Introduction and Speaker Background

Well, welcome to the MS and Neuroimmune summit. this is Debbie Ozment she's a good friend and a colleague. She is a dentist who has, made some remarkable discoveries and insights that this radical thing known as our mouth in the microbiome has a huge impact on our health and our vitality.

Dr. Ozment is there anything else that we should add, to your bio that I've left out? Oh, I just love people to join me on my on my, podcast, Vitality Made Simple.

Where, where we got to be friends and, just to learn how to feel better in every, every area of life. Yes. You know, and I, I did leave out that she's a diplomat of the American aging of anti, aging medicine, which is a very exciting and emerging, area, just as well as the Institute for Functional Medicine.

and so, Dr. Ozment is very, very well trained. So, you know, I like to have people start with a success story. do you can you think of some of your patients, perhaps with a neuro or neuro immune condition that you were able to help turn around.

Oh, I this is a great question, Dr. Wahls, because what comes to my mind, is a woman who initially came to see me referred by her physician. her husband had her arm, brought her in, did her talking for her.

We, identified what was happening in her mouth in terms of her oral microbiome. There's some key pathogens there that greatly, impact neuro immunity. And we identified those pathogens we we dealt with them.

It was pretty simple, actually. And, she was also doing, of course, some lifestyle strategies with, you know, things that, are totally in line with the walls protocol.

Real food, primarily for her. But interestingly, after, some periodontal therapy, very. people will know what that term. Oh, okay. Basically, we cleaned her mouth up.

Basically we dealt with these. We tested to see what bugs were in her mouth. We dealt with those bugs that were in her mouth. I made videos for her, actually, with with my phone.

I videoed me showing her how to do her homework. So every night she started watching that, doing her simple homework, not brush and floss. Terry, that's not that sounds good, but there's simpler ways.

And, three months she came back and she. She said, I drove myself. I'm now driving myself. My my brain is back. And it was absolutely astounding. Okay, so everyone hear this very closely.

This woman came in, she was having such brain fog. She really could not communicate reliably.

Patient Success Story and Oral Microbiome Testing

Her husband was taking care of her, driving her around and doing the conversation for her. And in just three months, she is again safe to drive and she is communicating freely on her own.

Oh my goodness, that is so exciting! wow. and. Is this part of your routine dental dental practice then, that you are teaching people that how to take care of their mouth?

absolutely. my practice is now limited to physician referrals for people who have, inflammatory neuro immune autoimmune conditions. I no longer do restorative dentistry because this area is so exciting.

So so what I do typically is a saliva test, a very simple swish and spit test that identifies the pet, the pathogens, 11 different pathogens that are in the mouth.

And we know these are keystone pathogens that relate to different areas of the body. In that particular woman, she had high levels of a bacteria called Pfizer bacterium nucleus.

That's a big name for a, bacteria, but it causes all kinds of problems. She also had a bacteria called paw from Mona's Gingival as PG or column PG and f n.

Well, we know that PG, can damage the blood brain barrier. And of course, that is so key in any, neuro immune condition because the blood brain barrier, being compromised is a part of, you know, all those conditions.

Multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, autism. Can I have you back up just a moment? And, tell our listeners, what is a blood brain barrier?

The blood brain barrier is is sort of like a fence. it's a it's a semi permeable barrier. So it's supposed to only let good things in and keep the, you know, keep the bad things out.

Now, we used to think that it was like a single layer of cells, but now it seems to have more than one layer. And this, this blood brain barrier protects your brain, protects your central nervous system from from viruses, from bacteria, from parasites.

You know, all those things that say, if you step on a nail, then that's supposed to protect you, to protect your brain from that inflammatory process.

But, but but now we know that these these, oral bugs, these, these pathogens, these oral bacteria that, that are the bad ones or that can go bad, some actually start out good and go bad, doctor walls, but, they can actually make holes in the blood brain barrier.

So when that happens, not only do these, these bad bacteria have access into the brain, but they also, once they get there, they start that inflammatory process, that demyelinating ization, they, they start, you know, they they start a bad kind of party, they start a riot.

And, and when that happens, then things can get back out into the circulatory system. So when that barrier is not working, it's really a dual problem.

Things get in and things get out. And this inflammatory, fire just continues. And then, what? Let's talk about the oral microbiome. We said that there are these 11 pathogens.

You've named two of them, and are they, in particular, a problem for multiple sclerosis? in other neurologic type of, issues? yes, they are in, you know, there's probably about 700 species of bacteria in the mouth.

But this the particular test that I, do when patients come to see me test for 11 and, they've really been well tested. This test came out in 2010. And since then, you know, the research has just exploded.

Yeah. So that, one in particular, a fuser bacterium nucleus atom is one that is really, of particular interest to me because I've seen it in 100% of people with neuro autoimmune problems, 100% at high levels.

