Chronic Inflammation: How it’s Wrecking Your Metabolism Transcript

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Podcast Introduction and Episode Overview

Chronic inflammation is silent, ongoing, and it damages our body. It's linked to obesity, diabetes, heart disease, fatigue, and brain fog. And I know a lot of our providers would say it is the underlying cause to all disease, dis-ease in the body.

And then there's hidden drivers that are in our control. Poor diet, sugar, processed foods, poor sleep, stress, toxins. Your health is shaped by more than symptoms.

Through real stories and expert insights, we explore how your genetics, environment, and daily choices affect your wellbeing. We uncover root causes and share practical tools to help you find the healing you need.

Welcome to the Forum Health Integrative Medicine Podcast. Hey everybody, welcome back to the Forum Health Integrative Medicine podcast. I'm your host, Amanda, and I am so excited for our talk today.

We have interviewed Dr. Garrett Siebold in our Utah locations on chronic inflammation. As you may or may not know, chronic inflammation is often called the root driver behind today's most common conditions.

weight gain, insulin resistance, fatigue, brain fog, cardiovascular disease, and even cognitive decline. Doesn't stop there, though. What does this mean for you?

Well, in this episode, Dr. Siebold is going to break down the connection between chronic inflammation and metabolic dysfunction. He's going to tell us what it is, how it develops, and how it shows up in labs, and most importantly, what you can do about it.

We're going to learn the difference between acute and chronic inflammation and how that disrupts blood sugar regulation and drives metabolic disease and why gut health, sleep, stress, toxins, and even food sensitivities play a much larger role than people may realize.

Acute vs. Chronic Inflammation

This is such a great conversation. I'm so excited for you to listen to it. It is clear, it is actionable, and it is rooted in physiology and real world clinical experience.

Let's dive in. Don't forget to like, share, and follow for more. Let's listen to Dr. Siebold. Welcome back to the Integrative Medicine Podcast. I'm your host, Amanda, and I'm here with Dr.

Siebold. He is practicing out of our Utah, West Jordan, and Orem locations. We are so happy to have you here today, Dr. Siebold. So glad to be here. Yes.

Today, we're going to be talking about chronic inflammation and metabolic dysfunction. Favorite topic. Me too. Yay, good. This is great. This is great.

It's gonna be a good day. We've all heard the word inflammation, but what does it really mean? Acute inflammation helps your body heal a cut or fight infection, but chronic inflammation is a little bit different.

It lingers, it drives weight gain, fatigue, and chronic disease, and often goes hand in hand with metabolic dysfunction. Today, we're gonna break it down.

what it is, why it happens, and what you can do about it. Love it. Well, let's do this. All right. So, Dr. Siebold, patients hear the word inflammation all the time.

Sure. Can you explain acute first chronic inflammation in simple terms? Yeah. So I think acute inflammation really has more to do with things going on immediately.

Usually we think of it in terms of like sickness, getting a cut, spreading your ankle. Your body sends these acute inflammatory mediators to the site of the infection, the wound, the injury to start that healing process.

Usually acute inflammation lasts maybe three, five days and should start to subside, kind of going on its own. But chronic inflammation is a lot more insidious and it's a bigger problem.

And it's not always really necessarily real appreciable and noticeable at the beginning stages.

How Inflammation Drives Metabolic Dysfunction

It's more over time as you start to feel it and experience it more and chronic aches and pains and headaches and inflammation in the skin, resistance or difficulty losing weight, things like that you might start to notice more of the chronic inflammation.

There's definitely more of a different underlying like pathophysiology that goes into each of these different processes, but both are significant. Acute is a good thing.

Chronic is bad. Chronic is bad. Naughty. There we go. We like acute. We don't like chronic. Got it. That's right. All right. So how does chronic inflammation then connect with metabolic dysfunction like insulin resistance, obesity, or high blood pressure?

Sure. So chronic inflammation really starts to cause problems down at a cellular level, which is where a lot of our metabolic health starts or stems from.

It starts to impact energy storage and utilization. It impacts. our ability to process insulin to keep her blood sugar in a healthy range and starts to lead towards insulin resistance, metabolic dysfunction, type 2 diabetes, and even also more so other kind of more metabolic manifestations like erectile dysfunction or dementia or cardiovascular disease.

