## Introduction and Dr. Josh Helmanu2019s Background

Welcome to this episode of the Reverse Alzheimer's Summit. I'm so excited to introduce you to my friend Dr. Josh Helman. He's a Harvard trained physician, licensed in 14 states.

He has two degrees in biochemistry. And he's board certified by the American Board of Emergency Medicine and the American Board of Lifestyle Medicine, his medical degree from Harvard and MIT.

And he's the former medical director of Hippocrates Health Institute. And he's worked at True North Health Center, which has a focus on fasting, on water fasting.

So he has this incredibly unique experience, plus this impressive pedigree. And so we're here to pick his brain about all he learned along his journey so that you can get the benefits from his knowledge and experience at home.

Welcome, Dr. Josh. Heather, it's really fun to be here. So we got a chance to meet each other in person. In person? Yeah. That was so fun at a conference recently, and I just was so impressed by.

By your background. Again, it's just so unique and no one has your quite your skill set or I mean, everyone's is unique. But when I heard about yours, I was just like, oh my gosh, I could talk to you for hours and learn from what you've seen with your patients.

So were you just tell us a little bit more about the different places you've worked and what you've done there? Yeah, but I think what's important for people to understand is I started off very traditional.

So I, you know, I got two degrees in biochemistry. I, I actually started off in general surgery and switched to emergency medicine, went through the full, you know, residency training.

And then I'm licensed in 14 states. So I worked all around the country. So I've seen acute medicine, I've seen, you know, chronic diseases and how we try to manage them in emergency rooms and, you know, how they'll use emergency rooms for second, third, fourth opinions on these chronic diseases that don't have one quick, you know, fix in in most cases, you know.

## From Conventional Medicine to Fasting and Integrative Care

And so then and what was that transition like going from conventional medicine towards, you know, you've been at a water fasting clinic, which is pretty extreme by anyone's measuring stick, right?

So how did that transition happen? You know, it's funny from my perspective now, it's natural. It's something that our ancestors, hundreds and thousands of years ago had to do because most of the time food wasn't plentiful, you know, every season and every every month.

But for me, the motivation a dozen years ago was some personal medical issues. Specifically, I was 50 pounds overweight and I and that I had high blood pressure and I couldn't figure out how to fix these problems, even though I had all this traditional training.

And that's how I kind of went into the alternative world. But frankly, integrative. I mean, I'm I still write prescriptions. I'm still a fan of traditional medicine.

But when it comes to chronic diseases that may have 10, 20, 30, 100 different underlying root causes, I've learned you can't eliminate any possibility, in my opinion.

Right. Definitely. I think we're all fans of the emergency room when needed. Right. If I had a car accident, please take me straight to the emergency room.

No question about that. There's a place where conventional medicine really, really shines and certainly where you were in the emergency room. It does.

Although what I the story you hear from so many of my friends who are in that conventional M. D. role is burnout, is that it's really not healthy. You know, you can show up in these long shifts and especially through residency, you're sleep deprived and then you're trying to make life or death decisions for other people and care for other people.

And you might go in with this really ideal, ideal mindset about helping others and maybe getting that schedule where you don't have to take a lot home with you as an ER doc, but then people end up burnt out.

It was that part of your, your journey. Oh yeah, definitely. And part of it is, you know, some people have to work, you know, the midnight shift just because people have emergencies in the middle of the night.

And we know now we didn't really know or I didn't know 30 years ago when I started all this that that shift work was really awful for the brain brain function.

But we certainly know that now. So that's one thing that adds to stress. Another is that, you know, I love hospitals as institutions, but often they're very authority top down driven.

And for someone like myself who's creative and wants to pull in treatments from lots of different approaches, you know, I would I would, you know, ruffle some feathers sometimes because I didn't necessarily want to prescribe the first, you know, follow guidelines rigidly when, you know, unfortunately, not every patient is going to follow the guidelines.

And, you know, a patient might not have just one condition. They might have five. And you have to balance everything together. Right. Treating the individual instead of just going back to the algorithm.

And so you were on your journey. You had you were at Hippocrates. And then at True North, what were the biggest takeaways from your experiences at those places?

Yeah, I would say that both of those places I would see on a daily basis people get better from chronic conditions. And you know, in the case of Hippocrates, it was eating a raw vegan diet.

In the case of True North, it was, you know, eating plants or, you know, in addition to water fasting or, you know, in some cases juice fasting for, you know, between a week and 40 days.

So one of my takeaways from that was it wasn't sometimes necessarily the fact that they were eating plants as much as what they weren't doing. So if someone is is water fasting, they're not putting in things into their mouth that are pro-inflammatory and, you know, added salt, oil and sugar that can can definitely wreak havoc metabolically.

