



SUPPLEMENTS EXPLAINED MASTERCLASS

MODULE 9

TRANSCRIPT

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Module 9: Vegans, Vegetarians, and Supplements with Joel Fuhrman, MD

Nathan Crane:

Welcome to Module 9 of the Supplements Explained Masterclass. I'm your host and natural health researcher, Nathan Crane. I'm really happy you're joining me and my guest experts and doctors for this important masterclass.

Nathan Crane:

In this module, Dr. Fuhrman will be sharing with us the essential supplements you need if you're on a whole food plant-based or vegan diet. There's some critical life-saving information in this module you need to know, so make sure to watch the entire thing.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

Hi, I'm Dr. Fuhrman. I'm a board-certified family physician and nutritional researcher, seven times New York Times bestselling author, and president of the Nutritional Research Foundation. I spent most of my life and my career in helping sick people recover from chronic illnesses with nutritional excellence. I'm very passionate about the possibility that people don't have to be sick and they can use nutrition to get well.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

The same nutritional excellence enables people to get rid of their high blood pressure, their diabetes, their autoimmune conditions, melt away their heart disease, and get their cognition and brain fog to lift and feel better about their health, and everything getting better on their body, because we're a disease-resistant organism. That same nutritional excellence leads for slowing the aging process and keeping ourselves fit and younger longer and keeping our mental faculties as we age, and giving us the best possibility of having a happy and healthy life to 100 years old.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

So we live in an era with this unprecedented opportunity to slow the aging process and live longer than ever before. And what we found, that enables us to do this, is actually to switch our diet from one that mixed together plant foods and animal products to one that's predominantly plant-based. And people use that term, plant-based, to means mostly plants and animal products that might be used as a condiment or an occasion, special occasion, or in very small amounts. But in no significant amounts.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

I know the word "plant-based" is kind of confusing and could mean more than 50%, could be 75% plant-based. But that's not really plant-based if it's considered 75% plants, because that could be 25% animal products and that wouldn't fit the criteria for plant-based. So plant-based usually means at least 90% of calories from plants. And of course some people use the term "whole food plant-based" to mean, among those plants you're eating, they're not using processed foods like commercial baked goods and chips and French fries and things that are not plant-derived foods that's not good for people, out of bags and boxes, that are processed foods.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

The term "vegan" is often referred to a person that's 100% plant-based, not even a tiny bit of animal products, including an animal product-derived food like honey. But also, the word vegan does not refer to the quality of what they're eating. So they could be on a very unhealthy diet. Just because it's all plants doesn't make it healthy.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

Your plant-based diet doesn't have to be perfectly healthy either. A whole food plant-based diet could be mostly like a macrobiotic, a rice-based diet... which is not really a diet designed for longevity. Or a fruit-based diet, a fruitarian diet. Lots of types, for example, of plant-based diets, or even lots of types of whole food vegan diets that may not be ideal for human lifespan.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

So I coined the term Nutritarian diet, to be more specific, more definitive, in describing our dietary portfolio that's designed to maximally enable human lifespan and slow the aging process. I use this term, Nutritarian, to make sure people know exactly what it means to eat a diet of nutritional excellence to slow the aging process and maximize human lifespan. And the word Nutritarian means rich in nutrients, but also comprehensive in its nutritional approach, to make sure we're getting optimal levels of all the nutrients humans need to maximize immune function, and protection against cancer.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

Those nutrients humans need are mostly found in colorful plants. We're finding now, that taking acidophilus and bifidus and probiotics doesn't give us an optimal microbiome compared to eating a wide variety of plant fibers and a huge variety of foods, including onions and different varieties of mushrooms, and both raw greens and cooked greens, and different types of seeds and nuts and berries and fruits. That the variety of the diet, giving a variety of different types of nutrients and fibers, give us the broadest spectrum of bacteria that live in the gut that now powerfully support the intraepithelial lymphocytes, the immune systems that live around the digestive tract that's our primary defenders at the gates of the castle. There's no way we can adequately have a strongly protective immune system against cancer unless we're eating a plant-based diet. The type of plant-based diet that give us the most protection is a Nutritarian diet.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

Now, a nutritarian diet can be vegan or a person could eat a small amount of animal products, special occasions, or a little bit of flavoring a few times a week, a few ounces here or there. Certainly under 5% of total calories. A nutritarian diet means that we're not guaranteeing the optimal level of certain nutrients that are found in animal products, or better absorbed in animal products, than they would be in plants.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