All of those are in part actually both due to chronic inflammation as well as metabolic dysfunction in the body. Let's take one step back. Let's define what is metabolic dysfunction.

Yeah. So really metabolic dysfunction has to do with how well your body is able to process glucose and insulin, right? Your main source of energy in the body.

How well are you able to store that away?

Lifestyle Triggers: Diet, Sleep, Movement, and Stress

Metabolic dysfunction we typically think of as like type 2 diabetes on the extreme end and then more like insulin resistance or being overweight on the other end, the lower end, the beginning stages.

So it's really just how well is your body able to process glucose, insulin, and keep those within healthy ranges. Perfect. What are the most common lifestyle drivers of chronic inflammation you see in your patients?

I think, I mean, there's definitely a handful of them. I would probably say one of the biggest ones is going to be diet. Diet is a huge one. Diets that are high in, essentially the standard American diet.

Yeah. A lot of processed food, a lot of refined carbohydrates, sugars. These inflammatory seed oils, refined processed oils are very inflammatory for a lot of people.

The low fiber is a big part of that problem too. So that's definitely a huge one for lifestyle and drivers of

inflammation. Another big one is just not getting adequate sleep.

If you look at probably the two best ways to reduce inflammation from a lifestyle standpoint, one of the biggest ones is going to be fasting, like intermittent fasting or even longer term fasting.

And a second huge one is just going to be getting adequate sleep. Generally, all adults need seven to nine hours of sleep every night. I wish I could say that I got that consistently.

I don't. I think most people probably don't, given how busy life is. And, you know, there's studies that show just from multiple decades ago, on average, men and women are sleeping an hour less every night, which is felt to be one of the drivers of chronic inflammation today.

Another big one, lifestyle would be just being inactive, more sedentary. You hear the terms sedentary is the new smoking, right? Yeah, sitting is the new smoking.

And I think in large part, exercise is fantastic for reducing inflammation. But even on the extreme ends though, exercise can be a driver of inflammation too.

It can be a stressor on the body. 100%. So there's a happy medium. Definitely not saying don't exercise. Everyone should be doing way more exercise than they are.

There's a very small percentage of people that may be on the excessive side that could be causing inflammation for them. I think ultimately you have to assess yourself individually.

Everybody's genes and other epigenetic responses kind of determine how well you respond to inflammation. Yeah, absolutely. I think stress is another big one too.

Right, I mean sleep itself. triggers a stress response in the body, whether we recognize, like we don't recognize or think of sleep being like, oh, I'm stressed out while I'm sleeping.

But if you're having like poor sleep, stress response kicks it off. Cortisol goes up. Wake up in the middle of the night. Increases insulin resistance, kind of creates that vicious cycle.

Yes, absolutely. What about the gut microbiome? What kind of influence does that have on metabolic health and inflammation? At Forum Health, we uncover the why behind your symptoms.

With advanced lab testing, hormone optimization, and cutting edge therapies, we help you heal and perform your best. And now, through shopforumhealth.com, you can access physician-grade supplements trusted by our providers, supporting everything from adrenal health to focus and longevity.

Learn more at forumhealth.com and explore supplements at shopforumhealth.com. So the microbiome is a really cool, I think, new area of study in medicine, relatively new.

The last couple of decades has become a bigger… Lots to learn in that….influent or bigger, has gotten more of the spotlight, I guess, in medicine and research.

We're learning a ton about the microbiome. We certainly have a lot still to learn.

Gut Health, Genetics, and Hidden Inflammation

But we are seeing that the diversity, the different constitution of your microbiome does have an influence on specifically different inflammation markers in the body.

What cytokines, interleukins, other inflammatory molecules are in the body. Those are chemical messengers that speak to the cells surrounding them. Some of them are more pro-inflammatory.

They're going to drive inflammation in the body. So we're seeing that ultimately that the microbiome has a big impact there. It also plays a part in leaky gut or increased intestinal permeability is the other traditional name for it.

Both of those have huge impact on the inflammation of the body. In fact, in even one of our lectures today, we heard about the total antigenic load that your gut mucosa sees in one day is more than your immune system is ever going to see in its lifetime.

