



THE FAT SUMMIT

Separating Fat From Fiction

Transcript:

Interview with Mark Hyman, MD
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Maria: Okay, I'm here talking to my friend Dr. Mark Hyman, who is my friend, but who's also an architect of change when it comes to how we see food, how we understand food, how we understand our bodies, our health. You are definitely somebody that I respect, because you really push it.

Dr. Hyman: I do.

Maria: You are really out there throwing all different kinds of things. Don't eat sugar, detox from sugar, and eat fat. You're constantly trying to push yourself, really, to the forefront of nutrition and health, and this Fat Summit that you're convening; I thought really caught my eye. I thought to myself, "Okay, here goes Mark now. He's going to tell us why we should eat fat, okay." Before the book comes out, it's a new book. He's actually gonna convene a Fat Summit. What's up with that?

Dr. Hyman: Well, you know, Maria, thanks for interviewing me, because it's great to have a conversation about this topic that so many people are confused about. "What do I eat?" You know, "WTF should I eat?" is basically the question I get from people all the time. The reason I wanted to bring together over 30 experts on fat and on diet and nutrition was to try to dispel some of the myths, to bring up some of the controversies, and get people thinking about this subject in a new way. Because our belief about fat, I think, is what's driven us to have this obesity epidemic in America today.

We now see one out of two Americans who has pre-diabetes or Type 2 diabetes. Up to 75% of us are overweight, and now we have one in three kids who are going to have Type 2 diabetes who are born today. So this is an epidemic, and it's driven, really, because we went on this low-fat craze, and substituted the fat for sugar and carbs, and that's actually what's driven the problem.

Maria: You've been really clear, though, in the past, saying this epidemic...you're tying it to sugar. But you're also now saying it's about sugar, but it's also about that we replaced the fat with the sugar, and we should now go back to the fat, but still eliminate the sugar.

Dr. Hyman: Exactly, right. Exactly, exactly, you got it. Yeah.

Maria: So what do I eat, is the question, and how do I know, really, to believe you this time? Because even in this book, you do say you've been a carnivore, you've been a vegetarian, you've been a vegan, and you've subscribed to the low-fat. We've all kind of gone through this roller coaster, really...

Dr. Hyman: Yeah, it's been a roller coaster.

Maria: ...as the doctors, like you, have told us. So why should we believe you now?

Dr. Hyman: Well, we're getting smarter, right? We have more science, more knowledge, more understanding. You know, we've been looking at this question of diet and nutrition, fat and sugar, carbs, for 50 years. When we started this journey in the 1970s, in The McGovern Report, we were trying to figure out what were the dietary guidelines for Americans. And McGovern and his team tried to figure out, with scientists of the day, what the science said. They had pretty crappy science, and they came to the conclusion that it was all this fat we were eating, and that we should really lower the fat in our diet. And that's when the dietary guidelines came out in 1980. They were really about putting fat down.

In 1992, we got this food pyramid, which was putting the icing on that cake that told us to eat 6 to 11 servings of rice, bread, cereal, and pasta every day. Well, guess what? We listened. We had these monster muffins, we had these giant bagels. We had big, giant bowls of pasta. I thought pasta was a health food. And then on the top of the pyramid were fats and oils. We should eat them sparingly, so we did, and so everything was low-fat.

Then the food industry jumped on board, and we created thousands and thousands of low-fat products, low-fat salad dressings, low-fat everything, low-fat foods of every kind. Cookies, Snack Well cookies, remember those? Everyone was like, "Oh, they're low-fat. You can eat all these cookies you want." But the truth is, that actually created this downward spiral of obesity, because we actually were mistaken. The science was wrong at the time, and we didn't have the data. Now the data's coming in.

There was a review of 53 studies that was just published in October 2015 by Dr. Walter Willett from Harvard, and David Ludwig, looking at all the studies of randomized control trials on fat and sugar, or low-fat diets versus high-fat diets for weight loss. These were studies over a year or more, so they were good, long studies. They found, hands-down, the higher-fat diets did better for weight loss than the low-fat diets. So for years, we've been recommending low-fat diets for weight loss, and they don't work. That's why people sort of bounce back, because the sugar and the carbs are addictive, they cause cravings.

Fat is satisfying, it speeds up your metabolism. Sugar slows down your metabolism.

