

# Family Recipes IV: Stuffed Sweet Peppers

Earlier this week I introduced you to the Lachere family of seven, who were hard at work making important changes to their diet. Although they had made the shift to an all fruit breakfast and plant based lunches with ease, the evening meal was still a struggle. With five children longing for their family favorites that all happened to be dairy and meat centered, mom Molly struggled for ideas. When she asked for help I suggested she enlist the children to send me a list of their favorite dinner items and we would replace them one by one with plant based alternatives. Their requests included cream based soups, tacos, sandwiches, lasagna, casseroles, and stuffed peppers.



Highest on the list was the stuffed peppers so I decided that would be a good starting point. If I could win them over with a replacement for their traditional sweet peppers filled with rice, cheese, and ground meat, then I'd know we were on to something. Over the weekend I sent them this Quinoa Stuffed Pepper recipe by Detoxinista to test.

## **Ingredients**

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup dry quinoa  
1 cup water  
4 bell peppers, sliced in half lengthwise, seeds & white pith removed  
1 tablespoon coconut oil  
1 small onion, chopped  
1 clove garlic, minced  
1 cup chopped mushrooms (about 4 ounces)  
1 zucchini, chopped  
1 (15-ounce) can white cannelloni beans (about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups cooked beans)  
1 cup marinara sauce, plus more for serving (homemade or purchased)  
Sea salt and black pepper

[Full Instructions Here](#)

The Lachere kids were on it and all five joined in on the project. Even one year old Annaleise took part in the testing of a blended version!



Hearing the feedback, I'd say the finished results were a hit all around and these Stuffed Sweet Peppers start off the new list of Lachere Family Plant Based Favorites. Here are some other recipes I shared with the Lachere family and they plan to test a new one each week.

Vegan Taco Meat

Grain free Stir Fry

Dairy Free Mac & Cheese

Butternut Lasagne

We'll be checking back in with them in a few weeks to see how they have fared. So stay tuned!

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# Changing Your Plate Part V: Dinner

We've had quite a few weeks now of meeting real families from my practice who are each, in their own way, making efforts to eat more plants daily. From the Sherman family in Houston who decided to take their first steps based on their baby daughter's milk sensitivity, to the Thorntons who wanted to get their energy back and set a good example for their young daughter, and then the Kearleys who, after several years, had some excellent tried and true tips to share. It's been quite a journey. Now, to close out this series, I'd like to introduce you to the Lachere family of Helena, Montana.

Mom, Molly, came to me requesting help to heal her digestive tract from damage that had occurred over the years leading to a Crohns diagnose. She had tried many different routes but nothing seemed to work. When we began our work she was faced with a lifetime of heavy duty medications or some radical dietary changes. You are going to love her story!

Molly and, husband, Gerald are in their thirties. She teaches and coaches part time at a private school and Gerald is a policeman. Although she and her husband do love to cook together when they get a chance, it's Molly who does the majority of the shopping and the cooking for their family of seven. They are proud parents to Kevin 11, Carly 8, Tyler 6, Marcella 3, and Annaleise who is soon to be 1.



When Molly and I met for her first remote appointment I was quite blunt. At this point in time, given the progression of her symptoms, if she wanted to avoid further dependency on medications she would have to get serious. And by serious she would have to at a minimum eliminate all dairy and all gluten. Even after that we would have to see what still may cause inflammation. The only way to be sure of what causes what reaction would be to reduce/eliminate processed food items. For a working mother who also feeds and cares for five children, making those changes would not be an easy route.

But Molly didn't shy away. She listened, declared it wouldn't be easy but she was opposed to filling her body with medication for the rest of her life. So she began to make changes for herself the very next day. Here's what Molly had to say,

*"After I felt so much better and noticed the huge changes to*

*my health, I knew I had to get my family on board and completely change their eating habits.*

*In myself, I have noticed a complete change in my bowels. I went from over twenty bowel movements a day, to now just one or two solid bm's. I also noticed better sleep, more energy, and even clearer thinking and emotions."*

Having followed Molly's case, I'd like to point out this took a huge amount of dedication AND she had her share of emotional and physical setbacks when she questioned whether this was going to get her to where she wanted to be. This is often the case in highly inflamed individuals. Because inflammation will move along the pathways of the lymphatic system, pains will change and the "new symptoms" can be confusing. Continuing onward is the key and you will see that her perseverance has paid off. She recently underwent testing to check her inflammatory levels and both Molly and her doctors were astonished at her results. They applauded her commitment to her diet and encouraged Molly to continue whatever she was doing as it was truly making a difference!

