Introduction and Tallene's PCOS Story

Welcome to this episode of the PCOS SOS Summit. I'm your host, Dr. Felice Gersh. With me is a really amazing, innovative woman, one of the few nutrition experts, a dietitian who specializes in PCOS weight loss, and the founder of PCOS Cysterhood, a weight loss app for women with PCOS.

Her name, Tallene Hacatoryan. And she is so amazing. You're going to love this interview. Welcome Tallene Thank you so much for joining me on this episode.

Thank you so much for having me. Dr. Gersh, this is such an honor. Honestly, I've loved being your patient reading your book, so I'm excited to have a chance to chat with you about PCOS weight loss.

Well, the first thing I really would love for you to share with all of our viewers is your own personal story. Your journey is so, so powerful and really it's empowering how you yourself went on this journey to deal with your own problem and how you got into this field.

So share your story, please. Sure. So about ten years ago, I had a ruptured ovarian cyst and that just sent me straight to the emergency room where I figured out one of the doctors told me I had PCOS and when I went to the gynecologist, the gynecologist told me to take birth control and just come back when I want to get pregnant and, you know, think nothing of it.

But I after a while of taking birth control, I realized that I was just suppressing all of my hormonal imbalances. It was just covering everything up.

And I really didn't know what was going on. So I quickly came off of it and started managing, learning how to manage my symptoms. Really, it took me a while to figure things out because I really struggled with cystic acne, anxiety, hair loss and especially weight gain despite eating what I thought was really healthy and what was actually a lot healthier than the people around me and it was so funny to see how well devastating is the better adjective, to see how I would gain weight so quickly and I had no idea what was going on.

So I finally figured out the root issues that were really driving my PCOS symptoms. Specifically the insulin resistance, the inflammation, and how that was creating this kind of perfect storm for having high testosterone and all of the symptoms that I was facing and with a lot of diet and lifestyle tweaks and changes and just figuring out what works for my body.

I was able to reverse my symptoms. Wow. So like, I'm sitting here, I bet everyone else is looking at you and they're saying to themselves, But wait a minute, look at Tallene She has gorgeous hair and skin.

She clearly doesn't look particularly overweight. So describe again a little bit like where were you at the beginning of your journey in terms of weight and skin and hair?

A little bit more so and then talk about the transformation that you actually went through with your own body? Yeah, well, I was around 30 or 40 pounds heavier and I felt really puffy and bloated all the time.

My skin felt puffy like overall with my face, chest, hands, waist especially, and everything I ate made me feel so bloated and I just felt like swollen all the time.

And my and they also manifested in my skin. The inflammation, the the swelling. Not only was my face bloated, but I also had really bad cystic acne, so deep and painful and all over my cheeks and forehead.

And you wouldn't recognize me if you saw. I don't need. I wish I had a I actually have a picture, but it's not even the

worst picture that I could have taken of my skin because it was just so painful.

And not to mention the ovarian cysts, the string of pearls that were on my ovaries, you know, I was told I couldn't reverse that as well. I was told that I was just, you know, that was just part of it.

And with doing diet and lifestyle changes that I'm sure we'll talk about in this episode, I was able to shrink them, reverse them, and they're not there anymore.

And it's something that I just had no idea would be possible when I was first diagnosed because I was in such a state of I was so used to feeling a certain way.

Understanding PCOS Weight Gain and Insulin Resistance

I couldn't even imagine feeling better because it had been so long that I was suffering from the symptoms, hair was falling out in clumps and not growing back.

And it was just like the hairbrush was like thick with hair. And I couldn't believe how quickly everything was deteriorating, especially right after I got off of birth control.

I was it was like everything just shot up after being suppressed for such a long time. So and not to mention, like when I was eating, I thought that I was eating healthy.

I was having a sandwich, you know, I was having a salad, I was having healthy snacks. But I never realized how many carbs I was eating or how often I was eating and how that was affecting my blood sugar and creating this insulin resistance.

That was just an inflammation from the food that I was choosing, gluten and dairy specifically, which I was very sensitive to at the time, and how it was creating this perfect storm for inflammation, insulin resistance, and therefore all of these symptoms.