## Diet, Processed Foods, and Personal Nutrition Choices

So but the one I wish that the conventional physicians could actually see this because if they could if they could see people who had had chronic conditions for decades, just within the course of 1 to 3 weeks, many times these things go away.

And, you know, we talk about reverse of these chronic diseases when, you know, you never literally never see it in conventional medical treatment. So and that's why from from this perspective, having treated thousands of patients that way, you know, to me, it's natural to consider those things.

But but you're right. Going back a dozen years before I had that journey. Yeah, I can I can see from that lens it's different, it's alternative. And, you know, I've I've talked to some of my classmates from Harvard Medical School

and they're like, wow, you do fasting.

That's that's so dramatic. I'm like, I guess, I mean, to me, it's natural because that's the way it works. And the standard American diet is pretty dramatic, right?

If we talk about what's dramatic, especially if we compare it to what our ancestors were eating right, a fasting mimicking diet or a fasting diet or a vegan diet that is much less extreme than like Cheetos, right?

Oh, oh, 100%. Yeah. Yeah. And the takeaway, obviously, is that processed foods are not good for you. But, you know, I think back to not only what I was taught at Harvard Medical School, but what I saw in the in the in the cafeterias.

You know, the food normally is most of it highly processed. You know, I remember talking to a Harvard dietitian 30 years ago, and she said that every morning as part of her class, she would learn how to bake muffins and other cooked goods.

I'm thinking this is ludicrous that that we put such such an emphasis, and I understand those foods are addicted, addictive. And I was certainly addicted to them as an intern and a resident.

And and, you know, going through this, you know, traditional medicine. But if people are willing to take a step back and in my journey, it didn't happen overnight, it took me literally years to cut out some of these addictive things.

But I'm so glad that I did. And, you know, I have patients who, you know, when they have a diagnosis, whether it's cancer or Alzheimer's or whatever it is, when they want to make changes quickly, many of them are able to make changes quickly.

But some people, like myself, it had to be a gradual approach. And and I think everyone's different and I certainly have empathy because for me it was hard to make all these changes all at once.

So tell me where you landed on as the best diet for you and why? You know, so for me personally, I like a mainly raw diet, raw plants, fruits, vegetables, you know, some whole grains.

And I try to avoid added salt, oil and sugar. I'm not perfect, but I know from the studies that those things, those three substances, sure, they're highly addictive, but they will promote early aging.

And in the mechanism, one of the mechanisms is they lead to blood vessel destruction through through the endothelium, through the the very fine, very small blood vessels.

And and that's one of the origins, because you're as healthy as your blood vessels are. And so this is the reverse Alzheimer's summit. You've been talking about reversing chronic disease.

That's one of them, and particularly a complex one with devastating consequences.

## Fasting, Refeeding, and Brain Health

So what are some of your takeaways you have? You have work specifically in the Alzheimer's space after leaving to you know, you were at a clinic that was very focused on neurodegenerative disease.

What were your takeaways in terms of fasting and diet as it pertains to brain health? Yeah, so so it's interesting fasting itself. I found like when I did a water fast and when I met one of my patients did them, I found them.

Fasting was associated with lower energy. So for me I couldn't work. Now there's some people who can work when they fast. Having said that, the real magic of fasting, I believe happens when you stop fasting and start re feeding and it's in that process when you know you've gotten all these toxins and other bad actors out of your body and when you start re feeding, that stimulates actually the production of your own stem cells, including stem cells in

your brain.

And that itself leads to better cognition and better brain function. And so with fasting, is there something that you recommend in terms of getting support for that rate?

I'm sure some people are listening to this and going, wow, that's really extreme. There's no way I'm going to starve myself. That sounds like an eating disorder.

And then there's other people going, Well, how do I even get started? What would that look like? Is it is intermittent fasting sort of like the the gateway drug here?

Or do you recommend a 40 day fast right out of the gate? How do people get into this? Yeah, so so the first thing is to understand that there is no one right way to fast, just like there's no one right way to exercise.

And what's really cool from the biochemistry is the biochemical changes when you fast are almost identical to when you exercise. So and I don't recommend people exercise and fast at the same time, just to be clear, because that leads to muscle breakdown, which most people do not want.

So, so but in terms of the ideal way to fast, I would say if to me the purest way to fast is water fasting, just drink water. Whether that's for three days or a week or 40 days.

And I would recommend, if you're doing them for more than two or three days, do it under medical supervision just because even even I found some of the healthiest people I've seen will get reactions from water fasting.