Molly tells me about what she first noticed in her children with the changes to their diet.

*"The change that stands out the most is no more tummy aches and constipation. My oldest son would spend 30 minutes every other day having a bm. My three year old would sit and cry that she couldn't get her "poopy" out.*

*Over all, my children have had a healthy increase in appetite, and their attitude towards food has changed. The older ones especially see the correlation between what they eat and how they feel. How cool is that?"*

What Molly saw in her children's elimination patterns is not uncommon but unfortunately we are not trained to see those symptoms as problematic. Early elimination issues ARE exactly the start of chronic disease and parents need to pay

attention. This is what food sensitivity looks like!

I love what Molly had to say about how she has framed this dietary shift for her children.

*"We have approached this change with the attitude that we have a choice to feel so much better! When my kids want to eat something with dairy in it, I don't freak out or tell them no, I simply ask them if it is worth it. Sometimes, they have said, "yep, totally worth it," and without fail, either within minutes or days, depending on the child, (one experiences diarrhea while the other experiences constipation) they come around and decide that it wasn't a good choice and they think a little longer next time they are faced with the same choice. The thing is, there are SO MANY alternatives that taste really good! This is absolutely not about depriving ourselves!"*

Molly's advice to families starting out is to take it slow and take time to make the changes.

*"This is not an overnight lifestyle change," Molly smartly shares, "every time you make a small change, you will feel better and will want to continue. The longer you are off of the dairy, the more you will notice the reaction if you try it again."*

So as Molly began implementing these changes, routines were very important. Because routines are already necessary for a family of seven, food planning would be no different. On a typical day, Molly's husband Gerald gets up and starts the smoothies. He also makes lunches while Molly gets the kids up and moving. The big kids and dad are out the door by 7:40. Molly works part time, so if it is a work day, she gets the little ones packed up and fed and they are all ready to go by 9:15. All of the kids and Molly are home by 3:45 and dinner gets started right away. Kevin, the 11 year old, is in charge of the salad making but he often recruits the others. He is training them well! Gerald is home by 5:15 and dinner happens



right away. Because the kids often have sports or meetings to attend, the Lachere family divides and conquers the evening activities.



Some routines came quite easily. Every morning without fail they all began to have their smoothies, every lunch box got two vegetables, and every dinner began with a salad. But what to do about that main course?

After all the challenges I gave to Molly it was her opportunity to turn the tables on me. Molly had this to say:

*“Plant based eating is challenging for us mostly because I wasn’t raised this way and all of my go to family favorites included large amounts of cheese, milk, cream, and meat. These are the meals my kids know and love and they aren’t about to give them up without a fight! I can’t just put a bowl of raw vegetables on the table with some dipping sauce and say,*

*dinner is served!"*

I asked Molly to give me a list of "family favorites" and I would get to work on finding some similar recipes that would keep them all on their new diet AND please her kids.

The list from Molly and her kids may sound a lot like your family favorites: casseroles, lasagna, tacos, stuffed peppers, stir fry, sandwiches, and cream based soups.

Before I got carried away, Molly reminded me, "*The goal is always tasty, cheap, and easy. We are a big and busy family after all!*"

So I had my challenge. Molly and family agreed to test out any recipe that met their standards and give me feedback. Later this week I'll be featuring the Lachere kids teaming up to make plant based stuffed bell peppers and you'll see for yourself what they thought about the results!

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## **Family Recipes III: Carob Freezer Fudge**



Last week I introduced the Kearley family, Janice, Stephen, and eight year old Ruth in Changing Your Plate Part III: Lunch. This week in Part IV: Plan Ahead we learned quite a bit from the system Janice has created to keep their plant based pantry stocked, the family well fed, AND staying within her budget!

