



How Ultra-Processed Foods and Added Sugars Influence Mental Health with Dr. David Wiss, PhD (ep – 77)

If counting calories and cutting out “bad” foods haven’t led to lasting change, it may be because nutrition is far more complex than simple math. In this episode, Dr. David Wiss returns for an eye-opening conversation with host Dr. Ginger Hultin that challenges mainstream narratives about weight, willpower, and what “healthy eating” really means.

Together, they unpack why the calorie model continues to dominate despite its limitations, and how it overlooks the roles of neurobiology and lived experience. From the science and controversy of ultra-processed foods to the connection between added sugars, fiber, and mood, this episode offers a refreshingly compassionate and systems-focused approach. If you’re ready to shift away from reductive nutrition advice and gain a better understanding of the social forces that shape eating behaviors, this conversation will leave you feeling informed, empowered, and deeply understood.

In this episode, we’ll cover:

[00:00:00] Count fiber, not calories

[00:00:31] Setting up the calorie + ultra processed food conversation

[00:02:48] Why the calorie model falls short

[00:05:35] What “ultra-processed” really means

[00:08:59] Values-based eating approach

[00:10:54] Added sugar, fiber & mental health link

[00:13:17] When nutrition advice becomes triggering

[00:14:14] Trauma-informed nutrition care

[00:15:41] Final takeaway: let your nutrition evolve

About Dr. Ginger Hultin, DCN, RDN, CSO.

Ginger Hultin is an integrative, clinical dietitian and cancer nutrition specialist who received her Doctorate in Clinical Nutrition from the University of North Florida. She received her master's degree from Bastyr University, where she currently serves as adjunct faculty teaching clinical nutrition. She has been in practice for over 10 years using a personalized, holistic nutrition approach. She runs a full-time virtual private practice, Ginger Hultin Nutrition where she helps clients with complex health problems improve their health through nutrition. In addition to being the host of The Good Clean Nutrition Podcast, she is an author of two books, Anti-inflammatory Diet Meal Prep and the How to Eat to Beat Disease Cookbook.

Connect with Dr. Ginger Hultin on [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#) or her [website](#).

About Dr. David Wiss, PhD, MS, RDN.

Dr. David Wiss, PhD, MS, RDN, is a trailblazer in the field of nutrition for mental health and substance-use disorder recovery. As founder of Nutrition in Recovery, he has supported over 1,000 individuals through a food-positive, functional medicine lens. Known for bridging neuroscience, psychology, and nutritional science, Dr. Wiss is internationally recognized for his work on disordered eating, gut-brain health, and innovative diet-based strategies for emotional wellness.

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