You know, we, so I do clinical research in the setting of multiple sclerosis, and, in my study comparing the low saturated fat diet and the walls that we were collecting poop, which was, a big challenge because poop people cannot poop on command, you know that. So, and they don't really like collecting their poop, and shipping it back to us.

and so, in my current study, we're collecting saliva. and, I'm really looking forward to seeing the analysis, at the end. And we'll be using artificial intelligence to look at the relationships between who's going in the mouth and what

kind of clinical outcomes they have.

Blood-Brain Barrier and Neuroimmune Disease

do you think that, this is a test that, every neuro immune patient should be having to guide, what they're doing? Absolutely not. The test I'm describing is, by oral DNA, and it's in it's a doctor administered test.

But there's also, the Bristol test, which is, a home test that people can order. I've heard, in fact, heard you talk about it on, your other programs.

It's an excellent test, and it's going to show she's a bacterium. It's also going to show poor firmness. Now, Fuser bacterium is so key because it's a gut disruptor.

So it starts in the mouth. We know that it's an oral pathogen. And in but it travels to the get it. It has an affinity for for messing up the gut. And so you know, that's just so key for any neuro immune challenge.

we, as you talk about so expertly, if there's always a gut problem and that's really where, where it's initiated, where the problem is initiated. Yeah. You know, Alessio Fasano has said that all autoimmune disease starts in the gut, that, and of course, I, I think the vast majority in perhaps he's right.

It is all and, yeah, my point of view is that if we have, a standard American diet, standard westernized diet, we're feeding the wrong bacteria throughout our microbiome in our mouth.

in our eyes, probably, in our ears that our in our entire gut, in our skin. And, for most people, for most of my patients, it's way easier to collect saliva and do the oral.

the oral, test than it is to get them to do the poop test. And I have more confidence that I have an accurate assessment. And I think, doctor walls, that we can safely extrapolate that if the bacterium is, is high in the mouth, it's going to be high in the gut, it'll be because the same factors that, you know, potentiate it.

Are there systemic factors? Because it's so interesting. I found a 2023 study just recently talking about a good bacteria called necromancy. And, you know, a lot in there if people are listening to the gut health.

There's a lot in the news about Aquaman's here. And, Aquaman here is is a good bacteria that helps, the the gut lining. It helps decrease leaky gut. It helps decrease, all the things that Doctor Fasano, has as well studied and, Aquaman.

Yeah. Will decrease vs a bacterium in the gut. It's it's the first time I've ever read anything researching this all the time that necromancy decreases vs a bacterium.

Now, if Aquaman's. Yeah. In terms of all the foods that you talk about, with, you know, three cups of cruciferous, three cups of colorful berries and, three cups of leafy greens, those are foods.

Many of those foods are foods the necromancer craves. The leaves, pomegranate. It's it loves onions. It loves, avocado. Just, you know, lots of those good foods help bloom.

Ackerman's here. And then, in turn, necromancy is going to help. Is that with you? So. some of the things that that, we're observing is that it's also the community.

Yeah. It we have less confidence in individual species, but we have a lot of confidence in the collective. so in my clinical trials we're seeing that, there are some bacteria that individually can be good for us.

But when the wrong company become actually very bad for us, so is that does that match what you're seeing as well? Absolutely. Thank you for bringing this up.

You know, it's it's it's all about relationship. And these these bacteria live in biomes and in communities, with, you know, similar surroundings, similar climates infuse our bacterium.

That's one of the things that's so interesting about these are bacterium. It's a bridging species. so it really never works alone. It makes other bacteria worse.

In fact, it can actually, like, energize, a bacteria, a good bacteria, and make it bad. I jokingly call, fuze a bacterium, the mother in law bacteria.

Because, you know, I know you're a mother in law. I'm a mother in law. You know, if we if we go and just stay a short time, where it's all good.

Gut-Oral Microbiome Connections

But if we go into our, son in laws or our daughter in law's houses and we, tell them what to do, and we stay too long and move our stuff in and move their stuff around, then we, cause of comes and then that's that's exactly what Fuzhou does it.

Fuzhou is actually a commensal bacteria. So at low levels, it's a good it's a good thing, but it's when it overgrowth and you know, overstays that it becomes a problem.

But it is key. The key research currently on Fuzhou is that it it it it bridge. Is it just makes it makes these bacterial communities, the, the pathogenic communities worse or worse.

you know, do we have any, bridging bacteria that make, bacteria more health promoting that can, you know, shift the, community in a more cooperative, helpful direction?

Not that I've read about, but what what does shift the community is, is real food, because for several reasons. one very important reason, though, is that it modifies age.

It makes the pH at the mouth more alkaline. And when that happens, that naturally suppresses these, these bad bacteria. So so it always comes back to real food.

Doesn't dairy. Yeah. And is that a reason to think about taking more, you know, potassium bicarbonate or sodium bicarbonate. is that a good thing or is that maybe not a good thing?

