

Hi everyone! Welcome to the new episode of **"Yalla: Learning Hebrew with Steph."** I'm Steph, and today, we're going to talk about fitness, healthy living, and ultra-processed food (UPF).

Healthy living is something that I am very interested in recently. At the beginning of this year I had to do a very restrictive medical diet. I was not able to eat any carbohydrates, like bread or rice, or sugar and even fruit. I was also not allowed to eat dairy, gluten and caffeine. Of course this was very difficult, but in this time I learnt so much about food and how what we eat affects our bodies and our mood. I feel that this diet changed my life and the benefits that I experienced were huge. Now my diet is a lot less restrictive but I still try to apply all of the things that I learned. And today, I want to speak a little bit about what I learned, so if you want to feel better, move more, and make healthier choices, this episode is for you!

So, let's start with fitness and why it's such an important part of a healthy lifestyle. Fitness isn't only about going to the gym or running. It's about finding ways to move your body that you enjoy and are sustainable. What is sustainable? Sustainable means things that you can keep doing for a long time, not just for a week or a month, but for years. It could be walking, dancing, swimming, or even just taking the stairs instead of the elevator. Just 30 minutes of activity each day can help reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and even improve mental health. Small changes can really make a big difference.

But fitness is just one part of living a healthy life. Healthy living also includes eating well, getting enough sleep and taking care of your mind. Small, daily habits can add up to big changes. Drinking enough water, practising mindfulness, and eating a balanced diet are all things we can do in order to feel better.

Now, let's talk about ultra-processed foods. First of all, what are ultra-processed foods? These are foods that have been changed a lot from their original form. They often have added sugars, unhealthy fats, preservatives, and other artificial ingredients. Sugary cereals, soft drinks, fast food instant noodles and basically anything that has a lot of ingredients that it's hard to understand what they are, then it's probably a UPF.

So what's the problem with UPF? Research shows that if you eat a lot of UPFs, then it can cause problems such as obesity, diabetes, and even some types of cancer. They can also affect our mental health. People who eat a lot of UPFs are more likely to feel anxious or depressed.

So, why do UPFs cause so many problems? One reason is that in order for them to be so tasty and addictive, they put in them a lot of sugar and fat and few nutrients that we need like fibre, vitamins and minerals. So this lack causes us to not feel good.

What can we do to solve this problem? The first step is to be more aware of what we're eating. Reading the food labels. If the ingredients list is long and has words you don't know, it's likely an UPF. Something else that helps is to try to eat more whole and natural foods like fruits and vegetables, nuts, seeds, whole grains, and lean proteins.

It's not always easy to avoid UPFs, especially if you are busy or trying not to spend a lot of money. But even small changes can help. For example, instead of sugary breakfast cereals,

you could try oatmeal with fruit and nuts. Or replace white bread with whole grain bread. If you like snacks, try making your own. Cooking at home is another great idea. When you cook at home, you know exactly what's in your food, and you can avoid using preservatives. Plus, cooking is fun and relaxing.

Now it's important to say that healthy eating doesn't have to be perfect all of the time. It's okay to enjoy snacks sometimes. The key is to make healthy choices most of the time and find a balance that works for you. Some people follow the 80/20 rule—eating healthy foods 80% of the time and eating less healthy foods 20% of the time. And of course, it's important to listen to your body.

Remember, fitness and healthy living are personal. What works for one person might not work for another, and that's okay. Find what feels good for you and what works for you.

So that's it for today's episode! I hope you found this episode interesting or helpful. If you have questions, ideas for future topics, or want to share your healthy living story, I'd love to hear from you! You can write me a mail, I will put the link in the podcast description.

Thanks for listening to "Yalla: Learning Hebrew with Steph." Until next time, take care and keep learning!