Podcast Intro and Amino Acid Basics

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Hey there, welcome to the Recharged Biomedical Podcast. I'm Dr. Edward Park, and if you're curious about regenerative medicine, you've come to the right place.

We're diving into the latest breakthroughs in telomerase activation, stem cell exosomes, and all the cutting edge science that's shaping the future of healing and longevity.

Let's get started. Hi everybody, this is Dr. Ed Park, your host for the Recharged Biomedical Podcast, and today we're very fortunate to be joined by Lori Hammer.

Hey, Lori. Hey, thanks for having me today. Yeah, absolutely. It's a pleasure. So today we're going to talk about what she does with amino acids and helping moms.

So over the years, she's developed this expertise. Now, not everyone knows what amino acid is, but why don't we start off with that? Yeah, so amino acids are the building blocks of pretty much everything in your body in life from hair, skin, nails, your organs, your muscles.

Most people think of amino acids as muscle building, but it also, it's for your hormones, it's for your neurotransmitters in your brain, your digestive enzymes.

So they're important for everything. Right, right, right. So the central dogma of biochemistry is that your genes encode a sequence of amino acids and then that makes proteins, which can be very complicated, you know, up to hundreds and more sequences of these 22 letters.

So just like an alphabet has, I guess what, 24 letters, we have 22 letters for amino acids. And some of them are ones that we can make and some we can't.

Tell us about the ones we can't and the ones that we sometimes make too little of. Well, yeah, I honestly think we'd probably don't make enough of any of them, to be honest with you.

So I feel like everybody's amino acid deficient, all 22 of them.

Assessing Deficiencies and Mood Profiles

But we have those 80 essential that allegedly we can get enough from our food to make the rest of them, but kind of find that most people are still deficient in all of them.

So I try to address that as a whole. Right. So for those that don't know, your neurotransmitters are derived from these amino acids, acids, all your proteins, like you said, collagen.

And so it's important to have them from the diet and have a healthy metabolism. And so people can supplement, right? Yes. But how do you know if somebody is deficient?

Is there actual testing that one does? Yes, there is testing out there. Some people test with blood or urine. I don't

use either of those. I use a symptom-based questionnaire divided into five categories for the five major neurotransmitters that really affect your mood and your glucose level.

So that's how I assess that. So then we can do it in real time and then I do sublingual testing. So we actually put the amino acid under your tongue and see how you respond to that.

Really? So you can actually see the person's mood or cognition change? Yes, within two to five minutes. It's amazing. It's one of the few supplements that amino acids absorb very quickly.

It can make a profound change in your body. So give us some of the profiles of somebody who's maybe this deficient, that deficient. What are some of the common things that you see?

So we'll use serotonin because serotonin is, you know, a lot of people are on SSRIs. Most people have some type of serotonin deficiency that I see. So this would be somebody with anxiety, depression, OCD, perfectionism.

You have maybe some odd phobias. You have afternoon or evening cravings, PMS. You crave a lot of things, a lot of foods to kind of boost your mood later in the day.

So maybe get angry real quickly. So that would be a low serotonin profile. And what's the precursor to taking that amino acid-wise? We're going to do tryptophan or 5-HTP.

I try to do tryptophan because tryptophan can convert into other things. 5-HTP only converts into serotonin. Okay, okay, fair enough. So is that your number one issue, people with anxiety, mood disorders?

Yes, anxiety, mood disorders, a lot of overwhelmed, feeling burnt out. I work with a lot of burnt out women. So that can fall into either serotonin category or maybe a low GABA.

Gabber profile where you're just so tense all the times you can't unwind. You can't take that deep breath and let it out. So Gabber. So tell me, you kind of couple this with sort of lifestyle coaching in the calm mom sort of program.

What does that entail for somebody that's just feeling like, let's say they're a new mom and they're just overwhelmed and they come to you. What kind of things are in your armamentarium?

Right. So we're always going to start with amino acids first, and then we're going to make sure once that feels stable, we're going to work on diet. We're going to make sure that they're getting nourished really, really well.

