**Male Speaker:** Welcome to the Chalene Show. Chalene is a New York Times Bestselling author, celebrity fitness trainer, and obsessed with helping you live your dream life.

**Chalene Johnson:** I grew up eating the worst nutrition possible. I remember coming home from school and being excited to have pop tarts and then a couple of hours later some toasted bread with butter and sugar. We’d wash that down with grape soda and eat some fudge.

 Breakfast was always one of those crunchy bright colored cereals that the first ingredient is sugar. Everything we ate was processed, and we just didn’t know better. In fact, I didn’t really start to learn much about nutrition until well into my career as fitness professional. Even when I was teaching fitness classes and working as a personal trainer, I knew very little about nutrition. I was taking my cues and thinking that I was educating myself by the trends that were happening. In other words, there was a period of time where I thought eating fat-free was the healthiest thing you could do.

I just didn’t know better and as they say, “When you know better, you can do better”, but we can’t count on trends or what’s happening on the covers of magazines, or sometimes, even what our government’s telling us about nutrition as knowing better. We’ve got to educate ourselves, and my guest today has made it her mission to do just that.

Today’s guest is JJ Virgin. She’s a wellness expert, and she’s passionately waging a war on sugar. She’s one of the nation’s foremost nutrition and fitness experts. She’s got 25 years in the industry, and she’s coached countless celebrities. She’s the author of the New York Times Bestselling book, The Virgin Diet. You may have seen her on the TLC Reality Series Freaky Eaters. That show is a trip.

 She’s been on the Dr. Phil Show, Rachael Ray, Access Hollywood, The Doctors, Inside Edition, PBS, and, most recently, Doctor Oz. JJ is a member of Mensa. She’s a UCLA graduate.

 You’re going to love her approach. There’s no BS. It’s straight to the point. She’s opinionated. She’s passionate because she wants to save lives. And this is reversible. We can change obesity. We can change the weight loss battle in our country. And please stay tuned to the end because JJ was kind enough to share with my audience some really cool free stuff.

**[START OF PODCAST]**

**Chalene:** JJ, are you there?

**JJ Virgin:** I am.

**Chalene:** Let’s talk to the people about your greatest enemy, our greatest enemy – sugar.

**JJ:** You know it’s so amazing too, like, if you’d said a couple years ago that I would be focusing on sugar at this level. I mean, I would be “Eh”, but what happened was, when I was doing the Virgin Diet, it the number one question I got asked, and I realized there are really two camps. There are people who are just absolutely controlled by it. They’re consumed with their cravings and they just can’t get away from it. But, then, there’s the other camp, and this is what I found most disturbing.

**Chalene:** Okay.

**JJ:** People trying to do everything right. You know, making that effort, buying organic, eating more fruits and vegetables. All that stuff that they would be doing, but they were confused because things would say, ‘no sugar added’ or ‘all natural’. It turns out that even though they were eating all these healthy things, sugar, because 80% of processed foods have added sugar and that’s even before you look at natural sugars, and there’s so many ways we lie with labels, that even though they were trying so hard, they were still having all these symptoms of what I call, high sugar impact, you know, gas and bloating and energy problems, and fatigue.

**Chalene:** Well, let’s go over those, if you will. And I know this are, kind of, second nature in the fight that you’re waging against sugar, but let’s talk about what some of those symptoms are that people may not even understand that it’s related to their sugar consumption.

**JJ:** Well, most of us don’t connect the dots between what we’re eating and how we feel, but when you really look at it, the fastest way you can change how you feel is by changing what you eat.

**Chalene:** Oh my gosh, yes.

**JJ:** Right? And so, you look at this and we focus so much with sugar going, “Oh my gosh, diabetes and heart disease and cancer,” and I’m like, well, those don’t happen overnight. Those happen over time. What is more important is to look at, “Wow, my energy just totally dumped at three o’clock,” or “I am just craving a cookie” or “I’m just hungry all the time and I shouldn’t be. I just can’t focus,” “I’m crabby,” or you got gassy, bloated, either you can’t lose weight or it’s all around your waist line, no matter what you do. You’ll lose weight, but you’re like a potato on stilts, like nothing’s changing there, right?

 Those are all signs, and the sad part is those are things that people think are just normal, right?

