Introduction and Doctor Painteru2019s Background

Hey, everybody. Welcome. I am so excited to have Doctor Tanya Walker painter here with us today. She is a natural path and a migraine specialist. And she's going to tell us a little bit about antioxidants.

So, doctor Painter, tell us a little bit about your background and how you came to be interested in migraines. Well, so, when it started, when I was in fourth grade and I had my first little health sheet put in front of me, and I saw all the systems in the body, and I was just so fascinated.

So that's kind of started my process. Fast forward to college. I graduated from the University of Washington, with my bachelor, with cellular and molecular biology minor in inorganic chemistry and on the pre-med track.

And then, I went to medical school at first year university to get my naturopathy doctorate. And, now I practice as a natural plastic doctor. I was in primary care for a while, and then I've since transitioned into that migraine specialty.

So I used to struggle with migraines myself. I had daily chronic headaches, frequent migraines. Nothing worked for me. And it wasn't until I went to medical school and kind of started putting some of those pieces together where I really started understanding.

There's a lot more than just what we're taught in medical school, a lot more that we can do to support our bodies besides just medications. And so that kind of led me down the path of, specializing in migraine, because I was able to help so many people who were struggling with so many migraines that medications weren't helping.

I was able to give them the relief that I got for myself. And, that's just kind of where my passion lies now. So I specialize in that. Yeah, fantastic.

I love it how it seems like there's so many people are at work as a result of events in our own lives. Yeah, yeah, a personal journey. Yeah. So let's get started.

Talking about antioxidants.

What Antioxidants Are and Why They Matter

I feel like there's so much confusion about what the word antioxidant even means. We all know that somehow they're a good thing. But what are antioxidants?

Yeah. What are they? Why are they so important to us? Yeah. So, you know, antioxidants are they're basically substances in our body, usually phytochemicals, chemicals that come from plants that can prevent damage to our cells.

So kind of going in a little bit into some of the science if you can, if, if anybody listening can kind of go way back to their chemistry when, you know, we have those electrons that are in the, the molecules.

Right? The, the, the atoms that make up all of us. And when we have something called a free radical, what happens is one of those electron pairs goes away.

Right. And so then we have an electron that really wants a partner. And so it tries to scavenge electrons from anywhere. It can our cells, cell membranes, you know, anything.

And that causes damage to our cells when it steals an electron from that. And so that's where we end up seeing some of the damage that occurs from toxic exposures, because they have all those free radicals that are then going around stealing electrons, which then kind of causes that cascade of events.

Antioxidants go in there and they give electrons away. They're like, they're like the I don't know, the charity, right? They're giving electrons to these free radicals so that they're not going around trying to steal from everybody.

They have their own pair and they're good to go. And so that's why they're so important is because it basically stops those toxins, those free radicals, from disrupting everything.

When we have too many of those free radicals, then that contributes to cancer, cardiovascular disease, liver disease. It interferes with our metabolic processes.

And it also is correlated with dysfunction at the cellular level, which is really important in energy production and just having our bodies work properly.

And so when we have too much Antioch or too many oxidative stressors, too many free radicals running around, then that's disrupting things at the cellular level, which can be super problematic.

Yeah. All right. So let me just recap here. So free radicals, oxidation, oxidative stress all kind of means the same thing. And it means cell damage. Right.

So what it boils down to okay. And then I always, I'm, I'm, I'm thinking about the analogy of what happens to metal with the process of oxidation. So when oxidation free radicals, oxidative stress, when all of that happens to metal, what we see is rust.

And so you can think of that in your mind as sort of just a little mental shortcut. If you hear the word oxidation, think of what's happening to metal.

When it's rusting, it's essentially rusting of the cells. Although of course there's no metal involved, but you can just think of that as sort of an analogy, to why all the terms.

Yeah, yeah. And I can totally imagine why rust inside my body is a bad thing. Yeah. Not absolutely. But yeah. All right. Cool. So then you mentioned that antioxidants are, of course, the solution to this process because it donates electrons, it gives the cells, sort of a defense mechanism and army to deal with all of these things that cause oxidation and oxidative stress, free radicals, etc., which we are conceptualizing as rust.

It gives our tools the ability to do with that. So, why is it that our body needs that help? Why do our own antioxidants become depleted? And what does that got to do with migraine?

Yeah. So this is where, you know, hearing that, you know, rainbow food and avoid processed foods and things like that. So a poor diet that is low in our antioxidants.

Why Antioxidants Become Depleted in Migraine

So thinking fast food, convenience foods, store bought prepackaged foods, none of those have that rainbow of color, right? Most of our antioxidants are going to be coming from fruits and vegetables.

