Constipation Part 2: The Hidden Consequences No One Warns Parents About Transcript

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Intro and sponsor message

Welcome back to the Get to the Root podcast with Hope for Healing. And today we dive into part two of our conversation on constipation with Dr. Paula Kropstadt.

In today's episode, we go deeper into what really happens when constipation is ignored, from headaches and joint pain to focus issues and even chronic immune activation.

Dr. K also shares the surprising role genetics can play, how your mitochondria could be involved, and practical, doable tools like vitamin C cleanses, magnesium, and other nutrient support.

Whether you're here as a parent trying to help your child or you're dealing with constipation yourself, today's episode is full of eye-opening connections and actionable steps.

This podcast is for education and encouragement. please consult your health provider for personalized medical advice. Now a note from Dr. K about our sponsor.

At Hope for Healing, we know that understanding your unique genetics can open the door to true healing. Through our sponsorship and partnership with Vagran, we're able to use custom SNP panels that give us deeper insight into the root causes of health challenges.

In this episode, we're shining a spotlight on the SLC-19A1 gene. It plays a critical role in fueling the mitochondria, which keep your bowel moving. We're thankful for the grand sponsorship of this podcast and their role in helping us deliver care that's as individual as you are.

So Dr. K, thank you so much for going on to everything that you've kind of described the basics.

What happens when constipation is ignored

But what I really want to know is what could happen if we just ignore constipation? Because so many people call constipation as like, oh, it's just a thing of life, or it's just something I'll get used to.

Are there things that could happen if we ignore constipation? That's a great question. Some of these people are going to go, oh, yeah, oh, yeah. But let's think about it.

When you don't poop, you develop headaches, OK? And you can develop, well, first of all, your abdomen is going to hurt. But what is going on during that time period?

So let's talk a little bit about the anatomy of the GI tract. Normally, and for people who can see this, the bowel is supposed to peristals, meaning things move through the bowel in a nice orderly fashion.

But if part of the bowel becomes distended, and swollen, impacted with stool and maybe certain types of bacteria that make gas. If you've got part of the bowel peristalsing and it hits that area, it causes severe pain and it causes bloating.

And people can end up burping and having vomit come up their throat. And that's another question that I ask children because parents have no clue. You're like, hey, you know, Do you ever burp and then gooky stuff comes up into the back of your throat and it tastes gross and you have to swallow it?

Yeah, all the time. And the parents go, I had no idea. And I'm like, yes, it's happening. And it happens a lot with kids with constipation. But also, you want to just think about the entire GI tract.

You think about what's going on in the esophagus, someone getting heartburn. But normally, since the tone of the GI tract is meant to be, it's very mobile, it's not supposed to be distended, when you are unable to evacuate literal trash from your body full of toxins, your nice thin GI tract starts to get distended.

And then it gets distended and distended and distended. And you have rock hard dehydrated poop all around the edges. So when that's going on, how can you absorb nutrition coming through the GI tract.

So number one, you become malnourished. You're not absorbing nutrients, okay? Number two, you're reabsorbing and recirculating toxins. You're reabsorbing and recirculating that you were meant to excrete.

And if there were any organisms or toxins within the food that you ingested, then you may end up getting those organisms replicating within your GI tract.

Okay. Now, let's talk about the stomach, the small intestine. The small intestine is supposed to be sterile. But what happens when you struggle with chronic constipation, and we see this all the time with children too, is that the large intestine becomes very distended also, and bacteria migrate up into the small intestine, and that's when we end up with the bloating and then potentially this reflux And in children, they can end up getting recurrent ear infections and asthma because they have silent reflux.

They're refluxing stomach contents because of this massive burden in their entire GI tract. Now let's go downstream. When you're unable to evacuate your body of all these toxins, you develop pain because it's an immune activation.

So you're unable to rid your body of these toxins, your immune system goes, there's bad guys, there's bad guys, and they're trying to put out the fire and you hurt.

So joint pain, headaches, abdominal pain, and When your GI tract close to the size of a tennis court has a sunburn, you just feel awful and you hurt all the time.

So it can impair your ability to think, to process information if you're always struggling with GI distress. So I just think the biggest thing is reabsorbing all that crap, literal crap, and feeling terrible, and it affects every part of your body.

Why constipation can affect the whole body

But cognition, if you have a kid who's constipated, they hurt, they have headaches, they're going back and forth to the nurse's office, their belly hurts, they can't pay attention, and their body hurts.

So constipation is terrible. Well, what is it actually that's causing so is it the fact that there is so much waste and quite literally waste things that we should have thrown away that are causing like a toxic react like what is actually causing the headache and these like focus in all of these neuro issues.

So it's multifactorial, but number one, it's literal reabsorption of waste material. And that can cause lymphatic system overload, our lymph system, so people tend to be swollen and boggy and they hurt.