And just covering those three macros, the protein, the carbs, and the fats, making sure those are good ratios for that person and they're high quality.

Because most women come to me, they're just undernourished in general. Nobody's eating enough protein. They're not eating healthy fats, and most people are overeating carbs.

So we try to get those balanced. So I mean, I have this general sense that processed foods, anything that is stable on a shelf for years is probably not that good for you.

Exactly. But in today's world, sometimes those choices are made for fast food or processed food.

Using Amino Acids for Stress and Burnout

And so what kind of general tips can you have for people who are going to eat at home and make their own food? What kind of things should they be emphasizing?

So emphasizing your protein. So you want to try for that 30-ish grams of protein per meal. For women in general, men will probably need a little bit more.

And I'm always encouraging animal protein. So whether that's eggs, fish, lamb, beef, whatever it might be, because that's going to give you the best amino acid profile, and that's going to nourish your body to the deepest level, as long as you can digest it well.

And then we're going into those healthy fats and trying to not have a lot of those processed foods. But in terms of like people's stress, I always think, you know, I was just doing a podcast and they asked me about, you know, stress.

And I said, you know, a lot of people just ruminate, you know, and they just, they create these dramatic scenarios in order to avoid them. But do you have a component of counseling involved or anything like that?

I'm not a counselor, but I mean, I would say it is a piece of it, right? So we're always doing the lifestyle coaching and helping people figure out, like, why do I have this habit and how can I implement a new habit or a new mindset?

Because you are what you think and you are what you speak. So we're always wanting to build the brain up so it's easier to make those thought processes, those changes, and to start speaking life instead of speaking negativity over yourself, your kids, your husband, or whoever it might be.

Yeah, yeah, I think that although your emphasis is on women, I think that today's lifestyle keeping the economic pressures and sort of social media. I think it's a long way from Ozzie and Harriet where one income could support a whole family of five.

So I think it's a stressful lifestyle for a lot of people. Yes, it is. So basically, the premise of what you're saying is you supply over-the-counter amino acids.

Is this something that one can buy in the vitamin shop or the GNC? Yeah, most amino acids can be found, you know, at Sprout, Whole Foods and kind of all over the place.

I get a picky about a few of them, but most of the time you can find inexpensive amino acids that will really work well for you. And these are absorbed obviously naturally through the gut system and transported actively.

Are you worried about impurities from, you know, the manufacturing process or are they pretty safe? Overall, they're generally pretty safe. I mean, you still don't want to buy the cheapest thing out there because most of those are not pure.

So pharmaceutical grade is always better. If you're using a company like Dow spends a million plus dollars testing for impurities and stuff in their amino acids.

So I trust that brand as well. So in terms of like, let's say I'm somebody that's on the go and I'm stressed out, the first rec might come back as what?

Tryptophan? Probably tryptophan, probably GABA. Those are two of the biggest ones. Does that make you sleepy, I heard, or can, or? Yeah, tryptophan should work with your own circadian rhythm.

And GABA can calm you down, but it also can sharpen your mind. So it takes away the noise so that you can actually focus. And then as your circadian rhythm goes into the evening, that will help with lowering cortisol and so that you can sleep better.

Nutrition, Protein, and Lifestyle Coaching

Great, yeah, because you know there's that trope about Turkey and tryptophan. I get that. I think that's overdone, yeah. So okay, so it's not gonna like melatonin mess up your circadian rhythm per se.

Correct. Okay, and you won't get immediately sleepy in most cases. Right, unless you're so wound up and then you

just feel so relaxed. And I always have to ask people, is this a, are you actually sleepy or is this a relaxation?

And some people don't know the difference because they haven't felt that way for decades. Right, that's great, that's hilarious. In terms of the SSRIs you mentioned, that sort of was this theory for decades that depression is a serotonin deficiency, and I think that's been challenged the last few years in the psychiatric literature.

Do you have experience weaning people off of these? Does it help? Because I know a lot of times when they come off SSRIs, they can have horrible side effects.