So it's all the opposite of what we thought, and as the science is coming out, we're learning that what's going on is very different than what we thought.

Maria: Why a Fat Summit? It's an intriguing name. Probably more people would want to go to a skinny summit than a fat summit, right?

Dr. Hyman: A skinny summit, that's right.

Maria: But your whole concept is, "Eat fat and lose weight, or eat fat and get thin," right?

Dr. Hyman: Right, so the tagline is The Fat Summit: Separating Fat from Fiction, right? Because we're trying to really break down the myths around fat, and I think, yeah, I could have called it The Skinny Summit, but this is really about exploring all the aspects of fat. What about saturated fat? What about refined oils? What about olive oil? What about butter? What about coconut oil? What about fatty foods? What should we be eating? I think people are so confused that I felt that bringing together the voices of scientists and experts and people who are doing the research, people who are treating patients, people who are seeing results.

We could really bring to light this topic in a new way that nobody's really done. I mean, there are these sound bites everywhere, right? Everybody's got sound bites, the media, short. I'm talking about 30 hours of interviews with experts to really figure out what's the story behind the story.

Maria: So you're going to kind of give us the skinny on fat?

Dr. Hyman: Skinny on fat, exactly.

Maria: But I have to say, Mark, you know, I read through the book, and not the entire book, but quite a bit of it. And you yourself talk about, as I said before, that you've tried all of these different diets yourself.

Dr. Hyman: That's right.

Maria: I think the general public, and I speak as a mom myself, I'm so confused about what's the right thing. You know, my daughter said, "You know, I only should eat Paleo." My other daughter is a vegetarian. My son is no dairy.

My youngest son is a carnivore, and he said, "You know, everything you tell me, I get a study the next day that says the exact opposite."

Dr. Hyman: Is the opposite, right.

Maria: Right?

Dr. Hyman: Right.

Maria: So you even talk in the book where we just saw this study last week that says, you know, all this meat maybe causes cancer. You actually say in the book, "No." So it's confusing.

Dr. Hyman: Yeah, well, it is confusing. Here's why, Maria, and this is something that most doctors, and certainly the media, has a hard time understanding, is that not all science is created equal. You know, when I graduated from medical school, I thought, "Oh, research is research. If it says it in the study, it must be true." But it depends on the type of study, it depends on how it was designed, it depends on who funded it, what the research shows. It depends on what the intention was.

For example, there is studies that look at populations, like the WHO study, looking at cancer. They looked at people who ate meat in populations. What happened? They basically asked people questions. "What did you eat last week? What did you eat the week before?" And they do these food frequency questionnaires, which is not a great way to study diet. And then they go, "Geez, let's see what patterns we can find, and who ate this, and who ate that, and whether they got this or that disease." So they said, "Gee, the people who ate meat seem to have more disease." But why? Were the meat eaters more likely to smoke and drink and eat sugar and fried foods and not exercise and have no vegetables? Yeah, so of course they're probably going to have more cancer, because we know all those things cause cancer.

Then they actually create what we call a false concept of the risk, right? So they look at what we call "relative risk." The relative risk means if your risk goes up from 1% to 2%, that's a 50% increase in your relative risk, right? That's doubling your risk. But doubling your risk from 1% to 2% is not that big a deal, right? What matters is the absolute risk. The absolute risk is, "Well, it only increased 1%, not 50%, or 100%." So when you look at this cancer study, they say, "Well, the average person would get a risk of colon cancer about 2.6%."

If you ate processed meat, like bacon, which I know I've had at your aunt's house many times, you actually will get an increased risk of 3.2%. So that's a relative risk increase of about 20% or 30%, but an absolute risk of like 0.6%. So it's not a lot, and I think that's why people get confused, because the science is hard to interpret, and there are different types of studies. Even if you have randomized control trials, which are the gold standard, they're also very hard to do in nutrition, and it depends on what you're studying.

The Women's Health Initiative, which was a huge study looking at 40, 50,000 women, they studied low-fat diets, and they found the low-fat diets didn't benefit in terms of cancer, heart disease, or weight in these women. But the truth was, they were trying to get women to go from a 38% fat diet to a 20% fat diet. Well, they only got them down to a 29% fat diet. So they really didn't get in people living around getting them to do what they wanted, so the studies are not perfect. I think we have to look at the basic science, the population studies, and the randomized trials. I look at my clinical experience, and I test this on patients. I'm a doctor, I see patients. That's what I do. I'm in my office right now in Lenox, and I treat thousands and thousands of people.