**Chalene:** Right.

**JJ:** All afternoon, go have a coffee and a cookie. You know? I mean, you shouldn’t have an energy drop. You should have steady sustained energy. You shouldn’t have to eat every two hours and have to have a little carb bump.

**Chalene:** Yeah. And so, when people think about craving sugar and trying to reduce sugar out of their diets, can you share with us, what are some of the myths that people assume that they’re doing a good job and really, they’re still getting a lot of sugar that they don’t realize.

**JJ:** So here’s the one that make me absolutely crazy. And it is this idea that fruit is free-food, right? And I actually have someone text me the other day, “Okay, so, I’m not eating any sugar, but fruit’s okay, right? I’m just snacking on that all day long.” I’m like, “Gah! No, no, no.” You know, we never should’ve put fruits and vegetables in the same category because the idea that a banana or apple juice or dried fruit is the same as kale is just bizarre.

**Chalene:** Okay, you are the first person I’d ever heard say that. And, if you’re listening, I want you to tweet that. Fruits and vegetables should not be in the same category. I mean, for me, that’s a light bulb moment in this episode. Like, hello! You’re right.

**JJ:** Yes. Thank you. So, that was a biggie for me is to get people to understand that fruit’s not this thing, like, “Oh, yeah, just have some fresh fruit.” Well, you know, fruits got some great benefits. One or two pieces of fruit, lower sugar impact fruit, which I’ll talk about what that means, but this isn’t something that you eat all day long, and what you really don’t want to do is unwrap that fruit. You have juice, or condense it like jam or dried fruit.

And one of the challenges is on the labels, and this is where people get duped the most. There’s this idea that if it’s natural, it’s okay, and if you get like, look at some of the green drinks, green machine drinks. It’s crazy; it’s got 56 grams of sugar. It’s got 5 servings of fruit, in the greens, right? It’s really fruit juice with some greens added because you don’t want to actually taste the green, but with the challenge with fruit juice is you’ve taken the fiber out. You’ve just now rushed it to the liver and you look at something like apple juice. Apple juice has more fructose than a Coke.

We’re all concerned about high fructose corn syrup, but you’re going to get the highest fructose fruit is apple. So, apple juice, that we’re giving our little kids, and turning them into little drug addicts. Oh my gosh, this is why we have children with fatty liver. I mean kids shouldn’t have fatty liver. No one should have fatty liver, but especially, not kids.

**Chalene:** Well, it has so much to do with consumerism and I have, myself, seen just people, thinking that they are eating healthy and even when I was doing personal training and I would ask my clients to keep a food journal. And, we would look back through their food journal, and they would say, “Well, I got a large fruit smoothie from fill-in the blank.” and, I would say, “How many ounces?” and they would tell me, but they had no idea how much sugar or calories was contained in one of those, and that sounds so healthy.

**JJ:** And, should we point out that for most of those bigger juice smoothies. They’re about a hundred grams of sugar.

**Chalene:** That’s crazy.

**JJ:** A hundred grams of sugar.

**Chalene:** And, why are we labeling that?

**JJ:** But, here’s the other problem. If we did label it, would people really understand? Like, we put a little sugar mountain picture. I mean, do people really understand what that is?

**Chalene:** Well, thanks to you, they’re starting to.

**JJ:** I hope so because I think they’ll still look and go, “But it’s all natural”, I mean, mercury is natural, arsenic is natural, it doesn’t make it okay. But, I think the bigger issue, Chalene, is we’ve been looking at sugar all wrong because we’ve been using the glycemic indexes as this gold standard for what we should eat, but the glycemic index makes a potato look the same as a carrot, right? Because it doesn’t take into account amount. Everything’s based on a 50 gram load. And, it also doesn’t take into fructose into account because fructose doesn’t raise blood sugar, which makes it sound so great, but in reality it’s because it’s beligning straight to the liver, the only organ that metabolizes that or it starts making fat.

**Chalene:** So, what are fruits that we can safely say, that they’re lower in sugar and those are the fruits that we want to pay special attention to.

**JJ:** Well, what I did was I was looked at four things in determining sugar impact, and then I classified foods as high, low or medium sugar impact. And so, I looked at glycemic load, as opposed to just glycemic index. So, we could really take into account how much of the food you’re eating, not just where it was in terms of raising your blood sugar when you had 50 grams, and also, I looked at fructose, and that’s where you really want to look at fruits because apples and pears are very high fructose. And then I looked at, again fiber, and nutrient density.