Now, what's leading to the actual pain? The immune system is trying to squelch this immune activation, all these foreign invaders. And if you don't have enough of that stuff called glutathione, which is the body's master antioxidant puts the fire out.

If you don't have enough of that to begin with, then my gosh, it's like all these symptoms develop. So there's immune factors, cytokines, prostaglandins, that can cause all the pain.

But if you literally don't have the glutathione to put the fire out and then to evacuate your bowels, then it just doesn't go anywhere. It just gets reabsorbed and it's awful.

Yeah. Well, that makes a whole lot of sense. That's why I was like, man, these things can feel seemingly unrelated, right? You're like, oh, I'm constipated and I have a headache.

Like, our natural inclination isn't to go, oh, that's the same, right? And so, but what you're saying is, is that our bodies either are challenged, meaning because we have genetically, we have SNPs, which can you say what a SNP is?

Because we're talking about these SNPs, but can we discuss what it is real quick? So, in our body we have various enzymes, we have various sequences, so there's a gene, but contained within that long gene is one little single base pair change.

It's called the single nucleotide polymorphism. It's not a snip of hair. The other thing is some people call it a single nucleotide variant. So there's differences, but some of these SNPs have such profound implications.

So that's like the take the trash out of the body portion of constipation. Okay, so when we have that already, right? Well, that means everything is, like you said, it's being released into our body.

These toxins that it's supposed to know how to get rid of, it's not getting rid of them the way that it should. Or I love that you said this a while ago, to the capacity it should.

So you may go to the bathroom and if you haven't listened to part one of constipation, she really does describe what exactly your poop should look like and that goes for all people, all ages.

So I would definitely go back to episode one where she really impacts what we're looking for. But when we just have these, what did you call them, rabbit pellets.

And so we think we're pooping and we think we're fine, but it's actually a sign of constipation. And aren't there other things that could look like constipation that don't?

Could you talk about that? Yeah. One thing, though, I think that's really important, a lot of people will say, I'm not constipated.

Mitochondria, genetics, and constipation

I have stool every day. Well, they can have one of those distended totally distended and be impacted with a large stool burden, but they're having loose stool down the middle of it, and they don't know that they're constipated.

So the other big thing that we need to think about when we think about constipation is our mitochondria. So, if you remember back from some kids in junior high, they'll hear about the batteries or the powerhouses of the cell.

Yes, they make something called ATP, which is energy. So, my mind, when a child or an adult presents with constipation, I also think about mitochondria.

So mitochondria making energy for those little muscles in the gut to peristals like we were talking about, what if your mitochondria don't work like they should?

So what would that look like for a child or an adult that might have a mitochondrial component and not necessarily a detoxification component? So when we think about that, we think about children who might not be very coordinated because mitochondria help with the muscle control and coordination.

We think about children that really struggle with inattentiveness or ADD, ADHD, that constipation could be intermingled with that. And weakness and fatigue So, those are some of those things.

Yeah. So, mitochondria are a big part of constipation, too. So, you mentioned mitochondria, and how would we find out that it is a mitochondria? Would it be a mitochondria deficiency, or what would you call that?

Yeah, so in our context, when we do these little precision genetic panels, it's typically on the foundation methylation and wellness panel because the wellness panel has the mitochondria on there.

But specifically, there is one SNP called SLC19A1. That's a single SNP that delivers Vitamin B9 into our mitochondria, if that's affected, we tend to get constipation issues, but you need to look at the, I think there's, I don't know how many mitochondrial SNPs there are, but it's on that foundation methylation and wellness panel, which is pretty reasonable.

And it will show us the entire mitochondrial cascade. And so when we think about mitochondrial nutrients, we use two kinds. We use one called spectrum needs, which you don't have to be on the spectrum, but it's like a mitochondrial multivitamin.

It's like a multi on steroids. It's great. And it really helps adults and children that have mitochondrial challenges. because it has all kinds of goodies in it.

And then the other alternative is using something called Mitocor. Mitocor is like capsules that has mitochondrial nutrients in it. But we look at that whole mitochondrial panel, but you also look at the patient in front of you and, you know, parents are really good about like, oh yeah, yeah, they're struggling with this and that.

But you want to look at those two things. You want to look at mitochondria and you want to look at detox. Absolutely.

Vitamin C cleanse and magnesium support

Okay, so I feel like the problem with so many things that we talked about, which is why I love that you always talk about the genetics piece, Because I do think there are a lot of moms and dads who are doing the best they can.

They are hydrating them like we discussed in episode one. They are giving them the proper nutrition, but this this piece of like genetic piece can be that missing link of going like, I'm feeding them, I'm doing whatever.

And worse is that these foods that are really good can help your body detox, but now you're not properly pushing it out. And so there's so many factors that go into there.

So what is some of the first things that they could start with, or how would they go about getting support in this next step, in this next phase? two things that are very, very beneficial apart from, we mentioned glutathione and mitochondrial nutrients, but the go-to's for us are vitamin C for pooping.