Over the years, I've seen the changes that have happened as I've switched people from eating lots of kind of low-fat vegetarian diets to more high-fat diets, which are mostly plant-based, but contains some animal protein. And people do amazing. I mean their cholesterol numbers get better, their weight comes down, and they feel better.

Maria: Explain that to me, what you just said, because you said you're getting people off of a vegetarian diet, which is, you said, lower in fat. So what does a....not the Fat Summit, but your new book that's going to be coming out, *Eat Fat, Get Thin*, what does a day look like if you're eating fat? Because people are terrified of butter. They're terrified, I am, of oil. So do I eat the whole egg, do I eat only the egg white?

Dr. Hyman: Yeah, so here are a couple of my breakfasts. One breakfast would be a couple of poached eggs with an avocado. I put maybe some greens on the plate, and a sliced tomato, and then I pour olive oil all over it. I get extra fat with the olive oil, and I get the whole eggs. Another breakfast might be a shake, where I'll put in lots of nuts and seeds. I'll put in almond butter, coconut butter, berries, maybe almond milk, blend it up, and it's this delicious, high-fat, high-protein shake that's basically plant-based.

Lunch could be, for me, like a big salad, but I'll throw a can of fatty sardines or wild salmon on top, a can of wild salmon. I'll put lots of nuts and seeds in there, pumpkin seeds, pine nuts, walnuts on the salad. And then I'll put olive oil on it, lots of olive oil with balsamic vinegar. I'm not afraid of the fat. At dinner, I might have a piece of fish or piece of lamb, and tons of vegetables. I have very little grains, very little beans. I don't say no to anything, but I focus mostly on these foods that are very low in sugar, low in starch, and lots of good quality plant foods and nuts and seeds and good quality meat.

Maria: So, basically, you're really telling people to eliminate the carbohydrates. I mean, really, your whole last year, and you've written so much about this on mariashriver.com, and really successfully, about what sugar does to our brains, what sugar does to our personalities, and our temperaments, and our cravings, right?

Dr. Hyman: Yeah.

Maria: So from what you just described, the big difference in that diet that you're talking about seems to me to be the oil and the nuts, right?

Dr. Hyman: It is. Well, it's sort of where I put the emphasis, right? I put the emphasis on the sugar at first, and then I kind of flipped it and go, "Well, if you're not eating sugar, what are we actually eating?" So I didn't really say this out loud in my book on my 10-day detox, or blood sugar solution detox book, but that diet was 50% fat. I didn't actually design it that way, but when I actually analyzed the recipes after I set the criteria, it was about 50% fats.

What was fascinating was that I was getting reports from people, saying, "You know, I've been diabetic for years. I'm on insulin; I've been off my insulin in three days. I've lost 36 pounds in a month. My blood sugar is normalized. My cholesterol normalized. I felt good." One guy told me his cholesterol dropped from 100 points, and his triglycerides dropped 300 points in 10 days eating a 50% fat diet. Now that is just unheard of with any medication or other kinds of diets, because what you're doing is you're taking away the sugar on the one hand, but you're adding in these fats, which are really beneficial to the body to help it function better.

Maria: Now, you told me, when you sent me a note about this book, and you've written a lot of books, and you said that...

Dr. Hyman: I have a dozen now, a dozen.

Maria: ...this was the most difficult book for you to write. This has been the toughest. Why?

Dr. Hyman: It is. Sugar is easy, right? I don't think there's too many people on the planet go, "Oh, it's great to have soda if you eat a lot of starch." I think everybody just kind of gets that. Whether they do it or not, I think nobody, really, is saying, "Yeah, go eat more pasta and bread and rice, and have lots of sugar." Nobody is saying that anymore. I think what's more controversial is the fat, because people are so afraid of fat, and the science has kind of demonized fat. "It's fat that makes you fat. If you eat fat, you get fat, and fat causes heart disease." So there's a fear factor that is so difficult to get over for people, and even within the scientific community, there's such controversy.