So at least a true north. You're monitored twice a day. You've got people rounding on you. It's a safe environment. Now there are some some doctors doing fasting via telemedicine.

You can seek that out, but don't think that you have to start there. I think intermittent fasting or specifically just choosing a feeding window, whether that's skipping breakfast every day, you know, maybe only eating from noon until 8 p.m.

or, you know, whatever time zone works for you, you know, or maybe only eating one meal a day, but what I found is that the more you fast, the easier it gets.

Just with just same with exercise, you know, if you're if you're not exercising at all, you know, just walking around the block is going to be amazing enough.

And for you that is going to be perfect. And then once around the block can go to twice or three times around the block. So so what I would say is, you know, seek out an expert if you want to fast.

But but you don't need an expert to start. Just start skipping breakfast, for example. And so with Alzheimer's specifically, we know that toxins play a role in fasting that as you mentioned, it's a way to not put some toxins in.

And can you kind of just like take the threads through that align and and tell us what's going on, their diet and toxicity and Alzheimer's, how do they all connect?

## Toxins, Detoxification, and Inflammation

Yeah, so so one of the things that happens if and when you water fast or take some of these other fasts, fasting, mimicking diet, that you've got choices when you do these things, you're correct.

You're you're not putting toxins in your mouth. But the other exciting thing is that at least with some of these fasts, as you become key topic, you know, guess what, if you're only drinking water for a few days, your body by definition is going to need calories and it's going to get it by creating ketone bodies, and it's going to get some of that from the visceral fat cells in your body.

I mean, I showed it with myself when I water fasted and we replicated that at True North with some other patients by doing DEXA scans and looking actually and watching the visceral fat is a type of visceral fat is highly inflammatory fat that that surrounds organs like your liver and kidney and heart.

It's normally not a good thing to have, but it's the most metabolically active fat, which is why your body will go after it first. So it's a win. But as it's going after this visceral fat, there are many fat fat based toxins, whether it's PCBs or forever chemicals or similar type of fatty toxins that will get mobilized in this process of of of the body using the visceral fat cells.

So just in the process of fasting, your toxin level will gradually go down in time while you're fasting. That's great. And so then toxicity and inflammation.

How did those interact or relate to each other? Yeah, so many of these toxins, for example, whether it's DDT or PCBs or BPA. Maybe you be exposed to these different things.

Yeah. So it's sad. It's now in the rainwater. I mean, I, I grew up in Los Angeles and, and I know now that DDT was, was used, was produced in Los Angeles and then ended up getting dumped in the water between Los Angeles and Catalina Island.

And so, you know, I grew up growing up, went to the ocean, you know, and and unfortunately, was exposed to some of those toxins there. But it's in the water is also in our food chain, which is one of the reasons I recommend people eat mainly plants, because the higher up you eat in the food chain, you're going to get a much higher dose of these toxins.

So and studies have shown that that the vegans will have about ten times lower levels of these toxins because they're eating lower on the food chain. So it sounds like it's almost impossible to completely avoid them.

But if we can make choices to reduce our exposure and then keep our I'm sure it's like part of it is about just keeping things flowing, right? Like using our body to detoxify where we can.

Then we'll keep the inflammation down. That's that's part of it, definitely. Yeah. And so do you have any other recommendations for detox and other than dietary changes?

Yeah. So some other approaches that I've seen work are colonics where you're irrigating the colon with with water. That's, that's one approach. Another is we kind of talked about it is exercising when you exercise your sweat and mobilize toxins, the same thing if you want to do it's a sauna.

That's another way to to mobilize sweat, which is, you know, one of these ways to to move out toxins. Another is for for lowering inflammation levels is going to be getting adequate sleep like we talked about, too.

So those are those are some simple, simple ways, simple approaches. To getting toxins out of the brain. Right. Sleeping so important for that. Right. Right.

And then and then there are supplements that I like to found is the body's master detoxify or so if you're if you if you take a lipophilic glutathione, that's one approach.

And yeah, so so there are many different ways to, to try to minimize your exposure. But one thing that I don't think people understand is that when you when you talk about PCBs and these fatty toxins forever chemicals, literally, they can live have a half life in your body of like 30 years.

So we're not talking just about your exposures today. We're actually talking about some of the exposures that you may have had, you know, in utero or breastfeeding or, you know, from a very early age.

So it's not just what you're doing today, even though doing what you're doing today is important.

## Infections and Root Causes of Dementia

But, you know, I've seen people with mold toxicity, the mold fatty toxins that they were exposed to basically as little kids. Right. Yeah. Have it. They can really persist.