Now, I know you went to school and became a registered dietitian, so was that helpful for you in terms of learning all the things that you've applied or did you actually have to go out and kind of discover for yourself how women with PCOS would be best served by their diet?

Yeah, when when I was diagnosed, it really shot me in that direction of like, I need to figure out what's going on. And I thought becoming a registered dietitian would be the best thing for me.

But as it turns out, what we were learning was probably like two slides on a PowerPoint about PCOS, first of all, and I don't even remember like having a chapter about or like reading about it in a book or really like spending time on it.

And it's so funny because this is something that affects one in five or one in ten women and impacts their quality of life. And the first line of approach is diet and lifestyle changes.

So what didn't you think a registered dietitian would study for, like a whole semester on PCOS? But I didn't really learn a lot of the things that I know now.

Today I had to dig them up partially from your book, from studies, from research done on PCOS, women and really deep dove into it to learn about the effects that insulin resistance has on your hormones and all of the different lifestyle changes that can affect insulin resistance that you might not even realize or or think is like a big deal can actually shift, you know, the trajectory of your symptoms significantly.

Well, I'm with you in that I so often in the past and it's a little bit different but not not where it should be. Information about PCOS in medical textbooks, dietitian textbooks, it's like a footnote almost, right?

It's like a paragraph. It's like amazing for the most common endocrine disorder of women. And since 80% of women who suffer with PCOS have weight challenges, it's so important for them to hear like, well, tell us, what do you think every woman with PCOS who has a weight challenge, but not even just that, like maybe they have problems with just visceral fat, you know, they they're thin, but they're actually not the best body composition or they have skin and hair problems.

Where should they start? Let's start with your foundational knowledge base to share. What should these women know? These women who are struggling with losing weight with PCOS?

First thing to know is that it's not your fault. It's not your fault that you gained weight. You didn't just eat too much and gain weight. It is a concoction of hormonal issues.

There are two main hormones that drive PCOS weight gain, cortisol and insulin where we have insulin resistance. And when we have cortisol, which is our stress hormone dysregulated and these two hormones have a huge impact on how we pack on weight without even trying, without even, you know, eating too much.

I mean, if it's genetic or if it's something that's easily triggered by your environment or your lifestyle, this can really create a dysregulation in cortisone insulin and make you gain weight in the midsection, make you feel bloated all the time and not be able to metabolize the food that you're eating and naturally lose weight as your body should naturally be able to do.

It kind of halts that. And so 80% of women with PCOS have insulin resistance and insulin. When should I go into insulin resistance and explain how it works?

Absolutely. Just okay. The ABCs of insulin resistance. Okay. I have to ask because honestly, I slingshot myself into the insulin resistance story and then I go down this rabbit hole.

So I ask if this is something you want me to go into. But basically when we eat something like carbs, when we eat sugar, when we when we eat anything that breaks down into sugar like carbs, then our body takes that sugar.

Our body releases insulin from our pancreas. The insulin hormone takes that sugar to give to our cells so our cells can burn it for energy. But over time, if we eat too many carbs, if we are genetically predisposed to having insulin resistance, if we have a diet full of carbs and sugar and, you know, things like that can really trigger your cells to become insulin resistance.

Also, inflammation can trigger that as well, can kind of exacerbate that. So if you're sensitive to foods like gluten and dairy and that's creating an inflammatory response in your body, then your your cells are less likely to be insulin sensitive.

So basically, insulin is trying to give your cells that sugar to burn it for energy to metabolize it. But when your cells are kind of locked up and resistant, then insulin, then that sugar goes and stores as fat.

It stores around your liver as and you can see it manifest as fatty liver and that excess insulin triggers high testosterone in the ovaries. And so that high testosterone is where some of the PCOS symptoms start showing up.

You see ovarian cysts or irregular periods or symptoms like anxiety, cystic acne and hair loss. And so this is how insulin resistance and high testosterone kind of tie together and create that PCOS effect and lead to weight gain, especially in the midsection.

And then we have high cortisol, like I mentioned earlier, when you have cortisol dysregulation and this can be influenced by having poor sleep at night, which so many women with PCOS struggle with getting quality sleep in.