I've talked to guys like Walter Willett, who is a brilliant Harvard scientist, who thinks we should all be consuming lots of refined omega-6 oils, like safflower oil and soybean oil, which I have concerns about. Others are saying that we should be eating all this butter, butter's good for you, or saturated fats not a problem. And it's confusing for the average consumer. What should you do? I've tried to make it common sense, but I think Mark Twain said, "The problem with common sense is not so common." It's like if its stuff we've been eating for centuries, if it's real food, if it's part of an overall balanced way of eating; you can include pretty much anything that's real in your diet.

We've seen a consumption of butter go down dramatically in this country, and at the same time, we've seen obesity go up and heart disease go up. So we can see the patterns in that, and I think there are large studies, for example, on saturated fat lately, where they're looking at...there's one study of 600,000 people. I think it was 70 studies, 19 countries, all these different trial designs, looking at everything from the blood levels of fats, to their diets, to randomized trials, and they found they could find no correlation with total fat or saturated fat in heart disease, and that it was really the sugar that was the problem. Trans-fats were a problem, and omega-3 fats were good. And those conclusions, I think, are really the things we're finding in the data.

So I felt it was really a hard book to write, because there was so much controversy within the scientific community, that it wasn't clear cut. I had to sift through a lot of it to kind of tell the story.

Maria: Somebody I talk to, who's a well-known person in this space, said to me, "I only eat things that had a mother."

Dr. Hyman: I only or I don't?

Maria: I do. And then somebody else said to me, "I don't eat anything that had a mother."

Dr. Hyman: Right, right, right. It's confusing, right. So can you be a vegan, or you should be a Paleo? Like I joke, I say I should be a pegan, which is like a paleo-vegan. So I think the truth lies somewhere in the middle. I think that there are people who can do vegan diets, and do a very good job, and I think they can be healthy, but it's more challenging. You know, I saw a guy today who is a vegetarian, and all he eats is bread and pasta, and he's super unhealthy. He's a vegetarian, and he doesn't want anything with a face or a mother. On the other hand, I've seen guys who were like Rich Roll, who runs the Ironman Triathlons, with eating only plant foods. But you have to be smart about it, and you have to do it in a way that's smart.

The research shows that the low-fat vegans don't do as well. They have more trouble with weight, their cholesterol's worse, and when you put people in head-to-head comparisons of a low-fat vegan or high-fat vegan, the high-fat vegan diets, they lose more weight, their cholesterol gets better, and they feel better. So I think it's important to eat things like avocados and coconut and olive oil and nuts and seeds, as opposed to shunning those foods.

Maria: Just so we're clear, when you talk about fat to get thin, we're not talking that all of a sudden you should go and get a slab of butter and put it all over your toast.

Dr. Hyman: Listen, if I had to choose between a bagel and the butter, I would choose the butter.

Maria: You would choose the butter.

Dr. Hyman: Yeah, that's how big the paradigm shift has been. Bagels used to be health food, butter was the demon, and now I think it's the opposite.

Maria: So what do you put the butter on? Put the butter on your steak?

Dr. Hyman: People are putting it in their coffee now, actually.

Maria: That's right, Bulletproof Coffee, right? It's supposed to make you think. It's supposed to help you cognitively. I'm interested in a lot of this stuff, because you know, obviously, that I do a tremendous amount of work on Alzheimer's.

There's a lot that suggests some of these being insulin issues, pre-diabetic, the road to Alzheimer's. What can you tell us about fat, Alzheimer's, cognitive awareness, cognitive decline, if anything?

Dr. Hyman: A lot. I wrote a book called "The UltraMind Solution," which was really looking at how the body affects the brain and cognitive function. At Cleveland Clinic now, we're actually initiating a research program to study how we can reverse early cognitive impairment using this whole Functional Medicine approach and diet interventions. I see this in my patients, and I've seen the literature is sort of pushing this forward, that if you have a lot of insulin resistance and sugar, it actually affects your brain. Diabetics have four times the risk of getting dementia, and if you have pre-diabetes, you are likely to get pre-dementia.

I had a patient recently, who had early dementia. She was doing poorly. I intervened with complex interventions around her hormones, around her diet and nutritional status, and she did great for years. And then she started declining. I'd been reading the research on putting Alzheimer's patients on ketogenic diets, which is like 70% fat. I mean, I wouldn't recommend that for everybody, but very high-fat diets. The brain is actually made up of fat. It's 60% fat, and it runs better on ketones. We know, for example, in epilepsy, one of the treatments for years for epilepsy has been a 70% fat ketogenic diet, which, actually, you run on this fuel called ketones instead of sugar or glucose. It makes the brain wake up. That's what the Bulletproof Coffee is about. It's about actually turning on the ketones in your body by using this purified form of coconut oil called MCT oil.

