# Struggling with Mood Swings or Anxiety? Discover How Amino Acids Can Help! Transcript

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## Introduction to Amino Acid Therapy

It's really simple because everything in our in our body, from our head to toe, relies on amino acids for rebuilding, right? So whether it's your enzymes, whether your hair, your skin, your bones, your hormones, all those things, kind of boil down to needing amino acids, especially your neurotransmitters in your brain.

And so we'll use serotonin as an example. So serotonin is like our happy sunshine neurotransmitter. And when that is working correctly life looks really good.

Your glass is more than half full. It's not half empty. You. When when you're empty of serotonin, you kind of feel like you're you're anxious, you're depressed, you have OCD, which leads to all sorts of other mental health issues.

And so when that is functioning well, then you feel good. And so amino acid therapy comes in with therapeutic doses of we'll say L tryptophan or five HTP.

To rebuild the serotonin levels in your brain. You add a few cofactors in there and that will lift that depression, that'll lift that anxiety. This is doctor talks real talk from real doctors.

Only issues that matter to you most. Fully MD podcast I am Doctor Monica hierarchy. And if you are looking for a more holistic approach to mental health, then you should listen in.

Today we are going to talk to a nutritionist who is going to talk to us about her innovative approach to the to how to deal with depression and anxiety in a more holistic way.

So welcome, Laurie Hammer.

## Laurie Hammeru2019s Personal Health Journey

Thanks for being here. Laurie. Oh my goodness. Thank you. Thank you so much for having me. Monica. Excellent. Well, I always like to know a little bit more about how people come to do what they're doing because we all each have a unique path that's really important to the reason that we're that we came to this type of to be this kind of clinician.

So tell us a little bit about what led you to be a Fox impressionist, how you got there and how it led you to work in mental health? Yeah, so I had my own health struggles.

So how many of us start we have our own health struggles and then we're on the path to how do I fix this? So back way back when because I'm 52 now. So when I was a teenager and into my early 20s, I struggled with an eating disorder.

So I was bulimic. So I binge and purged a lot and tried to get into some eating disorder clinics. I wasn't low enough weight. I wasn't suicidal enough.

I didn't really fit those, more extreme parameters. But I was still passing out. I was still having seizures, and I was still bingeing and purging multiple times a day in my life was a mess.

I was in nursing school at the time when I had a friend. She's actually my nursing professor, and she's like, we've got to get you help. And she couldn't find me help. So I was doing counseling.

I was doing all the therapy stuff. I had said no to medication because I just knew that wasn't the answer even way back then. But the cycle was still continuing.

And so I thought if I moved away, that would take care of everything. Well, it didn't, because, you know, you can't avoid what's going on inside of you.

So then she, sent me this informational article from a GNC magazine that her husband randomly got about a clinic, an outpatient clinic in Mill Valley, California, that dealt with addictions and eating disorders.

And the article was on that. When you have these intense craving cycles that you're actually addictive or you're, sensitive or allergic to the things that you're eating.

And they talked about amino acid therapy and how they can cut that craving cycle. So I'm like, okay, let's try it. So I called out there, they said, sure, come on out.

And I and everything, they tested me. Everything that I was bingeing and purging on, I was sensitive to. So gluten and dairy and all those things. I had celiac disease that I didn't know about before.

And so that explained a lot of the gut issues and all sorts of those things going on. And now I know it's a microbiome, but back then it was just you.

You can't eat these foods anymore. And then, you know, adrenal issues, thyroid issues, yeast overgrowth, and then most importantly, I discovered that my brain was just my body was severely deficient in lots of nutrition, which I didn't know at the time.

And they used amino acid therapy to rebuild the neurotransmitters in your brain. And so using targeted therapeutic doses of specific amino acids cut my cravings like it just eliminated them.

And so I was able to overcome the bulimia, rebuild my brain. And then I was able to actually function normally. I could actually think so when your brain is depleted, you can't think, well, you can't work through things in counseling if you don't have the capacity to process all of that information, right, or to process any of the trauma that you went through.

And then when my brain was feeling better, my body started feeling better, and I realized I didn't have as much, you know, drama and trauma that I needed to work through because I could actually understand what was going on in life and then work through everything that was still left over.

And that was my first dive into this crazy functional nutrition.

## How Amino Acid Therapy Works

You know, medicine world. And that's how I got started. And it literally, honestly saved my life. If you like this discussion, please hit the subscribe button and consider leaving us a review.