And when you have poor sleep regulation, then you have this issue with cortisol where when you wake up in the morning and it should be high to give you energy and help you pop out of bed, it's actually low and you feel tired and fatigued and sluggish, like you're ready for a nap as soon as you wake up.

And then at night when cortisol is supposed to be low so you can relax and go to sleep and your melatonin can go up. For some reason it's high. And so that stops you from being able to sleep.

And this cortisol dysregulation can also lead to weight gain in the midsection and can lead to anxiety and so many other PCOS symptoms. So, you know, I know in your book you talk about how we have our circadian rhythm and it's so it's connected to this cortisol issue and not to like go down that rabbit hole as well.

But basically your cortisol hormone is very important for your ability to lose weight and drinking caffeine throughout the day to help you stay awake because you're so tired can actually make it more difficult for you to sleep at night and further progressed that cortisol issue also working out really, really hard, which is often something that women with PCOS are told to do in order to lose weight.

So going to kickboxing classes, going to back to back cycling classes, things like this can kick your cortisol out of control as well. It can make it pump up.

And women with PCOS struggle to bring it back down. So then you might find that you're wired and tired and anxious after your workout. Might mean that your workout was too stressful for you, for your body, and it's disrupting your cortisol regulation.

So there's so many little factors, even cutting out calories and starving yourself all day so that you could lose weight. That can also disrupt your cortisol regulation as well.

It's so funny because so many things that we're told to do for PCOS like eat less and move more sometimes can actually hurt us and push us into the into the opposite direction, disrupt our cortisol, disrupt our relationship with food and and not really provide that knowledge that we need in order to improve insulin resistance.

I think something that would help women with PCOS more is if we're taught how to manage insulin resistance rather than told to just lose weight and stop eating so much.

And I think that's something that's unfortunate. Leave women with PCOS as soon as they're diagnosed, they're being told that. And so that creates this cycle of issues that makes it so difficult to lose weight because you create stress around food as well.

Well, that is for sure. I mean, the that perpetually given advice of just eat less like you said, that is not going to work. So let's talk about what you actually recommend in terms of what are good food choices.

I know that eating processed carbs, you said, are clearly not a good food choice. So what would be good food choices for women with PCOS? So I'd like to start this off by saying it's a good idea to try going gluten and dairy free, especially just for 30 days to see if it's affecting your body, if it's creating a lot of inflammation.

If, you know, dairy could trigger high antigen levels, gluten can affect your leptin hormone and make you feel hungry all the time. So it would be really beneficial if you're comfortable, whoever is listening, if you're comfortable going gluten and dairy free to try it for 30 days and see how you feel.

And some of the foods that you can eat that are gluten and dairy free are like starchy vegetables. You could have some sweet potato, you could have buckwheat, quinoa, some grains that I really like.

You could have beans. These are carbs that are also have protein in them. It's a great option.

Gluten, Dairy, and Better Food Choices

And as well as all fruits, vegetables, proteins like chicken and fish, these are all wonderful options for women with PCOS, especially fatty fish that have lots of omega three fats in them.

And what's more important is not necessarily the foods your well, of course, the foods you're choosing are very

important, but how you're dividing them onto your plate is also very important.

I like to go by the rule where half of my plate are veggies, a fourth of my plate is a protein, maybe chicken, maybe fish, and then a fourth of my plate is a carb because I don't want to cut out carbs completely because then I don't feel satisfied after my meal.

But by understanding how much my body can tolerate, starting with filling up a fourth of my plate with carbs and seeing how I feel after that meal will help you discover your carb tolerance, which is something I think is really important for PCOS women to not completely cut out carbs, but rather slowly reduce it and see how you feel.

So let's talk a little bit about you mentioned gluten, by the way. I also begin with having them go my patients go gluten and dairy free. But, you know, gluten maybe they don't know like what is gluten and what foods have gluten.

So if you want to go gluten free, what does that mean? What foods need to be taken out of your diet? Gluten is a protein that's found in wheat and you can find gluten in grains such as you can of course, find it in flour in your it's generally it's like in your pizza, it's in your pasta, it's in it's all over them.