This woman, she basically started eating this way, and it was like she woke up like Rip Van Winkle and started becoming alert, remembering what was going on, recovering her memory, and it was very impressive. The brain is very resilient, and the insults can happen from multiple sources, but diet is the biggest driver of problems with the brain, and I think we're going to be seeing more and more of this in the future.

Maria: So just kind of for the layperson who might be listening to this, and then would be prompted to get your book, you mentioned salmon, you mentioned sardines. But is it olive oil, is it nuts to carry in your bag, is it butter?

Dr. Hyman: So what are the fats to rely on?

Maria: Yeah. One of the things that my...

Dr. Hyman: Okay, so one of my go-to fats.

Maria: Yeah.

Dr. Hyman: Actually, it's pretty simple. Its nuts and seeds, and things derived from them, like nut butters. It's good quality extra-virgin olive oil. I think coconut oil or coconut butter is also a great thing to include in your diet. I think MCT oil, it's a little bit processed, but I think it has great properties in terms of speeding metabolism; 70 to 90 million Americans have fatty liver, and this has actually been shown in research to reverse fatty liver. So it's a saturated fat. It literally reverses fatty liver and helps your blood sugar and insulin. And they recommend wild fish, like salmon. Sardines are my favorite. Sardines are the highest source of omega-3 fats. I know you don't like them, but they're good.

And I think, I wouldn't be eating the low-fat cuts of animal foods. I wouldn't be eating grass-fed animals foods, because grass-fed, for example, meat, has much higher levels of omega-3 fats, lower omega-6 fats. It has more antioxidants, more nutrients. If I was going to use butter, I would use grass-fed butter. I don't avoid butter, I don't think it's a health food, but I don't think it's a harmful food to be eating. I think if I were to choose between margarine and butter, I'd always choose the butter, and I don't think that's a problem.

Maria: What about dairy?

Dr. Hyman: I think dairy's an issue. Before I get to dairy, I want to add a few more foods. Avocado's a great food, great staple food. Lots of great fats, you can put it in smoothies, make guacamole. I always have in my bag bags of nut butters, little packets, and nuts and seeds, and those things are really great sources of on-the-go foods. I love macadamia nuts, I love almonds, I love walnuts, and I love pumpkin seeds. I use sesame seeds, hemp seeds and chia seeds. All these are really great sources of good fats. So as far as dairy, I think butter is dairy, and I think it has less of the milk proteins. A lot of people actually have problems with dairy, and it's a common cause of many symptoms, from digestive issues to allergies.

I met with one of the brigadier generals, John Cho, who is in charge of the military and the army medical here. He was talking about how they're trying to push their military recruits to drink milk, but 40% of them have lactose intolerance, so they don't touch it. I think dairy also can be inflammatory, it can cause in-

sulin resistance. It's a common source of acne. It's been linked to, I think, prostate cancer, as well as things like autoimmune Type 1 diabetes. So I think there are concerns I have about dairy. I think some people, its okay, but it should probably be grass-fed, organic cow milk, or sheep or goat milk.

Maria: Is this a huge marketing movement that you've got to get behind? I mean, do you have to shift everybody's consciousness about this?

Dr. Hyman: Yeah, I mean, we're changing a paradigm. I mean, like I had a woman come into the office the other day, and I'm like, "I want you to eat avocados and have olive oil." She's trying to lose weight for like 30 years, and she keeps gaining and gaining and gaining eating these low-fat foods. And she was so terrified. I said, "Listen, just try it for 10 days, come back and tell me what happened." She comes back, she said, "I'm so terrified to eat the avocado, and to get rid of the non-fat salad dressing and eat olive oil." And I said, "Well, what happened?" She says, "Well, I lost 6 pounds in 10 days, and I felt fantastic." And I'm like, "Your body is the best doctor." Right?

Maria: Mm-hmm.

Dr. Hyman: I've noticed that with myself, you know? I used to be a vegetarian, ate low-fat, tons of pasta, and made my own bread. I mean, I wasn't eating a ton of sugar, but I had sugar. I thought, you know, it was okay. And then I noticed I was getting more flabby, like I had gained about 15 pounds. I had a little mitt around my middle, I had little love handles. I was sluggish. I thought, "Oh, this is just what getting older is like." Now I'm 55, I'm going to be 56 next week...

