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the miracle carb

Celebrity dietitian and author Tanya Zuckerbrot offers the skinny on shedding pounds without sacrifice. BY LINDA CHILDERS

OUTSIDE THE DOORS OF HER SLEEK MIDTOWN Manhattan office, Tanya Zuckerbrot isn't a household name. But just wait. With two best-selling books and a celebrity following, the 40-year-old registered dietician is gaining a reputation as the go-to guru for weight loss and healthy living.

With her svelte physique and youthful appearance, Zuckerbrot is a walking testimonial for her services, which promote lifestyle changes over a restrictive diet. Her two books, *The F-Factor Diet* (Putnam, 2006) and *The Miracle Carb Diet* (Hyperion, 2012) give readers permission to drink alcohol, dine out, and indulge in carbs—provided they pair high-fiber carbohydrates and lean proteins at every meal.

A busy wife and mother of three children, Zuckerbrot's practice isn't about radically changing her clients' diets, but rather helping them to make smarter choices. "Many women assume deprivation is the price you pay for weight loss, but it actually sets you up for failure, because walking around hungry or feeling cheated isn't sustainable," says Zuckerbrot, who charges \$10,000 for a series of 10 one-on-one nutrition counseling sessions. "I also debunk the myth that carbs cause weight gain. In fact, the right carbs—whole fruits, vegetables, and grains that are nutritious and rich in fiber—are the secret to lasting weight loss, because they are filling and naturally low in calories and fat."

Zuckerbrot, who holds a Master's degree in nutrition and food studies from New York University and completed a two-year dietetic internship at NYU Medical Center, never set out to become a sought-after weight loss expert. When she began her career 15 years ago, her goal was to help her patients better manage conditions such as high chole-



“Many food companies have introduced fiber-rich items including yogurt, chocolate, snack bars, cookies, and crackers.”

terol and diabetes. She quickly discovered that despite their varying health problems, her clients shared one common denominator: They all lost weight and improved their health by following a diet that combined high fiber and lean proteins.

“Studies have shown that eating fiber and protein in combination promotes fullness longer, and on the fewest calories, while boosting the metabolism,” she says, noting that the body burns more calories digesting protein than it does digesting fat or carbohydrates.

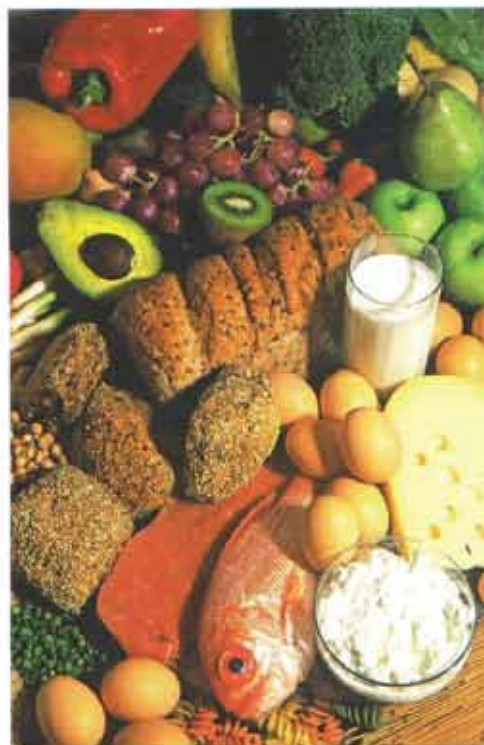
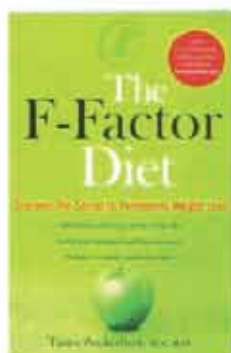
“Fiber is nature’s detox, in that it works to absorb and move toxins quickly through the digestive tract, and foods high in dietary fiber give you more energy and have cleansing properties that fight aging.”

Despite medical studies confirming that high fiber foods help to lower the risk of developing cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure, getting people to embrace fiber can still be a hard sell. The National Fiber Council claims

the average American only consumes 9 to 11 of the 32 grams of fiber recommended per day by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Even those who adhere to a healthy diet don’t always meet their daily fiber quota—often buying into myths that adding more fiber to their diet will result in increased trips to the restroom, or that all fiber-rich foods taste like cardboard. The reality, says Zuckerbrot, is that the best sources of fiber come from tasty foods such as fresh fruit, crunchy vegetables, nuts, cereals, breads, and pasta.

“Many food companies are jumping on the bandwagon, and have introduced fiber-rich items including yogurt, chocolate, snack bars, and cookies,” she says. “It’s never been so easy or delicious to eat a high-fiber diet, and the healthiest way to introduce more fiber is to do it slowly.”

In addition to its many health and weight-loss benefits, fiber may also be a key factor in the maintenance of youth. A 2011 study conducted by the National Institutes of Health found a cor-



relation between fiber and longevity. “Fiber lowers levels of bad LDL cholesterol, and stabilizes blood glucose and insulin levels,” says Zuckerbrot, who calls it a miracle carbohydrate. She advises that a well-balanced diet should include both soluble fiber—found in dried beans, citrus fruits, and potatoes—which keeps the stomach feeling full, and insoluble fiber—found in wheat bran, seeds, and the skins of many fruits and vegetables—which speeds up the passage of materials through the digestive tract.

Rather than going in for any number of eccentric New Year’s diet resolutions on offer, Zuckerbrot recommends resolving to lead a healthy lifestyle. And fiber, she says, is the not-so-secret weapon that can help you beat the battle of the bulge, regain energy, and maintain good health.

“Fiber adds bulk to food without adding calories, so high-fiber foods fill you up without filling you out,” she notes. “Since it steadies blood sugars, people are far less apt to overeat during the day, [and] their body isn’t craving sugar for an energy boost. Fiber’s digestive properties make it a powerful health ally.” ●

CLOCK-HALTING CUISINE

Zuckerbrot shares her checklist of musts that will keep you looking youthful.

Water:

“Staying well-hydrated helps remove toxins and keep skin plump and dewy.”

Foods high in antioxidants:

“Beta carotene, vitamin C, and vitamin E all help to reduce inflammation and puffiness under eyes. Research shows that antioxidants help increase cellular regeneration and the production of elastin and collagen, keeping skin

firm and wrinkle-free.”

Great sources: Grapefruit, green peppers, and broccoli. Strawberries have more anti-aging vitamin C per serving than oranges or grapefruit.

Vitamin A/Beta-Carotene:

“Beta-carotene is great for helping to prevent dry, flaky skin. It also reduces lines and wrinkles.”

Great sources: Fish liver oil,

meat, milk, cheese, eggs, spinach, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, apricots, and peaches.

Vitamin E:

“Often found in anti-aging creams, vitamin E helps to rehydrate the skin, protect against sun damage, and reduce dry and rough skin.”

Great sources: Swiss chard, spinach, kale, nuts, tropical fruits, red bell peppers, broccoli, and wheat.