It's like tucked away in soy sauce. It's like everywhere in processed foods. And it is I'm actually blanking on the exact grains that gluten is found in uncertainty.

So, you know, like, well, who's eating it, you know, spelt and rye. Rye is one, but it's both. Like you said, it's like heavily in all the processed foods and, you know, so it's hidden mostly.

Yes. It's found in barley, wheat and rye. But of course, most people aren't eating of barley, wheat and rice. Most people in America are eating processed foods that have wheat flour in it generally.

Also, oats are often rolled in gluten. And so it would you would want to buy gluten free oats. It took me about a year to go gluten free, fully and understand like where it's hidden and how to eat out when I'm when I want to eat gluten free.

And so it took a little bit of time to get used to, but for me it was definitely worth it because I saw physically my symptoms improving and I knew that if I'm physically seeing my skin get better, I'm less bloated, I'm losing weight, then something is happening inside as well.

And lo and behold, when I had an ultrasound, I found out that my ovarian cysts had disappeared. And so going gluten free had a huge effect on my PCOS symptoms and level of inflammation in my body.

Like not to mention all of the studies that are done on how gluten affects our bodies and makes us release a hormone called Z inulin in our stomach, which kind of opens up the tight junctions of our stomach lining and allows glide in a protein found in gluten to get through and into our bloodstream.

And some people can flesh that out easily and some people can't, and that creates chronic inflammation. And so that chronic inflammation can be found in everyone, but to varying degrees.

And you want to know how much it's affecting you, because with PCOS it's an inflammatory condition and anything that's going to create more inflammation is going to make it worse.

So you want to figure out what it is that's driving that inflammation, not to mention how dairy. There are studies that show that dairy can increase androgen levels, which is so devastating for PCOS, women who already have high antigen levels and struggle with facial hair, acne, hair loss and fatigue and all the awful symptoms that come with it.

And for me, dairy was a huge factor. I still don't eat it or gluten, but dairy like almost immediately creates like an androgen response in my body. I think I have really sensitive testosterone receptors or something, but those two foods are can have a huge impact.

And maybe you could tell our viewers, what are some of the grains that you think are pretty good for women to have on that quarter of a plate and that have no gluten in them?

Maybe they'll try them for the first time. Yeah. So quinoa is one of my favorites. Lots of fiber. It has protein in it. Buckwheat is also great. Buckwheat is delicious.

Sometimes if you don't find it in the grocery store, you can order it online. It's definitely worth it if you buy buckwheat groats or buckwheat noodles.

Not to mention Buckwheat has inositol in it, which is great for PCOS. Women. And and then we have so quinoa, Buckwheat Millet is great as well. It kind of looks like quinoa.

It's like smaller grains. I like to cook it in water and tomato juice. Tomato juice really adds a little bit of flavor to these grains, makes them more interesting.

I also have rice, which is a little bit surprising to some people that I do have rice, but sometimes it just goes with the meal better. It's the better grain, depending on what I've chosen to eat that day.

And so, again, it's not about like exactly. Oh, I'm having rice. It's a carb. Oh, no, it's not good for my insulin resistance. It's more about how much am I putting on my plate and what am I pairing it with.

So I'm eating it with the protein. My chicken or fiber, my salad on the side or healthy fat avocado. It's all combined on my plate. And so that creates a really insulin friendly situation where I'm not just eating a bunch of rice and then I'm having like a little bit of chicken.

You know, the ratio is in such a way that allows my blood sugar to stay stable and so that it doesn't go up during the meal or after the meal and then drops drastically later.

That protein, fat and fiber help stabilize my blood sugar for longer and makes me not want to crave food or makes me not want to have cookies after dinner or, you know, have cravings and snacks afterwards.

And I think that balance is very important because if we miss our carbs or if we don't add protein to our meal or there isn't enough fiber, that's when the cravings kick in.

And that's also one of those major PCOS red flags. Now, a lot of people for breakfast have some kind of breakfasts like, you know, from a box. What do you think about some of these whole grains, these sort of ancient grains as a breakfast, you know, is do you think that's okay?