 The real issue with fruit is don’t drink it, and also, don’t dry it. Don’t turn it into little sugar bombs because that’s what you get with little dried fruit, and so often the dried fruit then they even add sugar to the dried fruit, that’s even more problematic, which is like, we don’t need to add sugar to fruit. My mom used to do that. Throw sugar on berries. I’m like, you don’t need to, but if you look at low sugar. No, isn’t that crazy?

**Chalene:** Did you go up in the mid-west?

**JJ:** My mother’s from the mid-west.

**Chalene:** Okay. Yeah, we did that too.

**JJ:** I grew up in Berkeley. Oh, okay that’s a mid-west thing?

**Chalene:** Yes, definitely.

**JJ:** The potato chips on the casseroles?

**Chalene:** Oh my gosh, yes. From Michigan, when we would go to a picnic, the salads were marshmallow salad, snicker doodle salad. I’m like, salads with no greens.

**JJ:** Yah, but you can call it a salad…

**Chalene:** Because it’s in a bowl.

**JJ:** It’s just like having a salad.

**Chalene:** Yes.

**JJ:** So, I think most people know that berries are fantastic, but also grapefruit, a lot of the different citrus fruits are low on sugar impact, and peaches. And then, non-fruity fruit like tomatoes and olives, I don’t just even count those.

**Chalene:** I didn’t even know that olive was a fruit.

**JJ:** It is a fruit.

**Chalene:** Poor baby. It’s just gotten a bad rep, all these years.

**JJ:** The higher sugar fruits, but there’s still medium sugar impact, but proceed with caution: apples, which we’re so surprised when I did this, but the average apple has 11 grams of fructose in it, so, apples and dates and grapes and all the tropical. So, those tend to be the higher ones, but again, the biggest thing with fruit is don’t drink it.

**Chalene:** Well, let me ask you about that because when you say don’t drink it, and I’m thinking about making myself my own healthy protein shake and adding berries to it. Now, I’m thinking to myself, well, I’m drinking my fruit. Is it better for me to consume it in its whole form?

**JJ:** Well, No. That’s okay because you didn’t juice it.

**Chalene:** Oh, okay. Don’t juice it, when you say drink it.

**JJ:** When you throw some berries in a shake, and now you’ve got your protein in there and then you’ve got your healthy fat in there, and you’ve probably thrown in some extra fiber. Now, you’ve given yourself a great metabolic hit because all those things are going to work to slowly deliver sugar to your body, instead of giving you this big crash of juice, right?

**Chalene:** Right. What are some of the things that people can do, who want to transition off of sugar. Like, they literally think that they’ll start having the shakes, that they can’t imagine going cold turkey. What steps would you suggest people take if they want to transition? Or do you think people should just go cold turkey?

**JJ:** You know it’s the number one thing, and you haven’t seen the book yet, so I loved that you asked this because this single thing. And I went and looked, when I decided I had to take on sugar. I went and read every single book out there, and then I was like, “Why is this a problem?” Well, part of it is sneaking into places you should never expect, like balsamic vinegar is basically sugar syrup.

**Chalene:** What?

**JJ:** What? Yes, sorry. But the other issue is that we go, “Okay, I’m going to stop.” And then, you just go cold turkey and there are two issues here. Number one, sugar is a drug. And sugar is the number one drug worldwide, number one drug of choice.

I mean, you’re not giving a little kid, 5 years old not doing heroine or he’s not having a glass of wine and a cigarette, but they are having juice and cookies. So, you look at it and go, the studies show it’s 8 times more addictive that cocaine. They did the study with rats, and they gave them morphine, lit up the rewards center of the bran, then they gave them Oreos, it did the same thing, and then they gave them the choice, and then they chose the Oreos. So, if you go with ‘it’s a drug’, you would never have a drug addict, pull the drug away from them and then say, “All right, hang out with it here, but don’t touch it. You’ll be fine.” This is silly.

The other problem is, is if you’re eating little bits of sugar all throughout the day, and that could be because you had the skinny latte and the muffin. It could be the strawberry yogurt you’re having. It could be the salad with the raspberry fat-free vinaigrette and the glazed walnuts. It could be the glazed salmon for dinner that was shined with sugar. All these things, all these places sugar sneaking in, then you say you’re not going to do any of that. Your body, when you’re eating a higher sugar impact diet is fueled with sugar, so you’re a sugar burner so you need to eat every couple of hours to keep your energy up because your body can’t access stored fat for fuel. If you just pull that out, you’ll crash. And of course, what are you going to do if you crash?