It really helps people find us and we truly appreciate your support. That sounds really, really interesting. So amino acid therapy not something that I know of, is something widely understood.

So can you explain a little bit about what that is. Yeah, it's really simple because everything in our in our body from our head to toe relies on amino acids for rebuilding.

Right? So whether it's your enzymes, whether it your hair, your skin, your bones, your hormones, all those things, kind of boil down to needing amino acids, especially your neurotransmitters in your brain.

And so we'll use serotonin as an example. So serotonin is like our happy sunshine neurotransmitter. And when that is working correctly life looks really good.

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And so when that is functioning well, then you feel good and so amino acid therapy comes in with therapeutic doses of we'll say I'll tryptophan or five HTP.

To rebuild the serotonin levels in your brain, you add a few cofactors in there, and that will lift that depression, that will lift that anxiety. If that's the reason why you're depressed in the first place, and then you can work on your gut health and then you can work on the hormone imbalances.

So what's left over after, you know, you balance that brain, that neurotransmitter system going on. So as a clinician that is evaluating patients that may benefit from this amino acid therapy, is there any type of testing to tell you what amino acids or which cofactors or where do you start with these type of patients.

Yeah. So you could do urine testing. You could do blood work. You could do those types of things. I personally use a questionnaire because it's real time.

You can use it. And it's actually more accurate that I found over the years than urine testing in those types of things. So it's symptom based. So I have it divided into five different categories for people to fill out.

What's going on. And then we I send them a kit of amino acids in the mail. And there's nine different supplements in there that we try. So we'll get on a call like this.

Whether it's a zoom call. And I actually have patients open up the capsules, put them underneath their tongue, and then we kind of stare at each other awkwardly for a couple minutes.

And then what do you notice going on in your brain or your body for that matter? Could be cognitive, could be emotional, could be physical. And so I often hear clients say my brain feels lighter, feel like they're sunshine coming into my brain.

I feel like this weight has been lifted off my chest. You know, my my shoulders don't feel like they're stuck to my ears anymore, or the noise is stopped around me and I can actually be present in this conversation.

So things happen really fast, which is a beautiful piece of it. And so when they're done with the appointments, there's already hope there because they like, oh my goodness, that particular supplement helped me feel this way.

And then you want more of that. And so then we can rebuild that whole neurotransmitter cascade in your brain and then add the co-factors in so that we know everything's converting well fatigue.

Brain fog, mood swings, weight gain. If you're a woman in your 40s to 70s, you've probably been told that it's just aging. But what if it's not actually healthy?

And we look deeper hormones, nervous system health, hidden toxicities. You're not broken. You just need a doctor who really listens.

## Testing, Treatment, and Medication Considerations

Visit Fully Healthy and Ecom and book a consultation. Today it's time to feel like your. Real self again. That's wow. That's. It's always interesting when we can have some fast results because yes, a lot of times it's hard for patients because it's a lot of time, but it's also our yeah, it's slow.

So in addition to using these amino acids, since you're coming from a functional nutrition standpoint, I imagine that you also work with patients nutrition, lifestyle.

What sort of things do you integrate from that standpoint? Yeah. So we definitely work on the diet. So we want to make sure we have a good foundation there.

So making sure they're not eating, you know the standard American diet work on you know their macros getting enough protein, healthy fats, you know, fruit and vegetables and all those kind of things.

So just tailor that to the individual person. But then also, you know, working on sleep, are they getting enough outside time, you know, sunshine removing toxins in the home and those kind of things.

But don't start there because that can be overwhelming, especially when your brain is feeling anxious and depressed. What age range do you work with? Because I know there's a lot of teenagers that have these issues.

Do you work with teens or is that too young? Oh yeah. No, I work with teens. I work at the little kids too, so I've even had a few, you know, toddlers and stuff that I've worked with over the years that it's very helpful.

So amino acids are just the building blocks to protein. So you do have to navigate some medications depending on what that patient is on. But other than that it just helps to rebuild things in your body okay.

And when you say navigate medications, does that mean that certain people can't do this if they aren't certain medications? Or or what should people know before considering this.

Yeah. So we'll go back to serotonin. So a lot of people aren't XYZ. And so when you're on an SSRI you want to make sure that you're using the amino acids specifically tryptophan and five HTP.

I'm about six hours away from the medication. So it's just navigating timing on all of that okay. So you can take people who are on medication and you just.

Do all the time. Yes. And then we work with our prescribing doc and then, you know, help them navigate that situation. Do you have any prescribing docs that are concerned with your therapy just because, you know, we've as a prescriber, you know, we were on a boy, serotonin syndrome, those type of things.