Maria: Happy Birthday.

Dr. Hyman: Thank you. And I feel stronger, fitter, healthier, and I'm leaner. And I don't do any more. In fact, I do less exercise, because I'm busy, and I noticed I have more muscles, I have no body fat. It's just fascinating to see what happens.

Maria: And you attribute that to fat, but also to decreasing sugar, correct?

Dr. Hyman: Yeah, it's the combo, right?

Maria: It's the combo. So it's not like...

Dr. Hyman: No, and I had a patient today, it was very interesting, because he was an Indian guy who had pre-diabetes, and it was pretty severe, and he was

eating a ton of protein, and he wasn't eating that much fat. So he cut out the sugar, but he was eating a lot of protein. This is a problem people get into, because they eat tons of protein. And actually, protein can convert to sugar in the body. It's a chemical process called gluconeogenesis, it's like basic protein gets converted to sugar. So he was actually getting sugar from the protein. I'm like, "Well, you've got to eat more fat. Cut out the protein, and just eat more vegetables and higher quality fat, and limit the protein." He actually, I think, is going to have a great result.

Maria: Wow, that's really complicated, because until you just said that, I would have thought, "Okay, we're going to have more protein, more oil, right, on the salads and the vegetables and nuts." But you're saying you really have to balance...I mean, first of all, it's an economic issue, a lot of this stuff, right?

Dr. Hyman: Yeah, yeah.

Maria: So people in inner cities, where there aren't good produce, and it's expensive, how do you think that Americans, in particular, are going to do with your philosophy?

Dr. Hyman: I think it's doable, you know? I was in this movie Fed Up, and I was in programs with people in impoverished areas. It was stunning to me, where I went to this place, Easley, South Carolina with this family that was massively overweight. It was one of the worst food deficits in America. They were on food stamps and disability. The mother was hypertensive, probably 100 and plus pounds overweight. The son was 16, almost diabetic, massively overweight. The father was overweight, had dialysis because of diabetes, and ended up struggling to try to lose weight, to get a new kidney.

The whole family was trying to do the right thing. They were having low-fat salad dressing, and Cheez-Its, because they were baked, not fried, and diet Mountain Dew, and all these things they thought were healthy. Cool Whip, because it was a healthy, low-fat dressing and low-calorie dressing...I mean topping. They didn't really know how to cook. They didn't know anything about food. So I went to their trailer, and instead of giving them a prescription for medication or telling them to exercise and eat better, I said, "Why don't we cook a meal?"

So I gave them this guide, called "Good Food on a Tight Budget" from the Environmental Working Group, and I said, "Let's cook a meal together." We made

turkey chili, some roasted sweet potatoes, and salad with olive oil and vinegar dressing, some stir-fried asparagus. They loved it. And I said, "You can do this." And they figured it out, and they actually used the cookbook and this guide. The mother lost over 100 pounds. The father lost 45, got a new kidney. The kid lost 50, but then he went back to work at Bojangles' and gained a lot of it back, sort of like putting an alcoholic to work in a bar.

And ended up showing that you can actually do this on a budget, and you can do this...you know, you're not going to be buying \$70 grass-fed steaks, but you can actually eat real food at less cost. I know your cousin Chris Kennedy started Top Box, which is a way to distribute low-cost food to the poor in inner cities, where they don't have access. And by going directly to the manufacturers and then cutting out the middlemen, the distributors, and showing that you can actually get people to eat real food again.

Maria: Yeah, I think we're also both working with Thrive, which is also trying to have market places bring healthier foods to what are traditionally known as food deserts. So I think this entire food revolution that you've been at the forefront of is happening. I think it's still super confusing to people, and I think the simpler the directive is, the better, the clearer. I think what I liked in the book is that you said, "Look, I was wrong. I've tried a lot of these things, and they weren't right. And now, what I know is that this is right. I've seen patients, I've seen weight loss, I've seen people who tried it the other way, and it isn't what we were told."

Dr. Hyman: Yeah, I mean, the thing is, a lot of people in this field have a point of view, right?

Maria: Right.

