

Metabolic Health Through Real-Time Data

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STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- 74% of Americans are overweight and 50% have Type 2 diabetes or pre-diabetes, marking a dramatic increase from 1950 when only 1% had diabetes
- Ultraprocessed foods containing seed oils, additives, and artificial ingredients contribute significantly to poor metabolic health, including in children, who get 67% of calories from these sources
- Corporate influence shapes health policies and food choices, with industry funding research that downplays junk food's harmful effects while promoting treatment over prevention
- Children's health is declining rapidly with autism rates jumping from 1 in 150 in 2000 to 1 in 30 today; ultraprocessed foods, pesticides, and hormone-disrupting chemicals are involved in worsening children's health
- Simple daily habits like avoiding ultraprocessed foods, walking 7,000 steps, eating whole foods, and reducing stress dramatically improve metabolic health and reduce disease risk

Have you ever wondered why chronic diseases like diabetes, obesity, and heart disease keep rising, even with all our medical advances? In a powerful episode of The Joe Rogan Experience, Dr. Casey Means and Calley Means tackle this question head-on.¹ Dr. Casey is the co-founder of Levels Health, which provides insights into metabolic health through real-time data.

Calley is the co-founder of Truemed, which enables HSA spending on healthy food, supplements, and exercise. They explore metabolic health, the impact of your diet, and how big corporations shape health policies — often at the expense of your well-being.

What Is Metabolic Health and Why Should You Care?

Metabolic health is all about how your body turns food into energy. When it works well, you feel energized and your body runs smoothly. But when it's off, trouble starts. Dr. Casey, co-author of the book "Good Energy," explains that poor metabolic health is behind many chronic health problems, which are widespread in the U.S.

Here's the eye-opening part: 74% of Americans are overweight or obese, and 50% have Type 2 diabetes or pre-diabetes. That's a huge jump from years ago when only 1% had diabetes in 1950. Young adults are getting dementia three times more often since 2012, and cancer rates are climbing too — especially in people under 50. Dr. Casey calls this a "disaster" that's getting worse fast.

Why should you care? Because your **metabolic health** decides how likely you are to face these issues. It's not just about living longer — it's about feeling good while you're here. The good news? You can improve it with simple changes we'll cover later.

How Does Your Diet Affect Your Health?

What you eat shapes your metabolic health more than almost anything else. Dr. Casey and Calley point the finger at ultraprocessed foods — like sugary cereals, fast food, and packaged snacks. These aren't just "processed" like jarred veggies; they're loaded with seed oils, which contain **linoleic acid**, additives and fake ingredients that interfere with your body.

Children are hit hard — 67% of their calories come from these foods. Dr. Casey says this floods your system with added sugar and unhealthy fats, leading to weight gain and insulin problems. Over time, it throws your metabolism out of whack. Meanwhile, whole

foods — like fruits, veggies, eggs, and grass fed meats — give you nutrients to keep your energy steady and your body strong. Want to boost your health? Try these tips:

- **Eat more whole foods** — Fill your plate with fresh foods — think colorful fruits and veggies, eggs, and grass fed dairy.
- **Cut back on refined sugar** — Skip sodas, candies, and [high-fructose corn syrup](#). Use a little maple syrup or raw honey if you need sweetness.
- **Check labels** — If the ingredients list looks like a science experiment, put it back.
- **Cook at home** — Making your own meals lets you control what's in them. Homemade meals are healthier and tastier too.

How Do Corporations Influence Your Health Choices?

You might not realize it, but big companies play a huge role in what you eat and how healthy you stay. Calley used to be a lobbyist for food and drug companies. He saw firsthand how they [push unhealthy products](#) while dodging blame.

Take soda, for example. Coke funneled money to groups like the NAACP to argue that banning soda from food stamps was unfair. Today, it's still the top item bought with food stamps. Food companies also fund studies to downplay refined sugar's harm, while drug companies push pills over prevention. Dr. Casey adds that this keeps the health care system focused on treating you after you're sick — not stopping sickness before it starts. What can you do? Stay smart:

- **Mix up your info sources** — Don't trust just one place. Look for honest, independent voices.
- **Ask who's paying** — If a study or ad feels off, check who's behind it.
- **Push for truth** — Support efforts to make companies and research more transparent.

