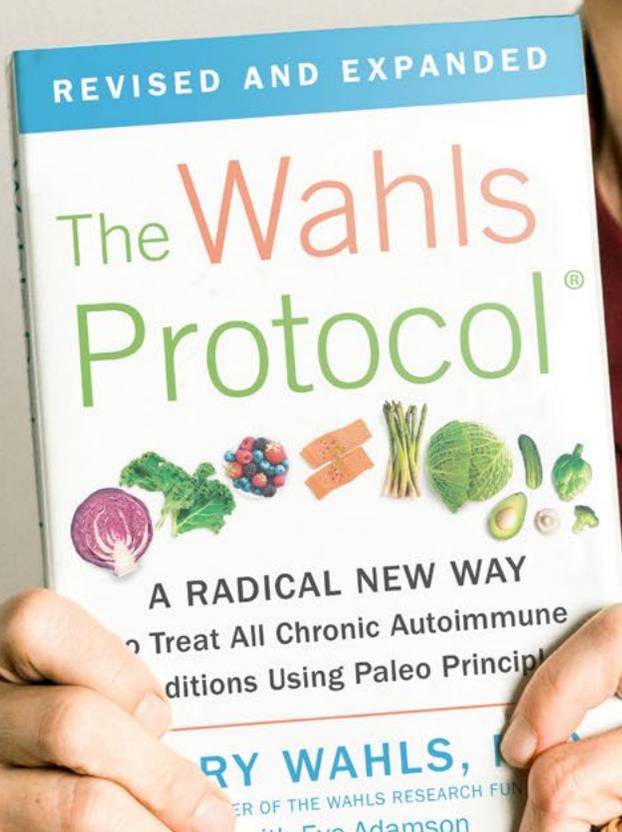


Introduction To The Wahls Behavior Change™ Model

Five Steps To Help Patients Exclude And Stay
Off Inflammatory Foods

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The Wahls Protocol



Five Steps To Help Patients Exclude And Stay Off Inflammatory Foods

You understand that your patients need to cut inflammatory foods from their diet and replace them with healing foods, especially non-starchy vegetables. But stopping gluten, sugar, and casein consumption—which can drive so much inflammation—is very hard.

Those foods have familiar flavors that are comforting and sometimes addictive, and they are cheap and plentiful. We are surrounded by processed foods specifically designed to create cravings and drive overconsumption. Plus, stopping gluten, dairy, sugar, and processed foods can lead to a temporary worsening of symptoms as the body readjusts.

Here are my top strategies to help people be more successful at stopping their consumption of these harmful foods:

- 1. What is your “why”?** I ask patients what they want their health for—I make them describe a specific physical activity or action that they want to be healthy enough to do. My “why” was helping my son and daughter grow up to be emotionally and financially successful. For others it might be dancing with a child or loved one at a wedding or other family celebration, leading their local cub scout or girl scout group in an outdoor activity, or working in their garden or at their place of worship. Asking people to articulate in detail their goals and dreams increases their motivation to stick to the challenge of changing a long-held habit.
- 2. Teach patients the mechanisms by which diet and lifestyle impact health.** It helps to use a lot of metaphors to translate complex chemical reactions, making them easy for people without a scientific or medical background to understand. In Iowa, I treat a lot of farmers. They understand the importance of giving their cattle quality feed if they want to have a champion steer. And they understand the importance of checking the soil and applying the correct fertilizers to promote high crop yield. They would not expect their livestock or their crops to do well if they did not feed them properly. When I explain that if they want to have health, they need to care and feed themselves to the same high standards that they have for raising champion livestock and crops, they have an Aha! moment. Using terms and examples they can understand makes those farmers much more willing to link their diet choices to their health.
- 3. Once they know their why and the mechanics of health, I connect the two:** it is much easier for people to give up favorite foods and begin eating unfamiliar flavors if they know why they are doing it and how exactly it will help them. It’s important to explain that they may experience unpleasant symptoms of withdrawal, such as headaches, fatigue, and increased irritability, but that after one to two weeks those symptoms will be replaced with increased energy, more stable moods, and clearer thinking.

4. Add a peer support group. Ideally, the patient will participate in a group that supports others who are using diet and lifestyle choices to help them achieve their “why.” Engaging patients in defining and expressing their personal missions and what they want their health for is transformative. Sharing these in a group reinforces their importance and makes the challenges of change easier to bear. My patients have also shared that it’s easier for them to get advice and guidance on how to make and sustain change from peers than from me. A group offers community, belonging, and even help finding and enhancing new meaning in their lives as they begin helping others in their healing journeys.

5. Create an opportunity to become a peer mentor. When a patient can mentor others who are new to the healing journey, that patient is now committed to their healing journey as a way of life. They are far less likely to fall back to their previous poor health behaviors once they become a mentor and are helping others. They have found in their healing journey a purpose. This is similar to the models that others have used to help people overcome addictions, and we have found it to be incredibly helpful in our clinics.

Wahls Behavior Change Model™ is a proven patient intervention that will attract more patients eager for your message of hope and recovery

Help me create an epidemic of health, join our growing family of certified practitioners.



The Wahls Protocol®

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