



# OPTIMIZED OUTCOME SOLUTIONS

## Is Food Thy Worker's Medicine?

*Harvey Warren, injured worker, and author of "The Optimized Patient"*

Nothing is more challenging in the life of most people than changing behavior. For many, very obvious reasons, nothing will interrupt your usual behavior patterns quicker and more fully than a serious injury. In recovery, behavior changes are no longer optional, but a function of the new physical challenge presented to you by the injury. Ironically, the one essential behavior change that rarely occurs after an injury is changing the way we eat. Improving what you eat is the last thing - and often the hardest thing - for injured workers to change for their own good. 2,400 years ago Hippocrates said, "Let food be thy medicine, and let medicine be thy food." Great idea, but how do you get an injured worker to optimize what they eat?

Here's a look at how human behavior changes:

### **Precontemplation**

Injured workers often see no need to fix a nutrition problem because they usually do not believe that one exists. Like most of us, they are completely unaware that food can help heal them.

### **Contemplation**

Given some sound and engaging information the injured worker is opened to the idea that a change in their diet may contribute to optimizing their outcome.

### **Preparation**

Gathering information is a key component in successfully preparing to change behavior. Success stories and praise from recovered injured workers can pave the way for the next step.

### **Action**

Injured workers realize that a focus on their microbiome, whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables does not need to be a life-long commitment. Like physical therapy it can be a temporary change in behavior, in this case food preferences, designed to help you heal.

### **Maintenance**

In my personal experience, my expanded understanding of the importance of nutrition and simple shopping and cooking strategies have had a lasting and beneficial effect on how I eat. ?

Recently, my colleague – and teacher – Dr. Kay Stearns Bruening, PhD was the subject of an interview on nutrition and patient recovery in Risk and Insurance magazine. I encourage Case Managers to read and share this article with your colleagues.

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