What kind of conversations do you have with prescribers? Just, you know, that very thing. Most people don't know about amino acid therapy, but people know about amino acids.

And I would say it's very rare that I have a prescriber that's not willing to work with them, you know, acid therapy, because it's such an easy thing to do.

And there's not a lot of side effects that can go along with that, other than maybe somebody doesn't respond to it, or a specific amino acid might give them a little headache.

And then, you know, we talk about navigating the medication correctly and it's very rare that I have a doc that's not on board. Excellent. That's that's good to know, isn't it?

Good to know. Yeah. Because it's so many other things are like, oh my what my doc tells me. No. But I think most doctors in general don't want people on medications unless it's absolutely necessary.

So I think their goal, most of them out there are for people to get the best healing they can. Absolutely. And so not that you would ever take somebody off medication that's already on it, but do you see cases where people are less reliant on it?

What's what's the timeline as far as like what somebody would expect if they're coming to you, they're on medication. What do you tell them about that. Yeah.

So most people who come to me don't want to be on their meds. So the goal most of the time is that we're able to get them off of their medication. So that's a probably about 99, 95% of the time that they're able to, you know, wean

off their medication correctly with their doctor.

And then we bring in the amino acid therapy alongside of that. So it's it's usually pretty I wouldn't say easy, right. Because medication withdrawal getting off medications is never technically easy.

But I would say the amino acid therapy minimizes the withdrawal symptoms from those medications. And then when people get off the medication, do they need to stay on these amino acids forever, or is that something that you just kind of get repeat to some extent, you can just manage it with lifestyle and nutrition at some point, or you swap out a pharmaceutical pill for, okay.

Now you don't want the swapping, right?

## Lifestyle, Gut Health, and Root Causes

We want to get people to the place where they're just using it as tools, you know, as a boost. You know, I'm like I said back in, it was in 1996 when I first started using amino acids.

And so there's stress in our lives will get depleted. And so it's just learning how to use these to replenish when you need to. Like when my mom died, you know, I took a few of the amino acids for a few weeks because it was hard.

The grief process really depletes. We place your brain, depletes your body. Right. And so then I would use them to give myself a boost there. So my goal is to teach people how to use them when they need them.

And then if you don't need them, you don't need to take them. Excellent. Are there any patients that you feel like are not the right type of patients to work with you, somebody that you exclude for any reason?

Not really. I mean, you just have to have the mindset and to give it enough time. The amino acids work quickly for some people. They don't. I mean, there's always that subset of the population about 10%, where it just takes longer most of the time.

You know, people feel really great within 90 days. And, you know, then we can, you know, navigate past that time. But sometimes it just takes longer for people to feel well enough not to use the amino acids or to stick with it long enough to see the results, you know?

And that's just the challenge. So if you don't have a lot of patients or you're not willing to work 3 to 6 months, you know, on this, then that's probably not for you.

Okay. And apart from sticking with it, doing the regular visits with you, seeing how the amino acids, how they respond to the amino acids, are there a set of other things that you have people do?

Because I know as a prescriber, I was want to make sure that before I prescribe something, I make sure people are going to therapy if they have some way of doing exercise or at least increased movement.

What else is in the toolbox to help these patients? Yeah, we're always talking about movement food. A lot of my clients are on, you know, they see a therapist.

And so I think that's really key in that as well, if that's something you need to to do, a lot of people don't. So after they're on the amino acid therapy they're like, I think I can deal with life now.

But yeah, we're always, always working on making lifestyle, making our are what are good. Trying to navigate rushing women's syndrome I would I would call it as my friend Minnie Pearl says, because we try to do too much as women.

So trying to help people navigate like what's really important in their life, and so we can weed out the things that cause us to be stressed in the first place.

And some people need to, you know, dive deeper. I mean, you work a lot with, you know, co-infections and Lyme disease and, you know, all that kind of stuff in the past.

So getting people the right kind of help they need is really important as well. Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. I think people always love hearing about cases, success stories.

Is there a certain case obviously we can't name specifics. We can't divulge that. But without naming too many specifics, is there a certain case that stands out in your mind or something that you're like, hey, this is somebody who had a great result?

Kind of what how they started, what their progression was just so that our listeners can kind of wrap their brain around what it would look like once somebody sees you.

Yeah. So one that comes to mind is I had a she's mid mid 30s and she came to me on five different medications. So we'll talk a little bit about, you know, a success story of medication.