You know some days a sweet treat at lunch (or anytime for that matter) is a welcome surprise. Here is a quick and tasty Carob Freezer Fudge from Angela Liddon's Oh She Glows blog. Janice makes this recipe with exactly that purpose in mind and then

takes it up a notch by adding in toasted pecans and coconut. Are you tempted now?

### **Ingredients**

1/2 cup virgin coconut oil, melted

1/4 cup creamy natural almond butter (roasted or raw are both fine)

1/4 cup carob powder, sifted

1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted

2-3 tablespoons pure maple syrup (or liquid sweetener of choice), to taste

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

1/8-1/4 teaspoon fine grain sea salt

1/2 cup gluten-free rice crisp cereal, to add crunch (optional)

[Full Instructions Here](#)

Enjoy it right down to the last square!

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## **Changing Your Plate Part IV: Plan Ahead**

Last week Janice Kearley shared her family's approach to a plant based lunch— totally DIY, prepped ahead, simple, and colorful. Later we featured the family's favorite wrap and bread recipes you won't want to miss. Moving on this week, we are looking at what prepped ahead means to Janice and how she does it.

We all know that getting ahead on our family cooking is helpful but having a system to follow is what makes it sustainable. Hopefully you can glean some take-away tips from

Janice that will work in your home.

## **Shopping/Stocking**

Let's start out with the topic of shopping and keeping that pantry stocked with essentials. When I asked Janice about her shopping she told me straight up, "*I don't buy a lot of packaged things.*" From our conversation I gathered that if Janice can make it herself, she will. So what items does she purchase and always keep on hand?

### **Janice's store bought staples:**

Nuts (raw)  
Raisins/ Dates  
Honey  
Maple Syrup  
Apple Cider Vinegar  
Brown Rice Vinegar  
Avocado or Grapeseed Oil  
Coconut Oil  
Sesame Oil  
Just Mayo  
Powdered Spirulina (for smoothies )  
Nutritional Yeast  
Coconut Aminos  
Muir Glen roasted tomatoes with green chilis  
Beans: Kidney, Black, Chickpea and Pinto  
Lentils  
Daiya Cheese

### **Items Janice prefers to make herself:**

Almond Milk  
Bars  
Coconut Butter (recipe from home made vegan pantry)

The majority of Janice's shopping is done at Costco and Sprouts. To keep up the ingredients she keeps on hand and minimize her purchases, she has developed a great system.

Janice keeps two customized lists on the fridge at all times. One is an item specific list for Costco, divided into sections so that items are checked off as needed. The other list for Sprouts/ HEB has the days of the week on the left for menu planning and sections on the right for Produce, Bulk, Canned/Boxed Jars, Baking/Spices, Frozen/ Beverage, Miscellaneous. Janice only enters what she plans to use that week on the list so there is no waste or over purchasing. Here's an example:

<b>Menu Plan</b>	<b>Grocery List</b>
<b>Monday:</b>	<b><u>Produce</u></b>
<b>Tuesday:</b>	
<b>Wednesday:</b>	<b><u>Natural/Bulk</u></b>
<b>Thursday:</b>	<b><u>Canned/Boxed/Breads/Jars</u></b>
<b>Friday:</b>	<b><u>Baking/Spices</u></b>
<b>Saturday:</b>	<b><u>Frozen/Beverages</u></b>
<b>Sunday:</b>	<b><u>Miscellaneous</u></b>

## Cooking Ahead

The next piece of planning that keeps Janice's kitchen running

smooth and hassle free is her system of batch cooking beans and lentils.



On the same refrigerator door with the grocery lists lives a little white board where Janice keeps up on what she needs to cook next. Items for batch cooking include chickpeas, pintos, kidneys, lentils, and black beans.

The Kearleys have purchased a true deep freeze in order to better preserve the food Janice is cooking ahead and a large supply of 2 cup Pyrex dishes that hold just the right portions for their meals for three.





Janice's final tip for all families is, *"If you have the space to grow some of your own food, especially if you have children, do it."* The Kearley family does have a small but abundant plot in their back yard that has been a rewarding family project.

In closing, Janice shared three of the many cookbooks that have inspired her repertoire in the kitchen:

Greens 24/7, Jessica Nadel (Be sure to check out the Kale Chip-Cool Ranch recipe.)