And if you think, you know, where's your immune system at? Primarily it's located in your gut, about two thirds of it's in your gut. And we're starting to see that, excuse me, in your immune system is the biggest driver of inflammation.

It is that that's one of the main functions of your immune system. And so we see that immune system getting triggered there because of a breakdown in the gut.

So the gut's important. Huge. Huge. You bet. Don't ignore it. Don't ignore your gut. That's right. Does genetics play a big role in inflammation in metabolic health?

It does. So in functional medicine, we love to talk about genetics and epigenetics. There's a phrase that genetics load the gun, but your epigenetics is what pulls the trigger, right?

The good thing is epigenetics are things that we have control over, right? That's our lifestyle, our environment, our exposures. And so certainly our genes do have an influence or predispose us, some people being more inflamed by certain things than others, but ultimately it's that lifestyle piece that really is the biggest factor.

So the good news is even though we may have a genetically crappy hand that we've been given, You can do things. We can still do things about it. You can turn the light switches on and off, but you've got to be willing to find the light switch.

Walk over to it. Yeah, you've got to do it. You've got to make the change. Yes. Curious, what lab tests or biomarkers do you find more useful or most useful for spotting hidden inflammation in the body?

So there's definitely a subset of traditional labs that you'll see. CRP or aceterate are two common non-specific inflammatory markers in the body. White blood cell count and other CBC blood measures, markers of inflammation.

You can definitely look at different cytokines and interleukins on traditional lab panels. insulin levels, hemoglobin A1C, blood glucose, leptin, uric acid, all those are great metabolic and some inflammatory markers.

And then there's more specialized tests and that's kind of a big part of what we do at Functional Medicine, looking at your microbiome, looking at your gut health.

Because you know it's going to be the contributor. Like, you might be able to find, like, okay, here are the labs that show the evidence that you do have inflammation.

Sure. But then the test, like, the gut test and stuff is, where's the inflammation coming from? Exactly. It shows you what that terrain looks like. What's the trigger?

Yep, big part of it. Important.

Labs and Testing for Inflammation

So stool tests, food sensitivity tests can also be suggestive and help you show where inflammation may be triggered or where it's coming from in regards to your diet.

We do a lot of chronic infection panels. That's another big source of inflammation in the body. Oh, that's a great point too. Or even other toxicities like heavy metal toxicity or environmental toxins.

You can be doing all the right things. And it's really hard to get those bugs out of the system. And they're just sitting there and… Lime or, you know, Epstein-Barr.

Yep. Chronic inflammation in the body. And heavy metals, like, you know, we do, we talk a lot about like detoxification and elimination diet and stuff like that, but there are like heavy metals and stuff like that.

Those are harder to just like, oh, let's get those buggers out. They certainly require greater chelation strategies and things like that. But the nice thing is there's a lot of good tests that we can do to evaluate for those things.

So you don't have to be left in the dark. When I see a patient and we're talking about inflammation, usually the first thing is let's get going on the lifestyle.

Let's do an elimination diet first step, right? But then, and we see where we get. And then if there's a lot of reason to test specific heavy metals, infections, things like that, then that's the next step.

Or even we just get through the basic stuff and we're not finding the answer. They're still really inflamed. Great. Then we just start digging deeper.

Yeah. Love it. Keep digging. Keep digging. Keep digging. So lifestyle is a big piece and component of controlling and managing and reducing inflammation in the body.

Is there, have you seen anything with like dietary patterns like Mediterranean or low glycemic or paleo? Is there any diet out there that you've seen?

work better for lowering inflammation? Sure. There's definitely a lot of, I mean, there's so many different diets and a lot of them are geared towards reducing inflammation.

I think one of the biggest keys for me is, is this something I can do long term? Yes. And the reality is different people have different food sensitivities.

And so one of my first things I love to do is go through just a basic elimination style diet. where we get rid of some of the more common inflammatory food triggers for people.

And we see how they do with that. I think people that have a moderate response but not great, a lot of times we might do something more. drastic for a short period of time, more like a carnivore diet for a couple weeks, and then start to maybe shift that towards more of like a paleo diet, getting back in some of the seeds and nuts and things like that, some berries, and then even maybe from there going back towards more of that elimination diet.