Tapering is the single most important thing, and I think, if you don’t do that, that’s the biggest reason that people are set up to fail because their body has to make that transition into being a fat burners.

The first thing that I have people do is make some swaps. So, if they’ve been eating potatoes, switch to sweet potatoes. If they’ve been eating white pasta, just switch to quinoa pasta. Just things that take them from a higher sugar impact to a medium sugar impact, but also focus on eating the right types of balances in each meal and spreading your mealtimes. You’re not getting into that snacking every couple of hours. So, you know, clean lean protein and things like grass-fed beef and wild fish and healthy fats like avocado and coconut milk and loads of non-starchy vegetables and then a little bit of slow impact carbs, you know, beans or quinoa, it depends.

I always say I crossover with vegans and paleos. I play with them all, so depending on which direction you go, you can do beans or you can do pumpkin, whatever makes you happy.

**Chalene:** So, it sound like tapering is the way to go. It’s going to give people the greatest likelihood of success. We can agree on that. But when it comes to really knowing, okay, what do I taper back first? If there’s one particular meal where we’re going to tell people or even a particular habit and say, “Start with this,” just tomorrow, I want my listeners to say, “Tomorrow, I’m going to make this one single change.” What would you tell someone who’s coming to work with you?

**JJ:** I bet you’ll like this one. So, my number one thing that I’ve done, whether it was the Virgin Diet, I’ve been doing it for 25 years, is to start today with a shake, is to switch to a smoothie. I think one of the biggest places we blow it is at breakfast. If you look at what most people eat for breakfast that’s cereal with milk and bananas and a glass of juice has the same sugar impact as four ice cream cones. So, if you look at what most breakfast foods are, they’re dessert. I mean, that muffin all you do with a cupcake is take the icing off and you have a muffin, right?

**Chalene:** And the other thing is that, I think, so many people are unclear on what a healthy protein shake should contain. So, do you have some recommendations on the types of protein that you recommend?

**JJ:** Yes. I’m all about food intolerance, so that’s my main area in weight-loss resistance. So, generally, what I recommend for protein is you always want to start with clean lean protein source. Look for something that, if it does have added sugar, it’s 5 grams or less of added sugar, no artificial sweeteners, obviously. I use a de-fatted beef protein for people who want a Paleo-inspired protein.

**Chalene:** Can you say that again. A de-fatted?

**JJ:** Defatted beef protein basically has the mouth feel of whey, but without allergen-sy profile of it. And, it’s defatted so you don’t have the issues that you’re going to get with meat that people are concerned about. So, I have that on one end and on the other, a plant-based type of shake, with say, I tend to use pea more than rice because the arsenic levels of rice that are in there.

**Chalene:** Do you think we make too big of a deal about that? Is that some sensationalism or do you think that’s valid?

**JJ:** I think it’s valid. And, the challenges it’s really, if you’re using a shake every single day and your shake was rice based, could be an issue. So, it’s really those things. Like you mentioned the most important thing here was what would you do if you’re going to change one thing? So, it’s those things you do every single day. It’s not like, if you have birthday cake once a year, who the heck cares? But, if every day, let’s say you’re dairy intolerant and every day you’re having some milk in your coffee, it’s a problem. Right?

**Chalene:** Right. Yes

**JJ:** Or here, but I just have a little bit of sugar in my coffee every day, and I’m like, first off, it’s not about the calories, it’s about the metabolic effect. It’s about sugar impact and what’s happening when you’re doing that every single time you’re having it. So, it’s those things you do every day. So, rice, I think, it’s something we have to look at.

**Chalene:** So, I’ve got a nice clean lean protein that I can use as the powder for my shake. What else am I going to put in my morning shake?

**JJ:** I’m a big fiber junkie. So, I actually use a fiber blend, but then, I then, I add an extra fiber, and I might get that from my use of my local catnips, I’ll use chia seeds or freshly ground flaxseed meal, or some avocado. Avocado has healthy fat, but loaded with fiber. I mean, you can get 10 grams of fiber from adding your avocado in there.