Oh She Glows, Angel Liddon  
Everyday Detox, Megan Gilmore

I sure have learned a lot from the Kearley family and I hope you have too! Please join us next week as we move on to the evening meal, in this Changing Your Plate series. You are going to love the story of the Lachere family of seven!

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## Family Recipes II: The Kearley's Mix & Match Lunch

Eating plant based came about five years ago for the Kearley family when mom, Janice, and dad, Stephen, were looking to give young daughter, Ruth, a healthy start. You can find their story here.

At the Kearley house, lunch goes together with ease because of its simplicity and the advance prep done by Janice. It always consists of plates of raw cut colorful fruit and vegetables slices, a spread of some kind, such as hummus, black bean, or a nut butter, and a wrap or bread slice (gluten free of course). While the wrap can be a corn or gluten free tortilla, Janice prefers to make her own in batches and store them in the fridge or freezer.

Here are two tried and true family favorites that she turns to again and again.

### **Paleo Roti by My Heart Beets**

#### **Ingredients**

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup golden flaxseed meal

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup tapioca flour

1 cup coconut milk (canned and full fat)

Salt to taste

Optional: Grassfed ghee to slather on top (or Earth Balance coconut spread)

[Full Instructions Here](#)

This simple and versatile wrap can be rolled or filled for a Kearley family lunch.

## **Superfood Bread by Deliciously Ella**

### **Ingredients**

2 cups of cold water

1 and a 1/2 cups of pumpkin seeds

1 cup of buckwheat or brown rice flour (or quinoa)

1 cup of almonds

1/2 a cup of sunflower seeds

3 heaped tablespoons of psyllium husk powder

2 tablespoons of chia seeds

2 tablespoons of dried mixed herbs (I used herbs de provence but basil, rosemary, thyme, oregano, etc. are all great)

Salt and pepper to taste

[Full Instructions Here](#)

Light years ahead of the commercial gluten free breads when it comes to nutrient content, this bread is super simple to prepare and the flour selection is adaptable. After the loaf cools Janice will slice it, separate each slice with a strip of parchment paper, and store in the freezer. Here's how it looks topped with deliciousness at the Kearley home.



Thanks Janice for your delightful suggestions! Be sure to visit my blog next week for some smart shopping and stocking tips that keep the Kearley family going plant-strong.

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## **Changing Your Plate Part III: Lunch**

We talk a lot about food, in my office and home, and how changes to diet are most sustainable when they occur one meal at a time. In order to support you on your path to plant based

eating, I thought it would be helpful to share some **real stories** from **real families** that we see in my practice. Becoming fully plant based is a journey. Setting realistic expectations while at the same time continually making progress is the key.

I ask my clients to change their breakfast first. What you consume for breakfast can set the stage for the rest of your day, activating your lymphatic system and encouraging healthy elimination. An alkalizing plant based breakfast will provide an alertness and clarity in the morning that can't be achieved with coffee or a meal heavy with protein. Last week I shared the Thornton family's story and their commitment to morning smoothies for the whole family, even 18 month old Lily Kai.

This week I want to introduce you to the Kearley family. Eating plant based was something Janice, who handcrafts Montessori baby toys, and her real estate inspector husband, Stephen, had implemented several years back. Since bringing their 8 year old homeschooled daughter Ruth to my practice, they've made a few tweaks. Even with the clean vegan diet they were consuming, Ruth still struggled with chronic congestion. Our plan for Ruth was more raw fruits and vegetables through lunchtime and a cooked gluten free, vegan meal for dinner. As this was not a huge leap, the transition has been fairly smooth. It also helps that Ruth not only is on board but is leading the way for the rest of the family.



Janice is very dedicated to her family's diet and has created some systems that are quite inspiring. Their first dietary changes came when Ruth was still in preschool and she and Stephen read *Disease-Proof Your Child* by Dr. Joel Fuhrman.