And then your experience with Alzheimer's, how much of a role does infection play in the neurodegenerative process? It's it's common and not every case is going to have the same infections.

But it seems to be a common theme of the patients I've treated. And and there's studies that have shown that exposure to Spiral Keats, including Lyme, the Lyme Spiral Kit and syphilis, are two famous ones, are associated with a ten times higher risk of Alzheimer's.

So it's a real deal but it's not just the the spiral keep bacteria. There are also viruses like HSV herpes simplex virus number one. There's also parasites.

Many of these parasites can actually within the parasite itself can store viruses and bacteria. So that seemed to be a common theme, is that infection in many cases are are a factor.

But the key thing is, you know, people are listening this and say, oh, I've got to treat my infections. Yeah, you may, but you have to do it carefully.

And what I found the best order to do is to detoxify first, because as soon as you start talking about killing bugs in your body, that normally will mobilize lots of toxins in other sub infections that have been brewing, often for ten, 20, 30 years. Wow.

And when you look ahead ten, 20, 30 years, what do you see as the future of either the diagnosis or the understanding or and especially the treatment of dementia?

I think it will be, I think 10, 20, 30 years. People will start to appreciate what you and I both realize is that that that the the root causes are many that you could easily have 30, 40 or even 100 different root causes.

And I think people will start getting more comfortable with not only identifying or diagnosing 30 causes, but then also figure out how to treat and coordinate the treatment that this this is a complicated, complex disease.

And, you know, in many cases, it's not going to be one magic drug or one magic lifestyle change that you basically have to layer them on. You have to stack them up.

And and I think people will start to understand that just just like, you know, we understand that, you know, if you're trying to fix your car, you know, unlike, you know, 40 years ago, things were pretty simple.

But if you're trying to fix your car today, you need like to analyze the computer, etc.. I think I think we're going to start having artificial intelligence and machine learning, be able to analyze for each individual person, oh, here here are 50 causes.

And and these are the top three that you should start worrying about right?

## Future of Alzheimeru2019s Treatment and TB006

Well, that's an exciting future to look forward to. Hopefully the technology will save us right now. The opposite, Dr. Josh, I want people to understand where they can find out more about you.

Sure. So probably the easiest way is it's going to be through my website, which is just drjosh.com D R J O S H.com And my email address is drjosh@drjosh.com D R J O S H @ D R J O S H. COM And then I'm on all the social media, including TikTok, where I'm D O C T O R J O S H M D (@doctorjoshmd) is on TikTok, but I'm on the other social media and I love that as a as a framework to get the message out to as many people as possible.

Well, thank you. That is so generous of you to share your email address and to be so accessible. You have collected a wealth of experience and of course information as well.

And I know that so many of your patients really benefit from that. And so thank you for doing the work that you do. Is there anything else you want to share with our audience?

Yeah, I know this isn't going to be aired immediately, but I'm really excited. There's a there's a brand new immune modulation treatment that I'm I'm getting set up to offer.

It's called TB006. And it goes after after one factor in inflammation, or at least the early the early results that we're seeing are amazing in terms of not only reversing Alzheimer's, but not causing the brain swelling and the bleeding that we're seeing with other treatments.

And this is available intravenously. And and I also recommend layering this on with with the other traditional, you know, supplements and lifestyle changes.

So getting. Rid of what caused the inflammation in the first place. Is exactly getting after the root causes. Yeah, super exciting. Yeah. We learned about the TB006.

You you went much more in-depth than I did, but we both saw this at the conference we were at and were like, Wow, is this the thing? Is this that IV that might make so many people better, that might reduce the suffering and the costs and expense and heartbreak associated with dementia.

And so that is a really exciting kind of look towards the future. And they were you explain a little bit about how that it's research. So it's a it's research based and so people have access to it because they would be study subjects in a clinical trial.

And right now they're essentially looking at safety of it. There's quite a bit of data, but they're doing the FDA, checking their boxes, going through the FDA process to get enough safety data to then go into a phase three trial, right?

That's exactly correct. And it's been approved for compassionate use by the FDA because the data have looked so good that they're like, no, you don't have to wait six years until this is a final approval.

Like, we want to get this out to the general public, but we also want to make sure that what we've seen so far that there aren't any serious side effects.

We want to make sure that that continues. Yeah, and that's such an incredible option for people. Really, really exciting stuff. So thank you for being one of those who is making it available.

Dr. Josh, it's such a privilege to be here with you. Thank you for joining us. Likewise. You know, and Heather, thank you for what you do. And let's definitely do this again.

Love it.