Those four nutrients that are better found in animal products are DHA and EPA, which are commonly called fish oil. But vegans and people can get it from algae-derived fish oil, because that's where the fish get it from, eating the algae. You take the algae that are grown in labs and under very pure conditions, and they purify these oils, purified EPA and DHA. We get that from plant material, to make sure our levels are getting the benefits of eating fish or salamanders or snakes or grasshoppers, of these omega-3 containing animal products.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

And also B-12. Because B-12 is not found in any significant concentration in plant foods. You have to get B-12 from animal products or you have to take it from a supplement. Now, even when you're taking it from animal products, unless you're taking animal products multiple times a day, you're still not going to get enough B-12 because the body only absorbs a little tiny bit at a time. So that's why we give a higher dose in a supplement. The RDI might be four or five micrograms, but we still give people 50 to 75 micrograms because we only absorb a small percent and we take it all at one time. So we're giving people a substantial amount of B-12 when you're on a vegan, plant-based, or nutritarian diet.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

The next nutrient we want to supplement is zinc, because the phytates in plant foods make us not absorb zinc as effectively, increasing the requirement for zinc by about 50% in people on plant-based or vegan diets. Again, you couldn't eat enough animal products to get enough zinc unless you were eating so much animal products that accelerated aging and increased risk of cancer. So we don't want to rely on animal products for zinc, we just want to take a little extra zinc. We use a zinc chelate, that mixes different types of zincs to make it more absorbable. But that's not as important as it is as to titrate and just add a little extra zinc, and not to think of getting huge amounts but to get that optimal sweet spot.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

The fourth nutrient not high in animal products include K2. A very valuable nutrient to take, K2. We get plenty of K1 from plant foods, and the body can make a little K2 from the K1, but not optimal amounts which has beneficial effects on keeping our blood vessels youthful and preventing calcium deposits.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

The next nutrient is iodine. We're trying to get off iodinated salt. And you can get it from plants in the form of seaweeds, like kelp. But mostly, we add the 150 micrograms a day of iodine, the RDI, because people aren't getting seaweed all the time and putting kelp on everything they're eating, so that we make sure people get that iodine.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

But we want to be careful because when we're using iodine as a supplement, or we're using it from kelp or seaweed, a narrow window of optimal here. We don't want to take too much. We want to be between 100 and 300 a day. We supplement with 150, that's the RDI. But if you're using kelp you could get too much iodine. So don't use more than a 10th of a teaspoon of kelp because that has 150 micrograms of iodine in it. Don't overdose with that stuff.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

And lastly, vitamin D. Has nothing to do with being vegan or not or animal products or not, because vitamin D is somewhat present in mushrooms, they add it to milk. But really, vitamin D is not a vitamin, it's a hormone made by the body. It's the sunshine vitamin. It's critically important for optimal health and immune function later in life, and that it's good to make sure your level is adequate.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

So we're minimizing sun exposure. We don't want to get sunburn and wrinkle our skin and get certain types of skin damage or skin cancer. So in doing so, even if we're getting some sunshine, it's better to

get a blood test and supplement accordingly. We usually recommend people supplement 50 milligrams or 2000 IUs a day of vitamin D, and adjust it accordingly up or down. Because every 1000 extra you take a day usually raises your level in your blood about 10 points. So if your levels are 22 on 2000, you may need 3000 or 4000 to get that level. Probably just 3000 would be enough.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

So I'm saying, start with 2000. If your level's not good enough, add an extra 1000. That should be sufficient. It's rare that a person would ever need to take 4000. And some people do well enough with just 1000, and that would be a potential possibility for somebody. But when you're taking 1000 or less, it's best to check your blood test too to make sure you're in that sweet spot. Which, of course, the ideal level is between 30 and 50 on your 25-hydroxy vitamin D blood test.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

All right. So just to be clear, I'm an advocate of a Nutritarian diet, which is a certain type of whole food plant-based diet. And we utilize certain foods with very powerful anti-cancer effects, those six foods I have people memorize and keep at the forefront of their thoughts with this G.B.O.M.B. acronym. Greens is your G. B.O.M.B.S., Greens, Beans, Onions, Mushrooms, Berries, and Seeds, like flax seeds, chia seeds, hemp seeds, sesame seeds.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

Did you eat your seeds today? Are you going to have mushrooms today for sure, in a soup or a mixed vegetable dish? Are you going to put chopped onion or scallion or green onion on your salad? Is your salad going to contain lettuce and some cruciferous greens, such as bok choy or arugula or baby kale or something? Are you going to have both those every day? Because let me tell you something, to have maximum immune function we need both lettuces for the sulfoquinovose and green cruciferous vegetables for the isothiocyanates. And it's better not to supplement that.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

I can give you a supplement of sulforaphane or indole-3-carbinol, but we're finding that you don't get the anti-cancer benefits compared to eating a diet rich in sulforaphane or indole-3-carbinol. Because you can take too much of it in a concentrated form. It can be a pro-oxidant not an antioxidant. It's the right level, a low level, and the wide assortment of these phytochemicals, that give people the most protection and immune function. Not saying, "This nutrient is good so we should then concentrate it and take it in a pill."