*"The book really got us going,"* says Janice, *"and since then we've really branched out. It was a good place to start making the switch to plant based because at the time we were still eating meat and a bit of dairy. It was a good guide to making a gradual change. It was actually quite easy by then to just eliminate meat and dairy completely. It's important to know that I LOVED cheese – but discovering recipes like Dr. Fuhrman's Orange Cashew sauce really helped. Actually, that sauce is how our daughter learned to love kale."*

With all this great experience, Janice is full of tips to share. I turned to her specifically for lunch and her's is a simple one. To keep the midday meal stress free, Janice does batch cooking of many staples. It is, however, important to note that the precooked items mentioned can just as easily be

bought prepared if and when time is a factor. Because the Kearley family keeps to a tight food budget, Janice prepares all of her beans (chickpeas, pintos, kidneys, lentils, black beans) in batches and stores them in the deep freeze in 2 cup glass storage containers. She has developed quite a seamless method to keep up on this that I will be sharing in next week's post.

Janice explains, *"Lunch is simple at our house. Everything is from what I have previously prepared. If we are at home, I'll set out raw veggies and fruits such as bell pepper, cucumber, celery, carrots, oranges, and kale chips not prepared in any way just cleaned and cut, looking for color, even if it's just the peel of the apple. I usually include some hummus, nut butter, or a black bean spread."* With these items they are able to make a wide variety of combinations.



Packed lunches use similar ingredients but the items are put into a wrap of some kind or into a sandwich with seed bread. Be sure to find the recipes for the Kearley family go-to wrap and seed bread featured in Lauren's Kitchen later this week.

Keeping lunch simple is the key here and that is the bottom line for all plant based eating. The challenge to changing behaviors is finding the bandwidth to be creative. Thinking outside of the box when under pressure and stressed is not going to be successful. So consider taking on this next step on your plant based journey when you can create for yourself some time and space to plan your own approach. And don't



forget to check back in next week for some further tips from the Kearley family on stocking your pantry!

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## **Family Recipes I: The Rob Thornton Smoothie Special**

Throughout April I have the honor of introducing you to a family each week from my practice who are taking steps forward, no matter what size, to change what is on their plate. This week you met the Thornton Family on my post about changing breakfast.

It's not an easy task to convince an athletic director and coach to trade in his daily eggs, spinach, and turkey bacon breakfasts for fruit but Rob Thornton was willing to give it a try. What's really interesting, yet not unusual, about Rob's story is that the thought of sweet fruit in the morning was actually nauseating. This is actual quite normal with individuals who maintain a very acidic pH. Alkalizing foods are not appealing but acid producing ones sure are! So the task at hand for those folks is to shift the pH gradually, easing into more alkaline foods by increasing the amount of raw fruit bit by bit.

Moving Rob into a pure fruit smoothie has been a slow process because we needed to increase his tolerance. I had him start with low glycemic fruits and more greens and build up the amount of fruit over time. After three months he is not only drinking his smoothies daily but he is making them for his family at 5:30 AM each weekday morning!

Getting Rob to completely forgo his protein heavy breakfast was no easy task and you will see by his recipe he is still

adding in a bit of peanut butter and almond milk. As I will tell all of my clients- this is about making steps forward and we all start at different place. The changes Rob has implemented these past three months are huge and we will keep moving ahead. As you may have read in my last post, by just changing his breakfast Rob has lost over 25lbs. While I will advocate for further dietary change we are going to move at a pace that is sustainable for the Thorntons.

### **The Rob Thornton Smoothie**

Frozen: Blueberries and Strawberries

Fresh: Bananas

Almond milk

1 tablespoon of fresh ground peanut butter or 1/2 avocado



While daughter Lily will drink hers down right away in her Minnie Mouse cup, Rob and wife Suzanne often drink theirs on

the way to work. They will often take along the other half of the avocado or a banana for a quick snack once at school.

So what next steps might Rob do to take his smoothie to the next level? Knowing the Thornton's schedule I would suggest they make it through the end of the school year with exactly what they are doing. Then when there is a bit less pressure on their schedules consider some upgrades.

With the almond milk and peanut butter, Rob is adding protein which tends to slow the speed of digestion and reduce the lymphatic action yet healthy fats and increased calories would be a good thing.