Education is also key. Knowing this helps you see through the noise and make better choices.

Why Are Children Struggling — And What Can You Do?

Children's health is tanking, and it's not their fault. Autism rates jumped from 1 in 150 in 2000 to 1 in 30 today.² Half of teens are overweight or obese. Dr. Casey ties this to junk food, chemicals like pesticides and [plastics that act like hormones](#) such as estrogen in your body. Girls are hitting puberty as young as 10 because of this "[estrogen stew](#)" they're exposed to daily.

Parents, you're not powerless. Cut ultraprocessed foods from your children's diets — swap [Lunchables](#) for home-packed meals with real ingredients. Get them outside more; kids spend less time outdoors than prisoners. Sunlight and play boost their health naturally. Push your doctor for options like exercise prescriptions, not just pills.

What's Wrong with the Health Care System?

The health care system sounds like it's there to help, but Dr. Casey says it's broken. She trained as a surgeon and saw doctors stuck treating symptoms — like prescribing pills or doing surgeries — without fixing what's really wrong. Why? The system pays for how many patients you see, not how healthy you make them.

For example, if you're tired or overweight, you might bounce between specialists — each one giving you a new drug or test. But no one looks at the big picture, like how your diet or sleep could be the real issue. It's a money game: more treatments mean more profit, even if you don't feel better. You can't rely on the system alone — it's up to you to steer the ship. Here's how to take charge:

- **Learn about your health** — Read up on what's bugging you. Ask your doctor tough questions.
- **Focus on prevention** — Eat well and move more to stop problems before they start.

- **Find a big-picture health care practitioner** — Seek someone who looks at your whole life, not just one symptom.

How Do You Take Control of Your Health?

Here's the best part: your health isn't up to doctors or corporations — it's in your hands. Dr. Casey and Calley stress that small, everyday choices flip the script. You don't need fancy gear or tons of cash — just a little know-how and effort. Try these steps to get started:

1. **Track your metabolic health** — Tools like glucose monitors show how food affects you. The [HOMA-IR test](#) provides a simple way to detect insulin resistance early, calculating the relationship between fasting glucose and insulin levels to evaluate your metabolic health.
2. **Eat smart** — Stick to whole foods that fuel you right. Test what works for your body and be sure to include enough [healthy carbohydrates](#). Glucose, derived from carbs, serves as your cells' preferred fuel source for energy production.
3. **Move more** — Walk 7,000 steps a day — it's about 45 minutes — and cut your risk of diseases like Type 2 diabetes, Alzheimer's and gastric reflux by up to 60%, Dr. Casey says. Ideally, work your way up to one hour daily, which can be split up into multiple shorter walks.
4. **Relieve stress and sleep well** — Try meditation or [slow breathing](#) to keep stress in check. Use these [33 tips to optimize your sleep routine](#).
5. **Stay curious** — Keep learning about health from solid sources you trust.

Start with one or two changes. Over time, they add up to a healthier, happier you. Dr. Casey and Calley reveal a tough truth: your health is under attack from bad food, corporate greed, and a flawed system. But you're not helpless. By understanding

metabolic health, cleaning up your diet and taking small steps daily, you can fight back. It's not about perfection — it's about progress. Start today, and see how strong you'll feel tomorrow.

FAQs — Your Health Questions Answered

Q: What's metabolic health in simple terms?

A: It's how your body turns food into energy. When it's good, you avoid diseases like diabetes. When it's bad, health risks go up.

Q: How can I fix my diet fast?

A: Swap junk for whole foods — think apples over chips. Cook easy meals at home and ditch sugary drinks. Simple wins add up fast.

Q: Why's the health care system letting us down?

A: It's built to treat sickness, not prevent it. Doctors get paid for volume, not your health, so root causes get ignored.

Q: What's the easiest way to take control of my health?

A: Cut processed foods from your diet. Start walking daily — 7,000 steps slashes disease risk. Add whole foods and good sleep for an even greater boost.

Q: Are kids really in danger from food and chemicals?

A: Yes — junk food and plastics are linked to obesity and early puberty. Feed your children real food and limit screen time.

Sources and References

- ¹ [YouTube, Joe Rogan Experience #2210 October 8, 2024](#)
- ² [Children's Health Defense, The Defender, July 14, 2022](#)