

WOMEN, FOOD, AND HORMONES: DR. SARA GOTTFRIED'S NEWEST BOOK

BY LYDIA GRAHAM



Lydia is a passionate advocate of healthy living. She has launched and positioned many health and wellness-related companies, products, technologies and organizations receiving more than 100 awards nationally and internationally. Her focus in the health sector is specifically on life sciences, aging and longevity. She is a partner and investor in several recognized national brands. She sits on the board of the Buck Institute for Research on Aging whose mission is to eliminate the threat of age-related disease for today's and future generations. It is the only independent research organization globally dedicated to extending the healthy years of life. Like the scientists at the Buck, Graham envisions it will be possible for people to enjoy life at 95 as much as at 25. To support Buck's mission, please visit www.buckinstitute.org.

THIS ONE IS FOR THE LADIES. SORRY, GENTS, but we have our unique issues.

Recently, at a retreat hosted by Blue Wave Medicine (www.BlueWaveMedicine.com), I had the opportunity to meet *New York Times* bestselling author and speaker, Berkeley resident and physician Sara Gottfried. She recently just published her fifth book, *WOMEN, FOOD AND HORMONES: A 4-Week Plan to Achieve Hormonal Balance, Lose Weight and Feel Like Yourself Again*. This book is a must-read for any woman wanting to shed those extra pounds, balance hormones, achieve metabolic flexibility, and enjoy greater mental acuity. Just about all of us fit into at least one of those buckets.

This is not your usual lose-weight-and-optimize-your-nutrition light read though, and that is exactly what I love about it. Frankly, it is one of the most useful and comprehensive women's health books I have read (and I have read a lot of them) and not for those who just want to dabble. This book is as Dr. Gottfried puts it: "My interest is in transformation and that takes a personal commitment and investment."

Dr. Gottfried speaks from the heart as well as experience. She herself struggled on a long difficult journey of metabolic inflexibility and unwanted weight fluctuation, particularly after having children, so it was a puzzle she needed to solve for her own health. And she did. Through perseverance, research, testing, and refining treatment for herself as well as for thousands of patients over the years, she developed the "Gottfried Protocol" outlined in this book.

Most current weight loss strategies and their success have been validated and studied on men. However, women's bodies are different for all the obvious reasons, and our delicate hormone balance (which, to make things even more complicated, changes throughout our lifespan), in particular, adds an additional layer of complexity unknown to men. In the last few years, we have heard much about the wonders of the keto diet. Yet, sometimes it seems to work better for men than for women—the keto paradox. There are myriad reasons for this, you will learn.

The Gottfried Protocol is a 4-week, science-based approach to women's health, weight loss, and achieving metabolic flexibility designed to side-step the keto

paradox with a program tailor-made for a woman's body. It embraces eating for your hormones. For those fortunate women already satisfied with your weight, the book still offers plenty to learn and apply. Plus, you might better understand your hormones, as these are described in-depth.

Achieving metabolic flexibility is important for everyone for health and immunity. "Only 12 percent of Americans are metabolically flexible," says Gottfried, meaning they can switch from burning carbs to burning fats as our ancestors did when they were hunter-gatherers. Most people with weight challenges have metabolic issues. Even thin people can have pre-diabetes (one in three U.S. adults) and metabolic inflexibility and not know it. "Women have adverse effects at a lower glucose threshold than men," adds Gottfried. It is never too late to make significant changes or turnarounds, regardless of weight or age. In fact, says Gottfried, "changes in insulin can be made in 72 hours."

The protocol consists of four phases: preparation, implementation, transition, and integration. Gottfried walks us through each phase step-by-step. Overall, the protocol focuses on three key tenets tailored for women: detoxification, nutritional (modified) ketosis, and intermittent fasting with added recommendations for hydration and exercise. There are plenty of insights that facilitate personalization. For example, on body type she explains the science behind each phase as well as surprise facts about common mistakes people make on keto, such as how too much fat or too much protein can cause inflammation and much more.