Right. I'll be honest with you. I can't personally taper people off, but I do work with our physician, their prescribing physician. And what I've seen over the last couple of decades is that there's so much protracted withdrawal going on, the deep side effects and stuff coming off these medications, but I have honestly not seen any serious side effects while you're using the amino acids and tapering at the same time.

So the amino acids help that tapering process. Yeah, I would think so, just as a guess. So tell us a little bit about your journey. How did you come to rely on this or discover this as a help to you?

Yeah. Well, amino acids saved my life. I really honestly don't think I'd be here if I hadn't done amino acid therapy. I was very depressed, very anxious.

I had an eating disorder for a very long time and I was definitely on the downward path of life, let's just say that way. And I wasn't getting the help that I needed.

And I had a professor and when I was in nursing school, she got a random article from a GNC magazine talking about amino acid therapy. and how it helps people with eating disorders and anxiety and depression.

And so I called out to this clinic in California who was in the article. And so I went out there as an outpatient because I couldn't do any inpatient treatment because I didn't qualify and found out that I indeed was very, very deficient in amino acids.

And once I started on the amino acid therapy, the craving cycle stopped, I stopped binging and purging, the anxiety lifted, my depression went away and it literally saved my life.

Amazing. Yeah, I think in the foods that we take, sometimes they are enriched, sometimes they're not. Even the exosomes that I give, they're enriched with amino acids, but we can't just assume that if you're eating pop tarts and tortilla chips that you're going to get all the amino acids you need.

That is so true. Yeah, you're not going to get them all. And so if mom's eating that and kids are eating that, how does that affect the children's behavior?

Well, if you're deficient in amino acids, you're going to have kids that are hyperactive. They may be angry. They may not sleep well. They're super fidgety.

I mean, it goes across the board. I see so many nutrient deficient kids. So do you think that's contributing that the poor nutrition schools having their snacks is contributing to this ADHD epidemic?

100%, yes. OK. Yeah, I guess, you know, the whole thing about munching on an apple and eating a salad, it's just kind of under-emphasized. And, you know, from when I started training till now, the food pyramid has been inverted.

When you start to peel back the layers and see it was just basically to sell food for the farm lobby or whatever, you sort of understand why. But hopefully we'll have more science-based recommendations for childhood nutrition and not just Yum brands, PepsiCo and all that.

Okay, so if you could give advice to people who are wanting to kind of get started in this, what would be a good

resource?

Safety, Dosing, and SSRI Taper Support

Do you have a website that they can go to? I do. It's lorihammer.com. L-A-U-R-I-E hammer.com. Yeah. And so they can learn a little bit about amino acids.

So that's really what you're doing in terms of your career and your service. Yes. So I see clients and I train practitioners too in amino acid therapy because it's a very underused therapy that can have profound effects.

I hadn't heard of it until, yeah, talking to you. It makes sense. You know, you hear about people taking stuff to relax, like gava, tryptophan. But I guess there's a direct reason.

It stands to reason if you push a precursor to serotonin, you'll have higher serotonin levels. But a lot of that also, those transfers are made in the large intestine, though, by the gut bacteria.

So do people have problems with absorbing from their natural diet, too? Is that an aspect? Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. As a result of what? Dysbiosis or…

Dysbiosis, different stressors, chemical, physical, emotional things, you know, heavy metals, whatever it might be, parasites. So lots of absorption issues, which is why they're depleted in the first place.

So the goal is to calm the neurology, to regulate that nervous system so that you can actually heal, you know, the intestinal lining and the bacteria and all those things.

You know, we just did a podcast with the zeolite manufacturer, and what's your impression of that? Can that leach some of the amino acids, or is it kind of neutral?

I haven't seen that at all. I use zeolite all the time, with almost 100% of my clients, and I get fantastic results with that, along with the amino acid.

I think it's drawing out the toxins and whatnot. I do. It takes away the toxic burden, so then your body can use the amino acids better. Nice, nice. That's good to know.

Okay, so are there certain genetic types? Like, you know, people talk about methyl tetrahydrofolate reductase deficiency. Are there certain syndromes that come to top of mind when you think about amino acid deficiency?

