

## Amanda's Story

I joined the Suppers meeting series after hearing about it from a friend. I was interested because it sounded like a novel approach to support for healthy living, something I strive for. A couple of weeks into the program, I had my annual blood work done and found out that my triglycerides were dangerously high. My doctor asked me to go on the South Beach diet for three months, and then get my blood work redone.

Possibly because I had already been getting into the right frame of mind by attending these meetings, I decided to take my doctor's request to heart, and really follow the diet. It was hard at first. During the first two weeks I wasn't allowed to eat any fruit, flour, or sugar at all, and not even much in the way of legumes or starchy vegetables. I also had to be careful which meats I selected because my diet needed to be low in saturated fat. But this was no problem for my Suppers group. When we had a bean soup, we just substituted some chicken for me.

After those first two weeks, there's no problem at all mixing the Suppers program with South Beach. Both programs encourage healthful eating based on lots of vegetables, lean meats, and fish, and with minimal amounts of foods that trigger strong insulin reactions.

During the first few weeks, I felt a lot of anxiety. I hadn't been expecting that. I had anxiety dreams at night, and some very tense moments during the day. I was surprised because I hoped that not eating sugary things would help my mood feel stable right away. A nutritionist at our meeting said it's possible the anxiety symptoms related to the detoxification process that happens when you make a radical switch to a healthy diet.

I decided to wait it out for a few weeks, and see how I felt. Maybe I had been self-medicating with cookies more often than I had known, and would find I had underlying issues that I would need to address in a more healthful way. Or maybe it was just my body adjusting to a major dietary change. I could imagine that countless generations of evolution coupled with years of eating sweets might lead me to develop a sense of emergency when the supply of sugar was cut, even though I was doing it myself.

As it turned out, I did begin to feel better as time went on. Even before I began gently reintroducing the healthful carbohydrates, the anxiety had begun to subside. Still, I think having my dietary problems fixed will support any further self-explorations I may choose to pursue. My therapeutic friends at Suppers have been very supportive as I create new patterns, and it's great to have that help when making a big change.