Or they get gluten free oats in the slow cooked or o'groats or some of these other grains. Do you think they're okay for breakfast or what do you suggest people eat for breakfast?

So many people eat pastries and donuts and muffins for breakfast. What can they eat? That's really good for them? Well, I love to have a protein smoothie in the mornings, but to answer your question about grains and grains for breakfast, I think it would be great.

You know, a fourth of a cup of oats, gluten free oats or even millet or something that, you know, has fiber and protein and a grain that has fiber and protein in it, but also paired with eggs.

Or you can make your oatmeal with your protein powder mixed into it and some almond butter, something to kind of stabilize your blood sugar because it is a carb and that's fine because in the morning you're insulin sensitive, your body is kind of ready to burn that carb.

But of course, it's how you period as well, because it's not going to keep you full if you're just going to have oatmeal with an apple and some cinnamon on it.

It looks healthy, but it's not going to stabilize your blood sugar until it's lunchtime. So for me, what I love to have for breakfast is a smoothie. What I and it's quick and it's easy and it's not complicated.

Did I got used to it. And it's just one of those things that I do every morning and I make sure I get all my protein, fat and carbs in there. So I keep it simple for now.

I mean, sometimes that complicated, but I keep it simple, generally speaking. And I have a small banana, I have some blueberries, some almonds, milk. I like to have milk, which is a brand that doesn't use additives or gums.

So I get the unsweetened almond milk and then I add a couple of tablespoons of chia seeds, which I think is really an important superfood for PCOS women because it's a great antioxidant, has lots of fiber, omega three in it, it has iron, it has calcium in it.

And since almond milk isn't fortified with calcium or sometimes it is, but mine is it, I definitely feel like I have to add those chia seeds in there and then I also add spinach for some fiber and some almond butter for some healthy fat and a bunch of protein powders.

So I like to have around 35 to 40 grams of protein in the morning. And that smoothie will take me smooth sailing and into lunch. So if I have that around eight or 9:00, my lunch is at 12 or one and I don't feel like I need to snack all day or have a bunch of random things before lunch. I feel very stabilized, focused.

I don't feel like I'm on a roller coaster of blood sugar as sometimes people, when they think of smoothies, they think of like fruit smoothies, fruit juices or like breakfast.

When you think of breakfast, you think croissants and pastries. Then for PCOS women, I mean, sometimes I guess, you know, it's life and you're out here with your family, your friends, everyone's eating croissants and this and that.

And I think there's a time and a place, but regularly in your daily life, if you want to manage your PCOS symptoms and keep them at bay, then you definitely have to think of the choices you're making and how it's going to impact.

You know, a lot of a lot of people use whey as a protein, so I'm sure that's not what you're using because that's a dairy product. So what kind of protein powder are you putting in your smoothie?

I like to use either pea protein or hemp protein. Right now, I'm actually using a blend. It's called Garden of Life, and I choose the unsweetened one, the unflavored one as well.

I know sometimes with PCOS we have cravings for sweet things and stevia is often something that's used to kind of kick those cravings to the curb because it has that sweet, super sweet flavor.

Meal Timing, Snacks, and Blood Sugar Balance

But I find that when something is so much more sweet than sugar itself, like stevia, I've had patients who crave sugar even more and kind of become addicted to that sweet flavor even more because of constantly putting stevia in everything.

So again, there's a time and a place for it, but it's not something I regularly like to include into my diet because I actually don't think it's a very good ingredient to constant we have because of cravings.

I think managing cravings at the root of the issue is more important and that's making sure you're having your protein and making sure that you're lifting weights to improve insulin sensitivity, balancing your plate and not skipping out on any macronutrients.

These are the things that support your blood sugar so that they support your blood sugar so that you don't rely on things like stevia and, you know, random snacks for your cravings.

Yeah, I was going to bring up the topic of artificial sweeteners, so I'm so glad that you did. Maybe you could comment on other artificial sweeteners and why they really should not be part of your diet.

Yeah, most artificial sweeteners are, and people argue that stevia is not artificial because it comes from a leaf. But still it is like hundreds times more sweet than sugar.