Dr. Hyman: So people have spent their life and their career studying one point of view, either olive oil, or low-fat, or high-fat. It's just people get so attached, they're religious about this. You know, it's like it's worse than talking about religion or anything else, or politics, right? And yet, for me, I'm sort of agnostic. I'm really curious about what the science is, and so I've read thousands of scientific articles. There are over 500 of them quoted in the book, and I talked to experts from all over the world. I've tried things with thousands of patients, and I do it in a way where I get the feedback. I see their lab tests; I know what happens to them.

I have like a living laboratory, so it's the combination of all that information that shaped my thinking, and if I'm wrong, I say I'm wrong. If I have to change, I change. But I really see my thinking evolve, and I see amazing results that I just never would see before.

Maria: Mark, you said its like worse than talking about politics. How political is this?

Dr. Hyman: Well, Maria, it's so political. I mean, because...

Maria: Food is political.

Dr. Hyman: It's very political. We don't have a food policy, but we do, by advocacy, because a lot of the policies that have been established have been driven from the food lobby. So the FDA guidelines are on food and labeling. That's all driven by the food lobby to confuse people. Labels are confusing. It should say, "Green is good. Yellow, eat with caution. Red, this is going to kill you." Right? We should have clear marketing regulations for kids. There's no reason that we should be one of the only nations, other than Syria, I think, that allows food marketing of junk food to kids. Fifty other countries regulate this.

There's no reason that we should be using food stamp programs to fund \$4 billion of soda for the poor, based on the justification that it's discrimination to not allow them to eat soda like everybody else. And yet they can't buy cooked food, they can't buy alcohol, they can't buy cigarettes. There are just a lot of other restrictions that we put on it, but the food lobby is so strong that we actually can't change these policies. I'm going to Washington to a think tank on food stamps, and I want to start a campaign called "No More Crap on SNAP." You know, because the SNAP program feeds 50 million Americans at \$70 billion, and the policy just doesn't match the science.

Maria: So what, Mark, as you go into this Fat Summit, as you prepare for your book to come out, what is the headline you want people to take away from this?

Dr. Hyman: Well, the headline is really simple. It's that if we just eat real food, that everything works out. If you get rid of the processed, packaged, refined foods and just eat real food, you don't have to worry about much else. Michael Pollan said it right, "Eat food, mostly plants, not too much." Right? And if we stop worrying about the macronutrients, stop worrying about the calories...and the calorie obsession has really been a problem. We were saying to everybody,

"Eat less and exercise more," and it doesn't work. So that's the myth that I go through busting in the book.

What is the biology of weight gain and obesity? Well, it's not the biology of calories; it's the biology of hormones. So it's not about energy. I mean, Coca-Cola came out with this new campaign called The Global Energy Balance Network. They funded scientists from universities to come out and say that it's all about the calories, and we should exercise more to burn off more calories. And yet, what the science shows is that it's the sugar and the refined foods that are actually driving insulin, which is a hormone that makes you, gain weight. The way to shut that off is to cut out the sugar and refined foods, and eat more fat, and eat real foods. And it's that simple.

Maria: And also, I think, another point that you say really well is the fat you eat doesn't necessarily become fat on your body. The low-fat stuff that you're eating could actually become the fat on your body.

Dr. Hyman: That's right, I mean, we all think that the fat that passes our lips ends up on our hips. And that just isn't true, right?

Maria: Right.

Dr. Hyman: It seems so sensible, right? It's fat. You eat fat, you get fat. It has more calories than carbs. You want to lose weight, you eat fewer calories. But, actually, the biology of our cells doesn't work like that. When you eat fat, it speeds up your metabolism, it actually makes you less hungry, and it causes you to burn fact as opposed to sugar, which makes you hungry all the time and crave more. It slows your metabolism and makes you store fat.

Maria: So, Mark, what are the dates for the summit, how do people join you at the summit?

Dr. Hyman: Well, the summit's free. It's online, it's coming out the end of January, and we're so excited to be able to offer this free to everybody. We hope to get hundreds of thousands of people listening and telling them about the real story and the skinny on fat.

Maria: Aha, you use that line. Who can they expect to hear at the Fat Summit? Who will they hear from?