**Chalene:** It almost gets so creamy, like you’re having ice cream when you add avocado. The first time someone suggested that to me, I’m like, “Gross!” but then, I tried it, and like, “Delish!”

**JJ:** Isn’t it? If you want to make an amazing dessert, you can make chocolate mousse, with avocado and chocolate protein powder and a little coconut cream. It’s unbelievable. Yum!

**Chalene:** Where can I get that recipe? I need that recipe.

**JJ:** I’ll send that recipe to you. It’s so easy to do. Throw some sliced nuts on top and it’s great. I mean no guilt dessert.

**Chalene:** Oh, this is great. Okay, well, if you’re promising to share that recipe with me, then I promise to share it with our listeners and put it on the blog.

**JJ:** Fabulous. We will do it.

**Chalene:** Awesome. So, we’ve added some protein, we’ve added some fiber, and now, would we add some berries?

**JJ:** Okay, so here’s what I do with that. During two weeks, this is the crazy part, of the Sugar Impact Diet that, I thought, is going to get people going, “Oh my gosh.” For two weeks, I actually pull fruit out altogether.

**Chalene:** Love it.

**JJ:** Now, before and after that, yeah, I have people throw berries in. And berries are my favorite thing to throw in a shake. You know, loaded with fiber and phytonutrients. That’s my preferred, and rotating those berries. During the two weeks of the transition cycle of Sugar Impact, I try fructose down to as close to zero as possible.

**Chalene:** So, really, what you’re taking them on is a detox. And, when they’re on this diet, They’re going to detox from sugar first.

**JJ:** Yeah, and it’s really a fructose detox because here’s the cool thing with fructose. The more fructose you eat, the more you elevate something called GLUT-fied transfer proteins, which means, you get really good at eating fructose and sending it fast to the liver and making fat. And you bypass any tiny signals along the way. It’s also very aging, it can raise blood pressure. So, you do not want to be good at transferring fructose, but it turns out, you can change this either way. You can get good at it or bad a bit in a matter of days. So, by taking fructose down to as close to zero as possible, for two weeks, you basically, reclaim your sugar sensitivity. Sweet food starts to taste too sweet, and gross.

I did a little pilot test with 700 people and I used all sugar addicts, that was like, okay, let’s not make this easy. And, I wanted to prove that you could, whether you’re sweet tooth genetic or acquired, I think, for so many of us because we eat sweet all the time. We crave sweet all the time. Exposure leads to preference but that was the big thing that happened in two weeks. When people lost, the average was ten pounds, but the big thing is they lost their sweet tooth and that, to me, is the real secret because if you don’t have a sweet tooth, think how liberated you are.

**Chalene:** Yeah, then you won’t be constantly fighting, what it is you want. You actually learn to crave things that are better for you and give you sustained energy. And that’s very liberating, as opposed to having a list of rules, or having a list of things you can or cannot eat, as opposed to having things you actually crave and you actually want.

**JJ:** Exactly. I’ve never been good with rules, so I tend to look at a rule and the next thing I know, I’m like, “Why did I – like, there I go.” Going off, like, you know, breaking it again. But, it really is about connecting the dots. When you take these foods out and in the end of two weeks – and I loved the way you termed really is a detox. You go back and say, “Let me see how I feel when I eat some that medium sugar impact foods and let me try high sugar impact food,” and your monitoring your mood, and your energy, and your gas and bloating. And obviously, you go, “You know what? When I eat that, I feel whacked. I have a food hangover.” It’s a different conversation.

 You don’t want it because you know what it feels to feel really great. Don’t you think most people don’t really know what it feels like to feel really good?

**Chalene:** That’s a really good question. You know, I think sometimes, I have been so far removed, that I forget. I really do, and I don’t have to go back too far, but once you’re eating healthy and you’re exercising, it’s hard to imagine what it felt like before because it’s just a way of life.

**JJ:** For so many people, though, they’re used to just going through the day, getting that coffee, getting that cookie, having that muffin, getting that little something, something late at night. Right? We have those little things that have become habits, but now their body is hooked on them, and they actually need them in order to get their energy up throughout the day and they think that’s normal and then you watch the advertisements and, like, constipation, gas and bloating, headaches. It’s like it’s all normal stuff, right?