So imagine your body just becoming addicted to that sweet flavor and constantly wanting something even sweeter than sugar. That's less than ideal for PCOS women.

I prefer xylitol. Xylitol is almost equally as sweet as sugar. It doesn't have that intense sweet flavor. You can bake with xylitol, you can swap out half a cup of sugar with half a cup of xylitol and hardly taste the difference.

And it doesn't really have like a weird aftertaste or anything like that. I really enjoy using xylitol. It's good for your gut, it's good for your gums.

Xylitol gum is actually, you know, a great option to chew on if you're having cravings. Not to mention it helps improve oral health and gingivitis, which women with PCOS are also susceptible susceptible to.

So xylitol is my go to sweetener. Yeah, actually mine too. And I'm glad you mentioned about xylitol gum that there's actually some data that it may help restore the microbiome of the oral cavity, the mouth.

And you know, I guess you could say that fructose high fructose corn sirup and and sugar, they're natural products, too. So yeah. Stevia, anything that's super sweet.

I agree. It's going to sort of addict your brain. They even have shown that it actually lights up some of the same reward centers like dopamine in gets, you know, activated just like cocaine, you know.

So we don't want to actually have hyper stimulation of those reward centers so that you become an addict. That's not the goal. Sugar addiction is real.

So now you mentioned almond milk. So what about if you're not going to have milk? You know, and sometimes people put milk in their coffee or their tea and in their grains, you know, when they have like, say, whether it could be from millet that they put in or they could be from for the the oatmeal.

So now you mentioned almond. You've mentioned or recommend any other types of like we'll say, dairy substitutes as milk. Other dairy substitutes. There's macadamia nut milk.

There are other there's pea protein milk as well, which is high in protein. What I don't recommend is things like oat milk. I know it's dairy free, but oat is a grain which is basically a starch.

And so when you juice it to make milk out of it or however they make oat milk, you're basically creating like a starchy drink. So it's sweet. It's going to play a role in increasing your blood sugar.

Not very good for your insulin resistance. Counterproductive for going dairy free. I mean, we're trying to avoid dairy which can create insulin issues.

So oat milk is not my favorite, but there are a bunch of different nut milks and hemp milk as well. But I would stay away from the starchy ones like rice, smoke and oat milk.

Now, I was wondering, I don't even know that there's any data since so many with they're not gluten free oats. They actually have gluten contamination that may be oat milk.

Might as well, I'm not sure, but that was a really good point that you made about oat milk. Yeah, that's true. I think some of them say gluten free on them, but some don't.

So I wouldn't say that they're gluten free if they don't say it right. And now in terms of timing of food, is that part of your weight loss program? Like the best times to eat or not eat?

I like to recommend eating after three or 4 hours or eating at increments of 3 to 4 hours. For me, what works for me is eating breakfast around eight or 9:00 and then lunch around 12, have a snack at three and then dinner around six or seven.

And these increments can really allow your body to have several hours between meals for your insulin levels to come down. If you're snacking all day throughout the day, around the clock, then your body is constantly going to be releasing insulin hormone.

And like I mentioned earlier, that insulin hormone constantly being released, your blood sugar constantly being up, it's going to affect insulin resistance and exacerbated.

And in order to lose weight with PCOS, we always have to think, what's this going to do for my insulin resistance? So I don't suggest snacking throughout the day around the clock, rather having balanced meals and allowing for gaps of time in between your meals where your your blood sugar can stabilize, your insulin levels can be nice and low, and your body can go into fat burning mode because when you eat, your body is in fat storing mode, you're not.

In fact, it's the insulin is blocking fat burning. And that's a really important thing to think about instead of mindlessly snacking, you know what? What am I doing for my insulin levels and.

What would you recommend for, say, a pick me up around three. Yeah. Around o'clock. My favorite snack for me right now is to have some success is the brand.

It's a dairy free yogurt. I think it's from coconut milk and it's high in protein, has around like seven grams of protein in it. And then on top of that, I'll put some purely gluten free granola and that's my healthy fat.

And that will be a quick pick me up at three or 4:00. Oftentimes It's you know, either if I'm on the go, it'll be a piece of fruit and some nuts, something simple like that or let's see, maybe some like if I have some chicken left over from the next day because it's protein, I'll throw that, you know, on a plate, heated up and call that a snack as well.