Case studies and inspiration appear along the way. Dr. Gottfried details how to track data-driven metrics and identifies devices to measure your progress and provide feedback, such as testing your carb tolerance for certain foods by wearing a continuous glucose monitor to measure your glucose ketone index (GKI)—one of the best biomarkers of your metabolic state and the single most helpful for weight loss. She also offers suggestions on important supplements to consider, resources to explore, easy-to-follow prepared meal plans, and plenty of delicious recipes she has created and tested.

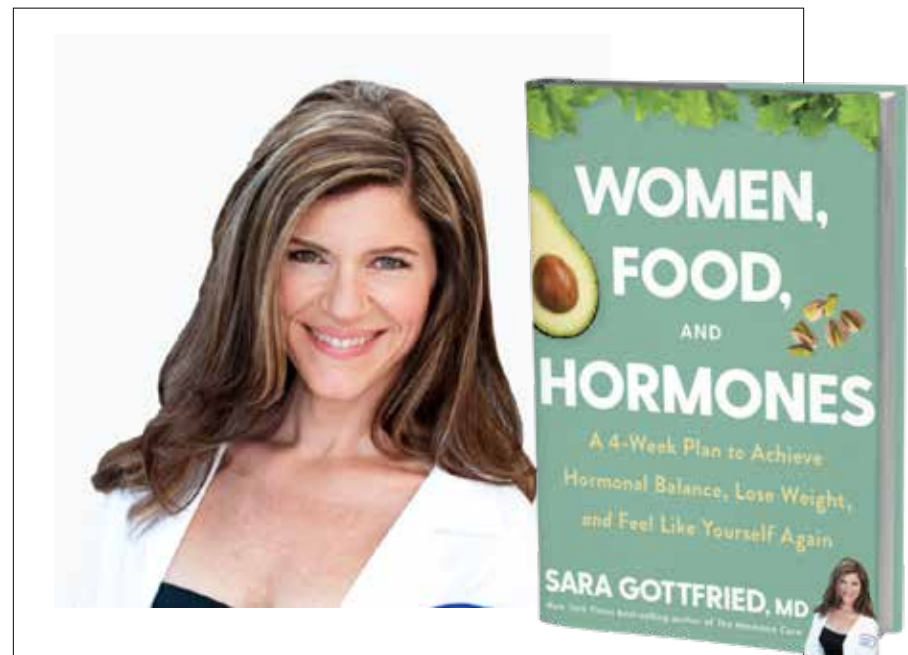
Of course, always consult with your own personal physician before starting any program.

Before beginning the protocol, Dr. Gottfried recommends reading chapters one through six to understand the macros, then going back to begin the program at chapter five. She suggests writing a personal values statement at the outset regarding goals, hormones, and weight. At the end, to sustain your success she helps you ease into mixing keto with a low carb Mediterranean diet (based on the personal carb threshold

you identified during the transition phase).

Dr. Gottfried practices precision medicine and talks about a nutrient-dense diet. The same could be said of her writing in this book—precise and nutrient-dense with much evidence-based specificity. Her attention to so many details, while concurrently giving us an optimal big picture vision to strive for, seems to come from an authentic place of self-compassion and compassion for others on this journey. She has given us a treasure trove of in-depth, hard-earned knowledge, and we are the lucky beneficiaries. Dr. Gottfried believes "to your hormones, food is information, and we can use food to communicate with our hormones in the way we desire. The key is to begin with food, because what you eat is the backbone of every hormone you make."

WOMEN, FOOD, AND HORMONES is a guidebook for a woman's optimal health that I will keep on my bookshelf and refer to many times over. Thank you, Dr. Gottfried, for sharing your knowledge and wisdom with us who choose to listen. It will make a difference.



SARA GOTTFRIED, MD

Sara Gottfried, MD, is a board-certified physician who graduated from Harvard and MIT. She practices evidence-based integrative, precision, and functional medicine. She is clinical assistant professor in the Department of Integrative Medicine and Nutritional Sciences at Thomas Jefferson University and director of precision medicine at the Marcus Institute of Integrative Health. She has written four *New York Times* bestselling books, including *WOMEN, FOOD, AND HORMONES*. Learn more at SaraGottfriedMD.com