Honestly, no. I mean, you would think there would be some, but I see people with folate issues that only need like two amino acids and therapeutic doses, and then I have some that need all five categories that I deal with, and some people don't need any.

So no, I wish it was more simple, but it's not. Yeah, no, that's good. So it's not like vitamins where if you have a clear deficiency, one disease will emerge.

Okay. So in terms of your idea of amino acids, can we overdose on them? Like, I don't think that the, maybe I'm wrong. Correct me if I'm wrong. There aren't like specific recommendations as to the normal intake, right?

I mean, you're kind of winging it, but can you OD on these things or? Well, when we're doing therapy, if you overdose, we'll say on tryptophan, you might get a headache or you might feel woozy or you feel irritated.

And then that goes away in like 10 to 15 minutes. So there's no long-term effect if you take more than what you need. It's an amino acid. Your body will deal with it and get rid of it.

Sure, sure. That's fascinating. So if somebody gets a general gist of what you're doing and they want to try something at GNC, then they can just see how they feel.

And what's a good way to know if it's working? Well, I assess people with a questionnaire, and so we have, you know, in each of those five sections, we were talking about a scale of zero to 10. So what's your anxiety?

Is your anxiety a 10? And all of a sudden, you're taking tryptophan, but you have to figure out what dose you need, because you could take one capsule of tryptophan.

You're like, oh, that didn't work for me. Well, you probably didn't take a high enough dose, and you need the amino acids multiple times a day. And the time frame, 30 minutes, an hour, less, or?

Well, if you're taking it orally, you're going to need at least 20 minutes, but I do the sublingual testing.

Lori Hammeru2019s Story and Resources

So we open up the capsule, put the powder under the tongue, and then wait two to five minutes to see how you respond. Okay. So it's a real time sort of…

It is a real time. Yeah. Okay. Cool. Cool. Cool. And so is there any downside other than a slight headache that goes away after 15 minutes? No, I mean, there's a few, like if you're on an SSRI, you want to navigate the tryptophan or 5-HTP a little differently than you would anything else.

But other than, you know, a few medication tweaks here and there, there isn't a whole lot to navigate. So can you get like restlessness or akathisia if you take too much or too little or how does it interact with the SSRI?

Only if you're doing that with a medication. So if you're on an SSRI and you overload yourself with tryptophan or 5-HTP, you're going to get symptoms, or you can get symptoms, but not just on the amino acids themselves.

Yeah. So like restlessness? If you take too much, you might feel your legs a little restless. When I'm doing the trialing with people, the sublingual testing, if somebody doesn't want that their body doesn't respond well to that high dose, they may feel like jumping their leg a little bit or they just feel a little irritated, but that goes away very quickly.

Okay, great. All right, so how do people get in touch with you? Have you written a book or anything on the subject yet? I'm in the process of writing a book, so I don't have it released yet.

So if you follow me, you'll know when I release that. So this next year, that'll happen. But you can find me on your website. What's that? lorihammer.com.

Oh, OK. So I noticed there was another Lori Hammer practices psych. That's not you up in Massachusetts. That is not me. I contacted her. We're actually going to meet because I've gotten that.

Yeah, I missed confusion there before. All right, Laurie. Well, thank you for the very, very helpful and very quickly summarized tips for people. I definitely think it's asymmetric risk.

You might be out 12 bucks, but you might have something that's life changing. So it's a useful info. Thank you so much for having me. Appreciate you. Okay, everybody, lorihammer.com and you can learn more about the Calm Mom program for moms who are feeling a bit overwhelmed.

And again, thanks for joining us. Thanks for having me. Thanks for tuning into the Recharged Biomedical Podcast. If today's episode got you thinking, you'll love my book, Exosomes, Songs of Healing.

It's packed with cool analogies, full color illustrations, and all the science you'll need to understand how exosomes are changing the game in aging and regenerative medicine.

You can grab it in paperback, ebook, or audiobook, whatever works for you. Now head over to www.rechargebiomedical.com to check it out. And don't forget to like and subscribe so you never miss another

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See you next time.