It doesn't have to be anything fancy. It doesn't always have to be anything conventional. It's just as long as it is a protein and it has some healthy fat in it, that's going to keep you full for longer.

Whereas if you kind of just think of What can I eat that's like low calorie and you choose like a snack pack that's like 100 calories and you kind of fixate on things like that.

That's not really improved your insulin sensitivity or supporting it. The snack that you choose, you got to think like, how is this going to help my blood sugar?

Because right now it's low, I'm hungry. I can't wait until dinner. What should I eat right now to stabilize my blood sugar? Rather. But rather than spiking it up and then crashing and then having a huge dinner, and then that spikes up your blood sugar again.

Then you crash again, and then you have cravings throughout the evening and you want to snack on things. So it can have such a cascade effect on your hormones later throughout the day.

Your choices can really affect you in ways that never even thought. So I always say, like, if you crave something at night, if you feel really snacky, it's nine, 10:00.

You want to go in the pantry and just have a bunch of anything. Think like, did you skip a meal that day? Did you skip your 3:00 snack? Did you have a huge dinner that sent your blood sugar soaring?

Like, what is it that kind of triggered that craving? And what can you do next time to help you avoid it? Well, great advice. And what do you say to your clients who are busy women and they're like going out and about.

They don't have time to really make up a sit down lunch, like with like the plate. Like you said, you know, dividing it all up. But they have to pack something to take with them to work.

What do you recommend for lunches that will be in full alignment with your weight loss program?

Exercise, the Cysterhood App, and Where to Find Tallene

Oftentimes having leftovers from the night before and just throwing it in a Tupperware, it doesn't have to be fancy. Whatever I had last night, which was some salad that I made with cucumbers from the garden that my husband is growing cucumbers.

And then I had some fish and some rice. And so I would just put that into a Tupperware and that would be it. You can also one thing I love doing and I've been doing this recently is creating Mason Jar salads.

So this is where you take a mason jar and at the bottom you put your cucumber, your tomato, your salad dressing. And it kind of like marinate in that cucumber and tomato and then on top you put, you know, it could be ground chicken.

I made ground chicken with like taco seasoning and then some black beans for your carbs and then salad like lettuce on the top. And so the lettuce doesn't touch like the dressing at the bottom.

So it doesn't get soggy when you just you close the mason jar, you put in your fridge and it lasts like three or four days and it's fresh and it's delicious.

When you eat it and you can meal prep it, you can make like three or four jars and that's your lunch on the go. All you have to do is flip it over into a bowl so that, you know, the salad is like right side up.

Now you have your lettuce at the bottom, your protein and everything at the top and the dressing and everything. And it's just the easiest picks. Friendly gluten, dairy, free, quick lunch.

You could plan. Oh, my gosh. That's like the tip of the century. That is so delicious sounding. And everyone can get mason jars and then create those salads ahead of time for a few days.

That sounds fantastic and such a good on the go. Kind of a lunch. And I know that your husband is part of your program and he does the exercise component.

So maybe you could tell us a little bit about how that fits in. You mentioned over exercising is a problem. So what is included in your weight loss program concerning proper exercise for women with PCOS?

Yeah, my husband, he is a PCOS personal trainer and we create videos and we always talk about this, especially in our app, about how doing slow weighted workouts can help improve your insulin sensitivity and also keep your stress hormones nice and balanced.

I know there's research done on hate workouts for PCOS women and how that improves insulin sensitivity. And for some people that's great and for some people that can be very stressful.

A high intensity workout for someone who has a lot of fatigue and cortisol dysregulation and can barely get up to even think about working out. That's asking for a lot to do a hit workout.

So a slow weighted workout is something along the lines of lifting weights taking around a 62nd break in between your sets, making sure that your heart rate isn't all over the place.

You're not jumping up and down and you're lifting weights and you're building muscle, and that muscle is going to pick up the sugar from your bloodstream and burn it for energy, which is great for insulin resistance.