**Chalene:** Oh my gosh. No kidding.

**JJ:** Crazy. And then, all of a sudden you go, “Wait a minute. I’ve done this for two weeks and I have none of that? That wasn’t just status quo. That actually was what I was eating. Oh my god”

**Chalene:** It is pretty crazy. And it’s amazing how much you don’t realize what your nutrition does to you just--headaches and clarity and focus and to remove the chronic swelling and achy-ness and things that, I think for many of us, we’ve adapted some of these really bad habits as we’ve gotten older, and so we think that these symptoms that we’re experiencing are related to getting older, when, in fact, I think, so many of them really relate to the bad habits that we keep tacking on year after year.

**JJ:** Well, I am older than you. I am 51. And I will tell you that I feel better, look better, have more energy, all of that, now, than I did at 30, 35 and the bigger crisis is so much of this is happening. I was actually raised on pop tarts, but then it crawled. I did a whole revolution.

**Chalene:** So was I.

**JJ:** Really. Then, I was happy.

**Chalene:** Oh my gosh.

**JJ:** I know, I took it to the extreme, but at twelve, I changed all of that. I grew up in Berkeley and I was like, “I’m not eating any of these things.” But you look at a lot of the kids now and with 20% teenage obesity and the average teenager eating 32 teaspoons of sugar a day. They don’t even have a chance to ever know these are their habits, now, this is how they live. And it’s really frightening.

**Chalene:** It really is. I mean, to speak about our past, and understanding more about how our nutrition impacts our ability to feel healthy and look healthy. Even when I did my first infomercial, I’ll get e-mails and comments on Facebook, and people will say, “What are you doing now? Your body looks so different. You look younger and healthier now, than you did 10 years ago. What are you doing?” And, my answer is, “I’m educating myself.” You know, when I’m filming that first infomercial, I knew zero about nutrition. I was on a steady diet of Diet Coke, and low-fat, low-carb foods, but I didn’t know anything about nutrition.

**JJ:** I know. I was a personal trainer back then. I literally lived on Diet Coke and everything fat-free. I was a fat-free vegetarian, like, what are you eating there? And a lot of frozen yogurt, by the way.

**Chalene:** And then, talking about the kids, this is a true story. It just popped into my head. My daughter’s now 14, but when she was 11 yrs. old, she had a little girl spend the night and her mom said, “Do you mind if I swing by and bring her her dinner?” and I said, “We’re making dinner, but –“ I thought, you know, maybe she’s got some, you know, bizarre allergy. This is a true story. Just sit up straight and hold on to your chair. The mom brought over two chocolate Hershey bars, and said, “This is what she wants. This is the only thing she’ll eat for dinner.”

**JJ:** Why? Does the kid have her own bank account and car, and that’s what she goes out and gets? Unbelievable.

**Chalene:** Exactly. The mom literally drove over two Hershey’s bars, and put them in a little bag because I’m sure she was just mortified to think, “Oh boy, here, I’m driving over to this woman’s house, who makes a living off of health and nutrition and I’ve bringing over contraband in a little brown bag, two chocolate bars for dinner.” Dinner. Yeah. We’ve got some problems. Moms and Dads, if you’re listening, it starts with you. You can’t say, this is all my child will eat because a child will not starve themselves.

**JJ:** I had one parent tell me that my child only eats microwave bacon, I’m like, how did they find that? How did that happen?

**Chalene:** You make me laugh. You’re so awesome.

**JJ:** I mean, come one. Someone fed them that to start with. Someone got them started. And if you got a 5 year old started on Hershey’s and that’s all they eat, duh, because if you know, I don’t know if you know, I was in the show called Freaky Eaters. I was the nutritionist on the show and that’s what we saw. We saw people who had lived their entire life on French fries. I mean, crazy stuff. One gal, all she ate was sugar, it was stunning. And another gal, all she did was drink Coke. If she had to eat, she had to float it in the Coke. And you know, I was like, how do these things happen?

**Chalene:** How do these people live? How do they exist? Let me ask you a question I don’t know the answer to, and I’d love to know it. Is there a way, or a formula for us to figure out, ideally, what would be the perfect amount of, in a perfect world, on a perfect day, grams of sugar, I should be consuming based on my age, weight, height, gender, and do those things factor in?