Diet Strategies and Personal Food Sensitivities

The primary goal just being to try to figure out what foods are you individually inflamed by? Because it's different for every person. For me, dairy is super inflammatory.

Small bit, really inflamed. My wife can drink a gallon of milk all day every day and have zero issues, right? Everyone's different. The key is for you to figure out what are your triggers in regards to food.

It does take a skill set that patients and people have to kind of gain to of becoming intuitive and listening to your body. Because I do think that it's so easy to go, go, go, go and ignore the signs and symptoms of your body.

And if you're not checking in with your body and seeing like, all right, had some cheese today or like an hour ago, like, what am I feeling now? I think taking a moment and taking a step back and doing that self-evaluation is a good skill for patients to work on, too.

100%. I think along that line, too, if I could add, a lot of these foods that people are sensitive to, you've grown up eating your whole life. And when you're younger and your hormones are in a better place and your body's capacity

to clear toxins is improved, you don't really feel it.

You don't see it. But as you get older and that capacity to detox and to repair and rebuild slows down, it becomes much more prevalent. And so for a lot of people, it's not usually until their early mid thirties that they start to kind of feel some of these things and it's not that all of a sudden they've grown the sensitivity, it's just that their capacity to clear that toxins and the inflammation out of the body is lessened with the aging and so those symptoms are more pronounced.

Yeah, absolutely. Our resilience is going down, our stress is going up because let's That's part two. Stress does not go down. I have a desk for some of our listeners out there, but what I've been learning is as I get older, I get more responsibilities and more stress.

And so, as my resilience kind of goes down too, now I'm noticing a little bit more like, Oh, my knee feels a little sore today. What did I do to that?

Well, what we can say is acute is necessary. We need inflammation in the body at certain times. It's a necessary thing for acute. But chronic is what we want to stop from happening.

Acute inflammation is healthy and it's short-term healing. Chronic inflammation is silent, ongoing, and it damages our body. It's linked to obesity, diabetes, heart disease, fatigue, and brain fog.

And I know a lot of our providers would say it is the underlying cause to all disease, dis-ease in the body, right? And then there's hidden drivers that are in our control.

Poor diet, sugar, processed foods, poor sleep, stress, toxins, the gut stuff. It affects the whole body. And then there's lifestyle medicine works, right?

The anti-inflammatory foods, stress, care, quality of sleep, daily movement, not over movement. So there's a lot of things that are in our control and we can do something about it today.

So if somebody is listening, if anybody's listening out there, wants to start today, what are the two most impactful first steps to begin lowering chronic inflammation?

First Steps to Lower Chronic Inflammation

I think the big one would be just lowering the input of where it's coming from. I would always recommend the elimination diet. I feel like of all the things we do all the time to help people with inflammation, I see more consistent, positive, good results from the elimination diet than most other therapies we can offer.

It's very simple, it's very basic, and anyone can do it from home. It takes some work, takes some preparation and planning, but definitely doable. So I say stop, stop, you know, eliminate what's causing the inflammation.

The other big things would be do what helps reduce the inflammation, which get more sleep and move your body. Yeah, absolutely. Three things, but I think that those three, and they're just simple lifestyle things.

There's all kinds of other nutraceuticals and herbs and IV therapies, things that can be very beneficial and can really help at times. But I think just from a simple standpoint, just cleaning up the diet.

And moving the body, getting more sleep would do fantastic for most people. And if you're still feeling stuck after the lifestyle, you can find our providers at forumhealth.com.

Find a provider near you. And we've got ways to help, right? Because it's not going to be easy to get rid of a Lyme infection or, you know, if there's any of those silent things, mold, the heavy metals and stuff.

You bet. over decades and decades, right? And so it's going to take some time and a little bit of thoughtfulness to

get to the other side and get back to that area of health.

increases disease risk. The good news, by improving food quality, sleeping well, managing stress, and moving your body daily, you can dial down inflammation and restore balance.

Thank you so, so much for being here today. I can't wait to have you back on. Thanks for having me. This was great. Favorite topic? Inflammation. Inflammation.

Metabolic disease. Let's do it. All right. Thank you so much again, and stay tuned for next week's episode. Thank you for joining us on the Forum Health Integrative Medicine podcast.

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