Some. And her goal was to get off her meds. She'd been on most she'd been on and off a lot since she was 12. But those five medications for like ten years, she had a great prescribing, physician and so is able to work, you know, through all that with her and we're ten months out and she came to me and she was very depressed, very anxious.

A lot of OCD issues. Didn't like to leave her house. She worked from home. So that made it more convenient to stay home. And now she actually just ran a marathon.

She's very active. She started dating someone like she'd been single for quite a while. And she's off all five of her medications. She's feeling and she looks like a completely different person.

I just said to her the other day, because her eyes are so bright and she's just got a smile on her face all the time, and she just looks beautiful. You know, she looks like somebody who actually enjoys her life now.

And it's just really fun to watch. That's amazing. That's amazing. A lot of the patients that suffer with depression, anxiety, or at least those that are willing to talk about are females and reproductive ages.

Is this something that females that are either pregnant or breastfeeding, something that they can do safely, or do you just need to wait until after pregnancy?

Breastfeeding I've had a lot of women over the years use the amino acids because there's let's just be honest, there's not a lot of studies because we don't study pregnant women and breastfeeding women, you know, with medications and things like that.

So I can't say that there's backed by a lot of studies, but I have a lot of women that they're like, oh, well, I could either go on an SSRI or I could use L tryptophan, which would be better for my baby. Right.

And just really great outcomes. And they're the building blocks of everything in your, in your body. So amino acids are generally pretty safe. Again, if you're pregnant or nursing you do need to chat with your, you know, your doctor or your midwife or whoever you're using for that.

Excellent. And I'm sure that you find some cases are a little bit more challenging than others. All of us clinicians have cases that always will great, and others that are just seems like they drag on.

Is there something consistent that you found, those that don't have the success that you would have expected? Where does your brain turn to like, is there something that you go to routinely to say, okay, let's try this differently.

Let's try this other part. What's your how do you, flush out those problems? Yeah, usually it's like a hidden infection of some sort when people don't respond.

And that's usually, you know, raising their cortisol up really high. And that just kind of keeps you in that anxious state. So we'll do some testing. I like DSG testing for cortisol and hormone issues.

And then if we need to we can dive into those co-infections, whether it's Epstein-Barr virus or Lyme or mold exposure. Those are the things that usually keep people from getting well.

I do see a lot of people that have, some vaccine injury, especially from, you know, the Covid shots and those kind of things. So I would say that that's a new factor that we hadn't dealt with before, but it really changes your microbiome and your gut.

## Success Story and Special Populations

And so we need to work on that again. Yeah. Oh yeah. A lot of new things that we're just learning as a medical community. Yeah. What sort of since you mentioned the microbiome and the gut, do you do any gut work with patients, any testing specifically for that?

That's not just, what kind of testing treatment you do for the gut. Yeah. So you to be focusing so much in functional medicine. Yeah. Because we definitely need to.

It's a gut brain connection. Right. We got to deal with both of those. And so yeah I'll do gut testing whether it's food sensitivity testing which can, you know, disrupt your microbiome or like a gut zoomer or some other type of, functional gut testing.

You know, we'll definitely dive into those things. I use a lot of pre pro post biotics, you know, a lot of gut healing protocols. So we're always working on the gut.

If we can heal the gut and the brain, life gets a whole lot better. Yeah, absolutely. And that's what I've seen in my practice too, that if if the gut's not addressed, it's kind of hard to it's impossible to heal the brain.

And so as optimistic as I would want somebody to be when they're doing amino acid therapy, I wouldn't want them to ignore that part. Mars. Like, how do we can do the amino acids?

But let's not forget that we have to have to have to address gut. And the other thing hormones. And my thought, Monica, is, you know, when you this is what I've seen.

And when you calm the nervous system down, when you calm the brain, when you nourish the brain, then the gut heals better and faster. So if we can calm all of that down, then your gut has the opportunity to.

To heal a little bit deeper. Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. I deal with a lot of people who struggle for a long time healing their body. And, they've done everything right there.

Yeah, on the right nutrition, taking the right supplements. But until I get them into 80, structured limbic retraining. Yes. That is really what finally helps them make significant progress.

And so, yeah, healing the brain can't heal the body also. So gut brain connection. I love limbic retraining. That's amazing therapy. Yes. Absolutely. Is there a specific limbic retraining program that your patients have had more success with?

Because I know there's I always hear about different ones coming out. I always refer people to them. But it's I never get a consistent response as to which one I don't either.