And then there are certain other things, but predominantly it's those fruits and veggies that really give us those antioxidant boosts. And so when we're not eating a lot of those, when we're eating a packaged or convenience diet, then we're not getting our main source of antioxidants.

So then we start to use up the antioxidants that we're able to make, because we can get them for two ways we get them from our food, and we get them by our bodies being able to make it.

But predominantly we get it from food. So if that source is taken away, then it's up to our bodies to make enough antioxidants. And there are a lot of reasons why that doesn't happen.

Well, but it also comes down to our genetics. You know, there are certain genes that are really involved, and if they

aren't working properly or they're mutated or, you know, dysfunctional in some way, then we're not even keeping up with what we need.

And then on top of that, you throw in the environment that we live in. I mean, we are constantly exposed to plastic and chemicals and toxins and pollutants in the air.

The smelly, yummy, you know, fragrances that are in our shampoo and soaps are things that are toxins to our body that we have to detox from. So all of those things are actually using up the antioxidants that we have.

And so when we run low, then we're not able to keep up with the level of toxins that our body is being exposed to. And then that's when we start seeing the cellular damage, the cancers, the, you know, cardiovascular disease, the high blood pressure.

And it also correlates with migraine as well. So when our cells aren't producing the proper energy, when we're not, you know, things aren't being produced, our neurotransmitters aren't being produced in the way that they need to be.

We start seeing all these imbalances starting to happen as your body is frantically trying to keep up with preventing as much damage as possible. But meanwhile, you know the free.

The rest is, you know, causing problems to our body. And you know that throws things off. And then we start seeing some of those chronic symptoms kind of popping in, and it just kind of snowballs from there until we're able to reverse that process.

There was a there was a really interesting study that I read and I, I tried to find it to link it for, for everybody, and I can't find that one, but I did find another one.

But these both of these studies looked at people with chronic migraine, and they looked at their antioxidant status. In one of them, it showed that glutathione, one of our most potent antioxidants, the most powerful, that was deficient in 92% of the people that were tested, in this study, that's a that's an insanely high amount for a study result.

The other one that I found was, for alpha lipoic acid, another, another anti, antioxidant. And that one they found was 87% depleted. So we can see that there's this common factor of antioxidant depletion in people with chronic migraine.

So it's I think a bigger deal than is even acknowledged or really talked about in conventional approaches to migraine. Yeah. Yeah. You're absolutely right about that.

This is not something that, that we talk about in conventional neurology. So what I'm hearing is you're saying our toxic load is going up and our own ability to to detox through antioxidants is going down partly because of nutrition, maybe because of genetics.

And so that imbalance is part of what's causing a problem for people with migraine. Because our brain cells are very, very sensitive. They do not like things to be suboptimal.

The brain takes up 20% of our metabolic needs. This organ is very high maintenance, so it does not like it when this shift is off and our toxic load is high in our our supplies are low.

Yeah. And you have to really intentionally, especially in, in how we eat like our standard diet. Now you have to intentionally like you said, you go into a restaurant and I can't tell you the last time I was served vegetables with a side or as a side, unless I specifically ordered it.

And then I have to pay more for it, which fine.

Using Diet and Supplements to Support Migraines

But it used to be included. Like that was part of a meal was your vegetables, and now you don't get that anymore. So you really have to be intentional about it.

Yeah, yeah, it is an uphill battle. We are all fighting. All right. Okay. You know what else I'm curious about? Are there ways that we can use antioxidants to actually improve our migraines?

I have been doing it with my clients for years now, and I. I don't find that treatment is near as effective when we don't really focus in on the diet and the antioxidant support.

So I think that it's key, clinically speaking. And so you know, there's a few different ways that we can that we can help to improve that. Number one, first and foremost is going to be the diet.

Right. We have to start, as we just mentioned, we have to start emphasizing our fruit and vegetable intake. And you know, especially now where everything is, you know, getting so expensive and fresh fruits and vegetables are pretty pricey.

Now, on top of that, we want to kind of go for the organic as much as possible, because if we're going with the pesticide stuff, yes, you're eating the fruit or the vegetable, but then you're also being exposed to the chemicals of the pesticides that our body then has to detox from.

So I don't know which is greater if you get more benefit from it, from the antioxidants, or if you get more detriment from the pesticides. I don't know about that, but so, I mean, ideally we'd be eating, organically grown, at least from the list of the dirty Dozen dozen.

I don't know if if everybody is familiar with Dirty Dozen less, but there is a group called the Environmental Working Group. You can find them at dot org, and they put every year they put out a list called the Dirty Dozen.