Okay, so there's a form of vitamin C that is a very clean powder and you can actually work your way up to doing something called a vitamin C or ascorbic acid cleanse.

You don't just start taking a bunch of vitamin C because it can give you an acid reflex. So a lot of people go, well, why would I take an acid? Well, vitamin C helps actually alkalinize your body.

So an alkaline body like a safe pH. So when we're building up all these toxins in our body, we are acidotic. So we want to start alkalizing our body and you know the basics of eating like cruciferous vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, asparagus, Brussels sprouts, mustard greens, those kind of things and using mustard and But I love a form of vitamin C where typically you start with about half of a teaspoon and you put it in about four ounces of water, you stir it up, you wait till the effervescence goes away, you wait till the white goes away.

and you drink it in the morning and you do the same thing at night. You do that for about two weeks and then there's this nifty little thing called an ascorbate sea cleanse that you do on a Saturday after you've spent the two weeks building up and you stay at home because If you're full of poop, you know, you've been working on softening

things up with the vitamin C, but you take the vitamin C every 15 minutes until you poop like you do for a colonoscopy prep.

Then there's a way to calculate how much vitamin C you or your child needs on a daily basis to keep your stool evacuated. So that's one big piece. And who would have thunk?

Vitamin C. But it's amazing. And so, yeah, so there's a really famous guy, Dr. Jaffee, and he's published things and come up with the PerpetuC cleanse.

We love that. Now, another very easy needle mover is magnesium. Not all magnesiums are made alike, but a lot of times we'll use magnesium glycinate. Specifically for constipation?

Yeah. Yeah. Okay. or you can do like a liquid clean magnesium citrate, okay? Okay, so before we go into that magnesium, can we know why vitamin C, before doing the vitamin C cleanse, why do we need to do the pre-work for the first two weeks?

Yeah, so if you don't start exposing your body to this very powerful antioxidant, puts the fire out, I've had people that were like, oh, I'm going to do this vitamin C cleanse.

And they literally end up vomiting. Oh, no. So they're like, OK, I'm just going to do this cleanse. So you have to start vitamin C pulls water into the bowel.

And what happens is for that two week ramp up, you're slowly conditioning the gut. You're moving some things out of the gut. You prime the pump. You're already starting a little bit of a clean out.

And then after two weeks, you've situated and exposed your body to the vitamin C on a regular basis. And one thing, you know, I just love my husband. What he does for me is he makes my vitamin C at night and puts it by my sink in my bathroom.

So when I wake up in the morning, I drink my vitamin C and it sat there all night. It's okay. And you can do the same thing for your kids. You just mix it up.

You have it on the counter. It's like, okay. Drink your vitamin C water. And it's colorless if you mix it up. And it's a simple, very simple thing. Now, once they start pooping, remember how I mentioned your gut gets distended Okay, you need to keep doing that or give yourself the amount of vitamin C that you need for at least six weeks so that you know that the bowel has shrunk back down to its normal caliber and the little peristalsis works.

And, you know, when you eat, like if you eat blueberries or you give blueberries to a toddler, you should see the blueberry skins in the poop the very next day.

You should have rapid transit through the GI tract. That's amazing. And so, sorry, I didn't mean to derail you to going to magnesium. So going back to magnesium, what are, so what was the purpose or what does magnesium do to help the body?

With constipation. Yeah, with constipation, magnesium, most of us are globally depleted in magnesium. And so there's different forms of magnesium, but magnesium is also something quite lovely that helps you poop.

So if a person is having a lot of headaches, a lot of body aches, joint aches, back aches, along with constipation, I might choose magnesium, a certain form, over vitamin C.

But I love vitamin C. And you put it all together, you get your squatty potty, and you ramp up on that until you're having a good poop every day. I love that.

Closing encouragement and takeaways

That's really amazing. I really love the tangible ways that you've given us, whether we want to see some genetic susceptibility or genetic vulnerability, and then we have the vitamin C.

You've really given, like, I would say, like, the handy-dandy tool belt of, like, tricks that people can step into. And so, Dr. Kay, is there any closing words that you have as we wrap up constipation?

I would just say don't settle for chronic abdominal pain and don't settle for chronic constipation because that's not healthy. And if people tell you, oh, just take Linses, you know, you're going to have this the rest of your life, don't believe that.

There's a reason for it, and you need to lean into those causes, either mitochondrial, detoxification. Just remember, your body's a symphony, and it needs to work like a fine-tuned machine.

Thank you so much. You're welcome. My pleasure. of just how much constipation can impact the whole body, and most importantly, that there are answers beyond just live with it.

And if you found this helpful, share this episode with another mom or friend who may be dealing with some of the same struggles. You can find links to the resources and more in the show notes, and don't forget to subscribe so you won't miss one of our upcoming episodes.

Until next time, remember, there's always hope for healing.