Dr. Hyman: Well, it's an exciting array of talent. We've got scientists like Walter Willett from Harvard, David Ludwig, who's one of the leading researchers

on obesity, from Harvard as well, who's looked at this whole issue of "calories are not calories." We've got Dr. Ronald Krauss, who's one of the premier lipid researchers on fat and cholesterol. He's the one who published so much of the research showing that saturated fat is not a problem. We have experts like Dean Ornish, who's shown you can reverse heart disease using diet and lower-fat diets. People like Neal Barnard, who's very much an advocate of the opposite point of view, which is we should all be low-fat vegans, and that we shouldn't be eating any fat.

We've got people like Dave Asprey, who's the Bulletproof Coffee guy. We've got just an amazing array of scientists and leaders. We've got Gary Taubes, who's written for the New York Times, who came out with that big article in the New York Times magazine section in 2002, I think, which is "What If It's All Been a Big Fat Lie?" About butter and meat, that changes our thinking about sugar. We've got doctors who are practicing...Joel Fuhrman, who's a leading diet book guy. We've got a whole crew of amazing people, David Perlmutter, who's doing the research on the brain and Alzheimer's and fat, and talks about high-fat diets for preventing and treating Alzheimer's. So it's really a great crew of humans and scientists and thinkers.

Maria: And the book comes out in February?

Dr. Hyman: Yeah, "Eat Fat, Get Thin" comes out February 23rd.

Maria: February 23rd. So I'm sure that you'll be absolutely everywhere, writing, talking, and pushing that. So I think the biggest takeaway for me, and correct me if I'm wrong for people listening, is that the fat you eat doesn't necessarily go to your hips, that fat can actually help you get thin, and fat is your friend, both cognitively and physically.

Dr. Hyman: And even for your heart.

Maria: And for your heart, right.

Dr. Hyman: Believe it or not, yeah.

Maria: Which is a total opposite of everything I have been taught.

Dr. Hyman: Absolutely.

Maria: Total opposite of probably everything, so I think that you're probably going to get a lot of pushback.

Dr. Hyman: That's why I said it's one of the most difficult books I've written.

Maria: Yeah, and I think the other thing, though, the lead up to this, was certainly your work on sugar and the sugar detox, so that really...well, fat is your friend, sugar is totally your enemy.

Dr. Hyman: What's happening, Maria, finally, after 40 years, the U.S. Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, that sets the guideline recommendations that the government puts in place, has said that we should no longer be concerned about fat. We should no longer be restricting fat. In fact, they say cholesterol is not even a problem, and that it's no longer a nutrient of concern. Meaning you can eat eggs again, whole eggs, so much for all those egg white omelets. This is based on a panel of scientists who have looked at all the research and come up with these conclusions, which is pretty stunning to me, because it's a complete reversal. They do still say to limit saturated fat, which I think is very controversial, and I talk about that a lot in the book.

But it's really compelling that our now government is going to be telling us to forget about the fat. Instead of telling them to have only the tippy top of the pyramid, we're saying, "Don't worry about it."

Maria: Yeah, and I think I'd love to...you know, we can talk at some point, because I think it's a really...we get inundated with questions. There's somebody developing Alzheimer's every 67 seconds, and people my age and kids in their 20s are dealing with parents, grandparents, and asking questions, "Should I be eating chocolate? Should I eat blueberries? Should I take resveratrol? What do I do, cognitively, women dealing with this with hormones, right? So the kind of work you're doing, I think that your food connects to your cognitive health, and that it's all connected, really.

Dr. Hyman: It so is.

Maria: Yeah, our physical health, our mental health, our spiritual health, our emotional health. It's all under your purview of being in the health that our health matters. So I think this is great. I look forward to attending the summit online, listening to some of these people. I hope they don't confuse me more.

Dr. Hyman: They might. There might be some controversy.

Maria: Yeah, yeah. And I think the book will be a much talked about and needed debate in this country about what's really good for our minds and our hearts.

Dr. Hyman: Yeah, thank you, Maria. Thanks so much for doing this with me.

Maria: Thank you so much, Mark, and good luck. Remind people that the Fat Summit, it's perfect for New Year's, right? You're going to give us the skinny on fat, and then your book coming out in February, which will help us, hopefully, with our minds and our bodies. So thank you so much, Mark Hyman.

Dr. Hyman: Thank you doing this for me, Maria. It's great to have this conversation.

Maria: Thank you, bye up there in Lenox.

Dr. Hyman: All right.

Maria: Bye-bye.