**JJ:** So, what if I said zero and that you really shouldn’t be consuming sugar, you should be making it. If you’re eating carbs, now you’re still going to get some. You’d eat tomato, you’ll some grams of sugar, or some pumpkin, but ideally, you’re eating slow low impact carbs and your body is breaking those down into glucose, right? Because your body is going to take all carbs, except fiber, and break them down into glucose or fructose. And then, if you had room in the liver, it would take that fructose and would break it, move it over to glucose and store it as glycogen, but there’s not going to be a room there because we’re overwhelming our liver.

But, ideally, you’re eating things like, pumpkin or quinoa, or you’re getting natural sugars in things like berries and your body is making the sugar it needs. You don’t need to give it, it can make it.

**Chalene:** So, if I’m calculating, if I’m really being careful about my food log, and I’m calculating my grams for protein and carbohydrates and sugars and fats, do I count those?

**JJ:** Okay, so here’s how I do it. I always try to make this really simple and user friendly, and of course, this is kind of very based on where someone is. Are they insulin resistant? Do they have an adrenal stress problem? What type of exercises are they doing? All these things are going to factor in, right? But, I think, ideally, if you look at this and go, okay, figure out how much protein you need, and I’m sure you’ve taught your audience that piece of it and basically, it’s somewhere around 20 to 30 grams per meal and it depends on your size and how much muscle you have and if you’re male or if you’re female, if you’re a strength trainer, or if you’re recovering from surgery, or what. And then, I keep it down to one or two servings of what I call low impact or slow low carbohydrates each meal. And then, a lot of non-starchy vegetables, and then the rest is healthy fats.

You can bring the fats up. You really got to watch how much on the carbohydrates and that goes again, up and down, based on are you insulin sensitive? Are you diabetic? Or do you have adrenal exhaustion? But the protein, pretty, stays the same unless you’re recovering from, you know, you’re healing from something and the carbs, very little bit. You eat loads of vegetables. I think most people are totally under doing their veggies. Like five to ten servings of non-starchy veggies a day, and then, healthy fats.

Don’t be fat-phobic. Fat is one of the most amazing – making an oil change is amazing for what it can do for your hair, skin and nails, reducing inflammation, incredible, and making you not hungry. If you don’t eat fat, you’re going to be hungry and crabby.

**Chalene:** We could do a whole show just on oils and healthy fats.

**JJ:** Yes, and I’m amazed, Chalene, that people are still fat-phobic. It’s incredible to me. Fat does not make you fat. It does not make you fat. It’s all those crappy processed food that make you hungry and age fast. It is not the avocado.

**Chalene:** So, tell me about the type of results, that you’re seeing when people are on the Sugar Impact Diet?

**JJ:** So, literally, we did this, because of the Virgin Diet, and so what I did was I took 700 people. I’ve always been bothered by the glycemic index, and so I read every book out there on sugar and “Okay, I’m going to figure this out.” And I knew fructose had to really be weighted heavily. I created this new Sugar Impact scale based on fructose and glycemic load, nutrient density and fiber. Created a program where you tapered, then you transition, and then you got transformed; you connect the dots and see how much you can do in your diet. That’s what I have people do. It’s like, let’s go through this and see how much you can handle. Where’s your weight? Where’s your body fat?

So, I took 700 people through that and the average person – because we went through and had to do the averages for the publisher to be able to say this – lost ten pounds, but the bigger thing was that they lost their sweet tooth.

**Chalene:** Ten pounds over the course of?

**JJ:** Two weeks.

**Chalene:** Wow! That’s astonishing.

**JJ:** That, to me, that wasn’t the big deal because you could lose ten pounds and gain ten pounds right back, but if all of a sudden you lost those ten pounds, but you lose your sweet tooth. And all of a sudden you are like, “Gosh, those foods don’t even appeal to me anymore, and actually, when I eat them, they taste disgusting and they trash my energy. I don’t even want them.” I have one woman, who’d gone through the Virgin Diet, but sugar and gluten were still her nemesis and she goes, the sugar impact she lost the last ten pounds she has, but now, I know exactly what happens if I have sugar or gluten. My blood sugar goes up 10 points immediately and I gain five pounds. With one thing. So, it’s just not worth it.

**Chalene:** Yeah. It’s really interesting. Well, it’s fascinating and I think what you’re doing is great work. I love that you have – you’ve really just overhauled something that you’ve – we’ve just been shoving down people’s throats the glycemic index and there’s something about it that you said, “It just doesn’t make sense,” And to overhaul that and to do such an amazing work in educating the population about sugar is really commendable. And, I know people are going to want to know more about how to manage their own sugar and to try this approach. So, where can they learn more about your new diet program?