And they are the top 12 most contaminated foods, that are most contaminated with pesticides and herbicides. And so when we're looking at trying to eat organically and then also trying to balance the budget, we at least want to make sure that our organic foods, our that the foods that we choose that are organic are the ones on that dirty dozen list.

We do not want to eat conventionally grown foods if they appear on that. That dirty dozen. So that's one way that you can kind of modify the way that I kind of do it when I go shopping is if you have a thick skinned fruit or vegetable that you're not going to eat avocado, cucumber if you peel it.

What else? Melons. You know, pineapple. Do I say avocado, banana, things like that. You're going to get rid of that outer skin. You're going to probably be okay in getting a conventionally grown produce there.

But if you're looking at any of your thin skin berries, peppers, potatoes, apples those always make the dirty dozen list. So you want to go organic for those.

But so I'm digressing a little bit, but coming back to it, if we just really make sure that we're emphasizing some fruit and vegetables with every meal, every time we eat that we have something that's fruit and vegetable that's really going to help.

Another thing, is avoiding processed foods as much as possible. So there's a, you know, a big push for everybody to eat, Whole foods. And you know, and take an anti-inflammatory diet.

And all of that cuts out the simple carbs. But basically, you know, sugar, white flour, white bread, those are all going to be highly processed foods that aren't going to give us a lot of nutrition and potentially could be draining our antioxidant.

So we want to try to avoid those and go towards whole grain foods, whole grain or whole food options. And so the best way, the best description I've heard of Whole Foods is if it looks like it did when it was in nature, it's pretty wholefood.

So you can kind of think about that with any vegetable, you know, soups, pretty processed, right? Everything has been precooked. Everything is in the can.

There's there's chemicals lining the can, but if you get all the vegetables that grew that look like they grew in the garden, and you chop them up yourself and put them in a, you know, stock or water, then you've got more of a whole food option.

Right. So, so that is going to be another thing is to minimize our, our processed foods are fast foods. Convenience foods. And then there's also supplemental options.

So we can actually we have, some supplements like glutathione alpha lipoic acid and Acetylcysteine or NAC. And those can also help with, restoring the antioxidant pathways, building them back up so that our body has more of a store to use from.

And then that will help to reduce that chronic inflammation caused by the free radical rust, oxidation, whatever you want to call it. And then the last point that I'll bring up is minimizing your toxic exposures.

So there's only so much that we can do. I mean, we have to balance being able to live in this society and our health, right? So we are going to be exposed to cans of food.

We're going to be exposed to plastic baggies and food wrapped in plastic. But we can minimize things as much in within our control. Right? We don't want to be reheating food in styrofoam containers, for example.

We don't want to be using perfume that isn't an all natural, you know, essential oil base. We want to avoid things like fragrances and chemicals that we are putting on our skin that's been absorbed in our body, has to process.

A lot of our beauty products are not made with chemicals that our body likes, so we have to try to reduce our exposure as much as possible. Our cleaning supplies, the soaps that we're using, the shampoos that we're using, which, by the way, org has a great list of things that kind of they scale up from zero being the healthiest option, completely natural to ten being the worst, most chemically laden thing you could possibly do.

So that can be a good way to try to start working on cleaning out your environment, reducing those toxic exposures. And you can make a good decision based on the rating that that that website gives.

All right. So I'm hearing a couple of things here. Number one increase fruit and vegetables. Number two reduce toxins not only on your food in the form of pesticides but in your environment.

And then also consider supplements like glutathione and alpha lipoic acid. So summarize it. Yeah. That pretty much summarize it. Those are some good ways to to kind of get started on helping to to boost things.

And God provided the medicine that we need through these fruits and vegetables. That's all we have to do. We don't have to spend hundreds of dollars in supplements.

We just have to take a little bit of time to prepare things ourselves. And we have everything that we need to bring our body back into a healthy balance.

Where to Find Doctor Painter

But if you are interested in keeping your body running or if you are dealing with a chronic illness, we really need to be a lot more aware of and focusing on antioxidant support, because that could be a huge key piece to a lot of chronic illnesses.

Yeah, I love what you said about how, you know, our bodies can do everything we need. We just need to give it the right, the right ingredients to do that.

Yeah. Yeah. Excellent. Well, thank you so much for being here today. I appreciate your time. Absolutely. Thank you. And if people want to work with you, how can they find out more about you?

You can find me on migraine mastery talk. I also have a YouTube channel called, Migraine Mastery and migraine free Life. And you can find me on Facebook under Migraine Mastery as well.

All right. Thank you so much for being here today, doctor painter. Thank you, Doctor Barrett.