And when you pack on not and I don't want to say pack on muscle because a lot of people, women get scared of lifting weights and creating that muscle mass.

But you're not going to look buff, quote unquote buff like you're going to create your muscle on your body. It's going to improve your insulin resistance and your blood sugar control and actually reduce your cravings and help with your symptoms.

And that is just some of the impact that it has, not to mention in increasing your metabolism even after you work out because your body is is holding muscle now and keeping your stress hormones nice and low because there are so many what including myself and I did these crazy workouts, I did the kickboxing, I did cycling, I was burning calories, sweating everything.

And I couldn't believe that I didn't lose a single pound. In fact, I felt like I was gaining more belly fat. And I hear the story over and over again from women with PCOS who have worked out so hard and not lose lost the single pound and have in fact gained weight or feel puffier.

And so that is because it's spiking your stress hormones and it's hard for women with PCOS to bring those stress hormones back down. So the slow weighted workout method helps keep it nice and low.

At the same time, you're building muscle, speeding up your metabolism, reducing cravings, and managing your insulin resistance. Well, I'm 100% in agreement with the amazing benefits of building muscle.

And muscle is what burns your glucose. Absolutely. If you have a really bad body composition, you don't have enough muscle. It's really hard to lose weight.

So great advice. Now I know you and your husband have created an app, so maybe you could explain to all the viewers about the app and the benefits of it.

And because they may want to go and get a hold of it. Yeah, the Cysterhood app, it's spelled C Y S T E R Cysterhood like CYST and it is a community app where women with PCOS, they come into our private Facebook group.

We you can ask any question, we're always there, answer and direct you towards answers and results. It's the largest PCOS community out there and trust me, I have been so many different chat forums for PCOS where it is just really devastating to see so many people struggle and not have tools to help them.

So with hours you have access to me. I'm always in there chatting with PCOS sisters and not to mention we have a plethora, a huge library of hundreds of gluten and dairy free recipes and you can even select which carb tolerance you are.

And of course we teach you how to discover your carb tolerance, and you can choose that the version of that recipe for your carb tolerance. So if you're eating super low, that recipe will be modified for you into a super low carb range.

And so that's we have curated our recipes in that way so that they're gluten free, dairy free, and there's different versions of it. Depending on how many carbs you're eating.

You can also do slow aided workouts and we have a huge library of workouts you can select from and we create a PCOS plan for you with the workouts and the recipes and you can follow it or you can swap out recipes and it's just a really fun time.

You can learn all about the PCOS weight loss method in there as well. It sounds incredibly sophisticated, you

know, you have a big library and you have your Facebook group and you really do very individualized programs.

Yeah, absolutely. We want women with PCOS to feel like there's answers and there's support out there because there's no reason you should be struggling with your symptoms forever.

You can reverse them. You can live symptom free and thrive with PCOS. And of course PCOS. You know, you want to keep it reversed. You have to do lifestyle changes that really suit you, that make you feel happy, that make you feel like you want to continue them in your life.

And that's what we help you do. We help you adapt to those lifestyle changes so that they work for you and you can live symptom free. And not to mention that little bit of extra testosterone that we have us stronger, better leaders, that makes us physically more strong as well.

And when we hone in on the PCOS itself and the benefits that it can really bring to your life, when you balance your hormones and you learn how to manage it, it can be such a beautiful thing.

Absolutely the same. I say, you know, get back to your roots. Right. PCOS in ancient times was an advantage. It's only modern lifestyle that has turned it on its head into a disadvantage.

So beautifully presented. And I just know that so many of viewers are going to want to get on that app because it's really amazing what you've put together.

It really is. And I can't thank you enough for joining me. Your own personal success story speaks for itself and in terms of like, if there are a website or just to remind them, how did they actually go about finding you?

Of course. Thank you so much for having me. You can find us on PCOSweightloss.org. You can find us on Instagram at PCOS.weightloss or you can listen to our podcast, A Cyster & her Mister Well, thank you.

And once again, everyone out there, PCOS, is not hopeless, right? I mean, we have so much that we can do to help each one of us to thrive. So thanks again, Tallene It was wonderful having you join me.

Of course. Thank you so much for having me.