**JJ:** So, here’s what I did. Again, my whole goal is to make things easy. So, I put together 4 training videos that just walk you through the program. Immediately, you’ll be able to take the Sugar Impact Quiz. So, you’ll be able to go, “Okay, where am I right now?” You got to know your starting point, and the sneaky sugar inventories, so you’ll see all the crazy places sugar is sneaking in, like, I’ll throw up balsamic vinegar.

**Chalene:** Yes. I didn’t know that. I can’t wait to watch the videos. I hope I’m not sad.

**JJ:** You won’t be sad because there’s an easy swap like, wine vinegar. No big deal, but you lower your sugar impact. It’s the things you do every day. So, simple stuff like that so you’ll know exactly what you need to do when you get started. And again, I’m all about making something easy to follow and easy to do, so you don’t feel like you have to take another class.

**Chalene:** Thank you. We’d love that.

**JJ:** We’re busy. We’ve got enough stuff to think about.

**Chalene:** Make it simple.

**JJ:** Yes.

**Chalene:** And so, where can find more about it? Where do they go?

**JJ:** Where do they go? SugarImpact.com and let’s do slash, Chalene, so we can give them extra fun stuff.

**Chalene:** Oh, cool. So, SugarImpact.com and these videos, will they be up indefinitely or do people need to make sure that they log on the next couple of days?

**JJ:** No, those will be up. And we’ll work on, we’ll see what we can put together for you too.

**Chalene:** Okay, cool. Well, nonetheless, I always wanted to tell people, when we have a guest on and they create something special for my listeners, take advantage of it right then. Make a note to yourself to do that immediately because I can’t ask my guest to keep these things up in their websites indefinitely, so take advantage of that. I know I’m going to head over there, as soon as we’re done. And take the quiz and watch the videos because that’s truly my answer. When people say what are you doing differently? My answer is I’m educating myself.

**JJ:** I love that. And, I got to tell you. Now, that I’ve really looked at this and just like you, when you said, “balsamic vinegar?” when I really dove into this subject, I was like, “Oh my gosh,” even me, I’m a nutritionist and I was finding that it was sneaking into places I never even would’ve thought about. And it has made a major impact. We were going to take on one subject. One thing that we could change. If you lower your sugar impact, you lower your kid’s sugar impact. It’s the biggest single shift you can make to impact your health.

**Chalene:** It’s simple, it’s amazing. JJ Virgin, it has been an honor to have you on my podcast. I want to recommend to my lifers that they subscribe to yours. I teach morning fitness classes and I tell my students, if you’re not listening to JJ’s podcast on the way to class, then you’re wasting your time driving here to do the fitness component of it. Learn something about nutrition. You’ve got just such an easy to digest, no pun intended, quick and easy podcast that I really enjoy listening to and I use that time driving to and from the gym to educate myself. So thank you for being here.

**JJ:** Thank you. Thank you.

**Chalene:** Absolutely.

**[ END OF PODCAST]**

**Chalene:** I hope you enjoyed that as much as me. This is one of those episodes where it’s really important you remember to go to the website ChaleneJohnson.com/podcast. Look for the episode with JJ Virgin. There, we’ve placed a link that JJ has given us. That link gives you here 2 week cookbook. It’s an amazing way for you to be able to detox not only yourself, but your family, off of sugar.

Lifers, if you’re listening to this around the holiday season don’t forget this is when it’s really the most important that you remember what you know. Your knowledge. Continue to expand your mind. It’s going to make getting through those holiday parties and avoiding that extra weight gain so much easier.

The holidays can be stressful. Let me coach you through it. Stay connected, and as always, leave me a message. Let me know what you thought about this episode. You can leave me a voicemail message by going to ChaleneJohnson.com/podcast. That’s also where you see the show notes as I’ve mentioned, but it’s where you can leave me a voice note about this show and you guys, I love it when you do that.

Thank you so much for keeping your messages specific to the podcast. And as always, thank you so much for stealing your friend’s phone. Opening up the Podcast app and then subscribing them to this show because that’s what good friends do, right? That’s why I love you guys. All right, that’s all for today. Talk to you soon.

**[ END OF THE RECORDING]**