.

David Roberts:

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Pomegranates make it look a little festive.

Martin:

Yeah.

David Roberts:

Anyway, but bringing a dish, I really like that. Bringing a dish that you know you'll eat, that you know is healthy. I think that's the other issue for me, is that I think my family, their view on food is shifted slightly with Mara's cancer and her having died, however, just very slightly. If I weren't buying the Turkey, it would not be organic, that sort of thing. And so basically, unless you know it's organic, the assumption is it's not.

Martin:

Right.

David Roberts:

Excuse me. I still have a little post COVID cough going on. And then I think the third thing that you said is just exercise, getting a game plan. We don't do this regularly, but walk after Thanksgiving, depending where we are at. But a good thing about my family is we have a lot of younger nieces and nephews, younger cousins. And so they're always outside playing, and so joining in with that.

I think for me, making sure I don't eat so much that I am thrown in this food coma, its important. And so I will say too, one other tidbit that I've noticed is like, I don't know, it could be because the Turkey in previous years hasn't been organic, however, I've noticed just a tummy ache after Thanksgiving. And it could be the potpourri of foods.

But I have noticed if I take some digestive enzymes ahead of the meal, that really makes a big difference. And I get my digestive enzymes from Vitacost, the broad spectrum digestives, not a specific enzyme, but I've noticed that helps quite a bit as well.

Martin:

Interesting. Yeah. I haven't always noticed that, but it's not terribly uncommon if you're having a potpourri of foods and maybe eating something you don't general eat. Like I almost never eat dairy, but if I do partake in somebody else's dish that they're very excited about, and maybe there's dairy in there, maybe there's a bunch of wheat, maybe a more processed wheat, then yeah, maybe I'll have a little something, but I'm generally pretty careful.

And again, what's fascinating and there's so many things, there's so many parts to this, and that's the understanding hopefully of your health is, it's not just nutrition. It's not just exercise. It's not just sleep. It's not just alcohol intake. It's the combination of all these things that can have effect on this beautiful thing you call your body because it is a system. There's no way that you can just affect one area. You're not just a heart, you're not just lungs, you're not just a brain. You're all these things together. And one thing absolutely has an effect on another.

So please take these things into account, being conscientious about all these things. If you falter a little, just get back up the next day, have a fairly decent plan for the next day to get back on the health wagon and, and move it forward. And there's no reason to talk to others while you're there and say, hey, look, I'm trying to get healthy. I think the more we can spread the notion of prevention and how important your body is and how important your body's health is, is great.

And I don't think it's nerdy anymore. I think there's a bigger and better understanding that the healthcare system is broken. And we as individuals need to do more to take this on. I've been listening to James Clear, I don't know if you're familiar with him, Atomic Habits, really interesting idea. And one of the things that I love that he was speaking about is, almost none of us rise to our goals. We fall to the systems we have in place to get to those goals or the lack thereof.

In other words, I may want to be the best guitar player in my family, but if I never pick up a guitar and play, because I haven't set aside time, the chance of that happening are not good. Or we all say, hey, I want to be healthier, but yet, when we go ... And this is another thing, David, is when we go to the grocery store, it starts there, right? So what are we buying? What are we doing there?

So again, if we want to be healthy, what exactly are we doing to make that happen? What are we buying at the grocery store? What is our weekly meal plan? And for this, what is our meal plan going into Thanksgiving? What is our plan to [inaudible 00:16:08] get back on the horse, should we fall? What's our plan to be active. Yes, we all love the football games. We all love sitting around and hanging out and vegetating and being in a food coma. But during halftime, let's get up and psych up the kids to go out and run around. And if you want to be old time quarterback and run around and just move around, so be it. Just have some sort of fun plan.

David Roberts:

Yeah.

Martin:

And you can be the instigator, the motivator. There's no reason you got to wait for somebody else to do it. So again, have those systems set up, so you don't falter in your goals and everybody's goals should be health. I mean, if I ask you, do you want to be healthy? That should be an absolute, yes. And if that's true, we should have those systems in place to those goals.

David Roberts:

Yeah, that's a great word. And as we're talking about people we listen to, I was reading Peter Attia's blurb on what he does for Thanksgiving.

Martin:

Interesting.

David Roberts:

And he basically makes sure everyone who comes, brings Tupperware, so that they leave with, there are no leftovers left. And so that's one, that's his thought. He thinks ahead of time, make sure that happens, and everybody leaves with food. Therefore, everyone shares the burden of the food.

Martin:

Of the leftovers. That's really interesting. Yeah. Peter Attia is incredibly mindful about, almost seems like everything.

David Roberts:

Yeah.

Martin:

With regard to health, I don't think he's perfect by any stretch, but great podcast. If you haven't listened to Peter Attia's podcast, it's called The Drive and yeah, he's got some great things to say.

David Roberts:

And so, we'll wrap up with the last question. What do you do about the pies?

Martin:

Oh, I enjoy the pies. There's no question. I'm fortunate enough that my niece and nephew work at a local food stand and they have fresh whole fruit pies that they bring. And unfortunately, I have become the pie uncle because I absolutely love pie. And so what I do is just have a small piece and absolutely relish the opportunity to have a freshly cooked, warm pie.

And I will say that occasionally, there may even be a little bit of ice cream on it, which is the thing I almost never do. So again, that planning with the soluble and insoluble fiber. It doesn't make it right, or even great, but what does make it right, is I absolutely enjoy it, and very seldom. And at the end of the meal, just a small serving.

David Roberts:

Yeah. I will add, I do like the pies as well. Small servings. Yeah. But instead of ice cream, I'll whip up some organic cream.

Martin:

Yes.

David Roberts:

With a packet Stevia. So it's sweet, but it's not sugary. It's not high carb that way.

Martin:

I have turned to doing that more.

David Roberts:

Yeah. Well, great. Well, so walking after the meal, drinking water ahead of the meal, having your first plate be veggies, considering digestive enzymes, the main thing is getting a game plan.

Martin:

So yeah. And again, another thing about sleep again, an incredibly important part of this time of year, so you're not waking up completely exhausted the next day and then it's easier and easier to fall off the wagon just because you're so exhausted. The one thing we don't want to develop is reflux. So make that Thanksgiving dinner a traditionally earlier meal, earlier in the day. And then maybe just a light snack in the evening, so you're fully digested by the time you're going to sleep.

WE really don't want to have a food coma all day and then lying down at night and we're barely digested and have a wicked case of reflux that continues for a few days, if not for months and months.

David Roberts:

Yeah. Yeah.

Martin:

If not, years and years.

David Roberts:

If not decades and decades.

Martin:

if not decades and decades.

David Roberts:

No, just kidding.

Martin:

No. Unfortunately, I have lots and lots of patients who have been on Prilosec or Omeprazole or one of those medications for a very long time. So not ideal by any stretch of the imagination.

David Roberts:

Great. Well this is super helpful. I really am glad we did this, at least for my benefit, to hear what you and your family, what you do. And so I hope this is helpful for folks listening and thanks so much for listening. We will be back next week with another podcast.

Martin:

Thanks everybody.

David Roberts:

Thanks.

Martin:

Take care.

David Roberts:

Happy Thanksgiving.

Martin:

Happy, happy.