Options to consider:

1. More avocado
2. Coconut Butter
3. Raw Coconut
4. Coconut water
5. Hemp Seeds
6. Raw Cocoa Nibs or Powder
7. Dates
8. Raw Greens- spinach or kale would be good (frozen is ok)



Big congratulations to the Thornton family for taking some very important steps forward and together in order to improve their health. What is so exciting and encouraging to me is that there are so many of you out there doing the same thing! Looking forward to next week when we take a look at lunch and get some inside tips from a family who has been eating plant based for some time now.

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## Changing Your Plate Part II: Breakfast

Last week I kicked off a new series about taking steps toward a plant based diet one meal at a time. In my first post, Changing Your Plate: Part I, I shared the news that so many of my client families are making headway in shifting what goes on their plates one meal at a time. Over the next few weeks I will be featuring a few of these families and sharing the tips they have gleaned to make the changes sustainable.

I suggest a cleansing meal of raw whole fruit to my clients to start their day. This first mini-meal of the day should be a kick-start, not a slow down, for the elimination system that has laid at rest all night. We want fresh, raw, whole alkalizing foods to be the first on an empty stomach in order to wake up the lymphatic system, digest quickly, and promote morning elimination. The best foods to fit that description are these raw fruits: **Apples, Berries, Citrus, Grapes, Mangoes, Melons and Pears**. These can be eaten as whole foods, blended into a smoothie, or juiced. Individuals who are in a very acidic state will do best starting slow with a piece or two of raw fruit instead of a juice or smoothie. This meal can be extended to become your breakfast or be eaten at least

15 minutes prior to what you normally consume.

Supporting the body with Gemmotherapy extracts when beginning to make dietary change is important since the consumption of raw fruits and vegetables in the morning calls on organs that have likely not been performing optimally. The Gemmotherapy extracts gently support those organs, relieving any additional stress.

Let's take a look at how one family integrated this change to their breakfast as a team.

Meet the Thornton family. Rob and Susanna both worked full time as career educators until Lily Kai joined their family 17 months ago. Rob now serves as the Athletic Director for Elgin School district and Susanna, a newly licensed professional counselor, is substituting three days a week to allow for time home with Lily Kai.

Throughout her pregnancy Susanna was vigilant about her own diet, but as a couple they had not embraced any changes.

When Lily Kai came along and their routines and world changed dramatically, she resorted to old eating habits. At the start of 2016, however, the Thornton's agreed together they wanted to make changes as a couple. They were both dissatisfied with their lack of energy in the mornings and at the end of each day as well as the extra weight they were carrying. Rob and Susanna wanted to make a change now in order to set better examples as parents.

They each came to my practice individually to talk about the first steps to take in order to make a sustainable change. What I had to say about an all fruit breakfast was not news to Susanna but it sure was to Rob Thornton! Separating Rob from his morning routine of scrambled eggs with spinach, onions, and turkey bacon plus coffee was not an easy sell. As an athlete and coach, and raised in a Hispanic household, he was more than a little skeptical about a morning fruit smoothie.

In fact, the thought of sweet fruit in the morning was actually even nauseating. So we took it one small step at a time.

And now, three months later, guess who the smoothie maker in the Thornton household is today? It's Rob who hits the kitchen at 5:30 AM while Susanna tends to Lily Kia.



*"We've been on the breakfast smoothie plan 100% since January. For us to be successful it is a big deal to have enough*



*product on hand. They have to be easy to make or we will fall back into our old patterns."*

The Thorntons keep a seven day supply of chopped fruit in the freezer and buy the organic Central Market brand. Because of their early start each day and tight schedule, they decided to go with convenience over price. Getting this built into their routine took some dialogue and most importantly some tangible benefits.

*"We stick with it because it really wakes us up. After we have our smoothie, we are alert and ready for our day. On top of that, Rob has lost over 25 pounds. The alertness really is addictive. We also found that discussing the improvements we each felt was very motivating."*

As you can see, the whole family is on board and Lily Kai knows to expect her morning smoothie in her own Mini Mouse cup!



So what advice does Susanna have for others just starting out?

*“Do what you have to do to make it work. Remembering why you are doing this is so important. Now that I am a mom it has changed how I see myself. I have come to realize that I am important too. If I am not good to myself, I am not being good to my daughter.”*

Read here to learn all about the first protocols I suggest for clients for opening elimination and why I recommend an all fruit breakfast.