I have clients try lots of different ones, and, you know, mixed results depending on, you know, which one. But I wouldn't say I haven't seen one that works way better than another one, or one that just doesn't work.

So I think it just depends on what's the best fit for the client. Yeah. Yeah, that's that's what I found too. But I always

like to run that by. I know it's always such a good question I wish I had one was like, this works all the time, but I don't have that.

Yeah, it would be great if we knew there was just like one thing that always one thing. There's never one thing. Is it nothing? No, there never is. Absolutely.

Yeah, that's that's a lot of really, really hopeful information for people that are struggling with depression, anxiety, because that's just one of the main issues that we deal with as, as a society, especially with all, our kids growing up and just being more on social media, they kind of have replaced that social connection.

They think they're connected, but they're not really. Do you have any specific advice as far as using screens, gadgets, social connection? What sort of direction do you give to patients in that sense?

Yeah. It's so hard for teens, right? Because that's how they're connected. So we start with nighttime if at all possible to, you know, shut those devices off.

We start with 30 minutes, then we work to an hour. And then if we can get the teens to leave it alone for like two hours before bedtime, we see much better results with sleep.

And, you know, just getting in that deep sleep.

## Sleep, Daily Use, and Key Takeaways

So we have that reparative mode. Adults seem to be a little more willing not get down on your phone for at least 30 minutes after you wake up, you know, go outside first.

You know, go for a walk, do some exercise before you open up that phone and, you know, face what's coming at you for the day. And then, you know, like like myself, I try to not look at my phone like, just like three different times during the day, you know, morning, noon ish and then night time so that you're not stuck on it all the time.

So stopping the scrolling, it's a lot easier when your brain is balanced. You're not looking for that dopamine or that endorphin hit. So if we can balance those specific neurotransmitters, you're less likely to want to keep scrolling and get sucked into the deep pit of Facebook or Instagram or TikTok or whatever it might be.

Yeah, yeah, it's it's hard. It's hard at all ages. You know, we we kind of say we get on to the teenager for doing that. But as adults, we're now I was always.

Scrolling on stuff. Right. And so just disconnecting from that habit. Yeah, absolutely. And as you said these amino acids are building blocks. Building blocks for all proteins, neurotransmitters, not to serotonin, but also melatonin.

Do you see people's sleep get better, even if that's not the thing that you're targeting? Yes, absolutely. Sleep definitely gets better. Because we'll use them at night before bed.

So, you know, tryptophan, Gaba, you know, whatever they need to help them sleep deeper. Okay. Are there any amino acids that use in the morning or are they basically just mostly nighttime therapy?

No. We use them all during the day. So I have a lot of clients that will take them, you know, 2 to 4 times a day because we'll burn through them pretty fast as your body is healing.

And so, I don't use like, tyrosine or delfino alanine or alpha alanine at night because those can be a little bit stimulating for some people. So we tend to avoid those at night, but they're really great for during the day, you know, for focus.

Yeah. Depends on the person. Depends on what's going on. Yeah. Yeah that's great. And we all know I sleep a lot better. Everything else is easier the next day. Oh my goodness. Right.

If we can just sleep well like so many things clear up. Yeah I know next day you're feeling better. Your appetite's regulating. You're not crazy. And all that junk food that you're not supposed to have had.

Definitely such a plus. Won't get people sleeping better, more motivated to exercise. But that exercise. And so it just kind of like starts coming together nicely once we get those things together.

This well, this is has been a really, really interesting conversation. I love it when we have more tools in our toolbox than just the medications that we know about.

A lot of things that people can do for depression, anxiety. But adding this amino acid therapy, I definitely is, is a great beacon of hope for, for a lot of people.

So I know we talked about a lot of concepts. If there is just 1 or 2 things that you want people to make sure they remember after this conversation, what would those things be?

I would say that there's there's always hope. So if you feel like you've tried everything, there's there's other things out there that you can still try.

And so I feel like amino acid therapy is one of those things that people miss. We can't medicate away a nutrient deficiency. We actually get to fix the nutrient deficiency.

So that's my goal is to, you know, educate people and to encourage them that it's, you know, we say it's all mental health, but I really think it's a severe nutrient deficiency in there.

And why we have the mental health issues that we do in this country. Yeah. Very, very interesting. Thank you so much for being with us, Lori. And we'll make sure to have, your website on our show notes so that people can read up on any other information.

And we really appreciate it. Thank you so much for having me. I appreciate all that you do. Thank you. Thank you for tuning in to Doctor Talks. We hope today's episode has enlightened and inspired you on your path to optimal health.

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