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

Nah, in most cases you're better off not doing that and taking that nutrient in its natural form, eating more of the baby sprouts and the microgreens and the mesclun lettuce mixes and the mushrooms. Better to get your ergothioneine from mushrooms, not from taking an extract of ergothioneine. For example, I eat mushrooms every day, but I don't eat an assortment of 10 types of mushrooms every day. So I take a supplement that has the 10 assortments of mushrooms that are so protective.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

So I do recommend people use some other plant materials that are not generally eaten, like green tea extracts or turmeric or curcumin extracts or astragalus or elderberry or different mushroom extracts. So we're talking about adding some particular anti-cancer plant material to an otherwise excellent diet,

those things we don't regularly consume adequately in our diet, or those products or those nutrients not generally found in plants in a rich enough amount.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

One thing we found, from the side of the literature over the last decade, is that protein does matter. A lot of the plant-based community is telling us, "Protein doesn't matter. You can get plenty of protein no matter what you eat. Just eat potatoes and rice and it'll give you enough protein." But that's not what the studies showed.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

The overwhelming amount of data from the studies show that, yes, more animal protein made for shorter lifespans, but it found that more plant protein, particularly from nuts and seeds and greens and beans, made for a longer lifespan, and that protein bioavailability and absorption goes down with aging. As we get older we need a little more protein, like above the age of 80.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

So utilizing maybe a plant-based protein, or certainly paying attention to having hemp seeds and sunflower seeds and beans and lentils and soybeans in your diet, is important as we age. Some people that are getting muscle wasting or weakness could then consider using a protein supplement, such as a pumpkin seed or a hemp seed protein or a pea protein supplement; a little small amount.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

Some elderly people may even need some small amount of animal product if their protein levels or albumin are getting too low. If their digestive capacity is diminished to the point where they're not thriving on plants, they need to pay attention to getting and keeping adequate protein. So too much could be bad, but also too little is something to be considered.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

As a physician, sometimes I encounter people that don't seem to thrive on a vegan diet; they want to or they know it's the healthiest way to live. It's rare. But then we do comprehensive amino acid analysis on them and test, and we do find some people may need a little more of certain amino acids. The most common one that vegans could need more is taurine. And then, of course, the next one is choline sometimes and creatine sometimes too. But usually not that often. So taurine is the one that most people and most vegan athletes do better when they supplement with a little extra protein and take the hemp seeds for protein and maybe add a little bit of taurine. But usually not necessary, unless a person seems to not be getting their full muscular and protein levels.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

We could determine that as people age, because they obviously, as they're aging, if they're losing too much muscle mass and getting weaker or getting too thin, then we can look at those blood tests, the amino acid profile, and look at the total protein and the albumin level in the blood to see that it's still in the favorable range or should they be a person that might want to consider some degree of protein supplementation.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

To wrap up this segment, to make sure you have the most important points here, remember: your diet, or the food you put in your mouth, is your primary source of nutrients, not the supplements you use. We are advocating people live longer and prevent cancer by eating plant-based diets. The Nutritarian diet is the gold standard of plant-based diets to maximally slow aging and prevent cancer.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

And then, once you're on this type of diet, we use supplements carefully and we add certain things that are needed, that are helpful, to make yourself live longer and give you more protection. Those things include DHA and EPA, zinc, B12, vitamin D, iodine, and K2. And then sometimes we add a little extra of certain things to make the diet even more superior or powerful against cancer, like green tea extract, mushroom extracts, astragalus, elderberry, beta-glucan, turmeric or curcumin extracts, certain things to give a more even powerful anti-cancer effects that are not core or essential to things that are missing, but just making sure we're adding little extra super foods, like we use sprouts and microgreens to add more super nutrients to the diet.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman:

Glad you've joined us. And don't forget, nutritional excellence is fun, exciting, it makes you more happy, removes fear, and enhances the pleasure and confidence in your life. Go for it.