Because we're decreasing the acidity of our stomach? What what are you telling your folks? I'm telling my folks to, increase their fiber. You know, I have them, you know, start low, go slow, and and work themselves up to at least 30g for females.

real food fiber. in on up to, you know, their comfort level. Now, that seems to to modify naturally there. So I do have people checking their, when they first their salivary pH when they get up in the morning.

And that seems just sort of naturally alkalis, in that way. I know some, some people have talked about, adding, a tablespoon of apple cider vinegar to water and drinking that.

and I know that sort of makes dentists nervous because they're drinking, putting acidic things into our mouth and our teeth. now I'm curious what what are your thoughts?

What the. Oh, so I think it's fine. In fact, my my dear mother in law had a friend who, lived past 100. She was one of those people that, you know, lived like 102 years and had two bad days.

she just, you know, she was having fun the whole time until the very, very end. But she drank, a tablespoon of apple cider vinegar every night in a glass of water.

And you know that I think it's really beneficial. I think it's a good thing to do in simple and inexpensive. Okay. So everyone, there are simple things that we can do that are, very affordable, very easy.

I'm thinking the episode of vinegar also has, the mothers. It has probably some good microbes in it. So there are a lot of good things in, apple cider vinegar.

And, I personally like to take fire cider, vinegar during the winter. so a tablespoon of that, because it's my perception that that helps reduce the risk of upper respiratory infections all winter long.

and so, I, I, I like that a lot. And then sometimes I'll mix it with my, olive oil to make a little dressing and, put that, on my salad greens as well.

So how did you get started? You know, you're a dentist, you're into drilling and filling, and I assume, but that's not what you do anymore. How did this change happen to you?

Well, I had this this sort of beauty practice. You know, I love people, and, had a patient who, who always had trouble with her gums. And she was one of these people.

She was, quite a a celebrity in Oklahoma City. So she worked all the time, and, but her gums always had this weird, spongy look where she comes in, and she looks great.

And I'm like, what are you doing differently? And she's like, I'm just doing what you told me. And I'm like, no, you're doing something else. And when you think of it, tell me, you know, quizzed on everything.

Diet, pH, and Helpful Microbes

doctor, what's this had to be like 25 years ago. And, it came down to it. She left and she came back and she said, well, Debbie, I'm, I'm I'm getting vitamin D injections.

And so. Yes. So think 25 years ago and I'm like, whoa. So I start researching vitamin D and that started this, this deep dive. And then, you know, I started going to cardiology classes because we knew that these oral microbes affected the heart.

So logically. Yeah. Yeah. And and then, then this, this saliva test came out and then, you know, and then there was the American Academy of Dental Hygiene Medicine.

I did a, I did a had a, got a masters in Metabolic Nutrition through a medical school of functional medicine. medical school is on and on. And you know how it is.

You know, I've talked about that privately. It's such an adventure. Once you get started, like, oh my God, it is so invigorating to learn, like, wow. It is. Wow.

And so that biochemistry that was such a chore in medical school is now like, oh my gosh, is so exciting to read. Exactly when my high school friends like you were addicts in high school, what happened to you? Now you're a nerd. I'm like, thank you.

You know, that's a super compliment. But there is so much to learn. And then I started seeing, you know, people's medalist increasing and, their health span decreasing, the healthy years they got to enjoy.

So that just totally invigorated me. And then, a real breakthrough happened in about, 2013. A physician referred me a patient that, wasn't sick, but her C-reactive protein, her measure of inflammation, a blood mark on inflammation was 18.1.

And and, of course, you know, C-reactive protein has a lot to do with neuro immune problems. It's often very high. Well, in this particular patient, we did a saliva test.

You know, she she didn't look, her mouth looked really pretty good. I would have ignored it before. but I, I did a deep cleaning. I use a laser. I, you know, I use ozone.

I have my procedure. I wasn't using ozone, actually, when I saw her get. But but a pretty simple procedure is my point. And, no antibiotics though, and, so.

Cleaned her up. That's the only thing that changed. She went back to see her physician, and her C-reactive protein had plummeted to 2.9. So 18.1 to 2.9.

Now, incredibly, her cholesterol improved, her blood sugar improved, all these other blood markers improved. And so that's really when I, you know, went on these.

Sort of like. Deep dive. Yeah. It affects everything. Well thank you so much for joining us today. And I hope you found this conversation insightful and engaging.

and if you're a summit purchaser, stay right here because we're going to dive even deeper into this captivating conversation. And if not, click on the button below to the side and get access to a world of information, because we'll be talking, a lot more about what the mouth has to teach us.

Get ready to reclaim your health. Now, if you're watching this, thank you for being a valuable member of our community. Let's dive in. So there's a fellow Western, a price in vitamin K2.

And I want to hear your thoughts on on. well, first vitamin K2, and then we can talk more about, Western price. Well, it's so interesting, doctor walls that, you know, Weston Price was a dentist, but he's the dentist that no dentist have ever heard about.

We didn't learn a thing about him. in school, he sort of came on my radar as a result of, you know, all this additional functional medicine training and, he he went out and just sort of studied the populations of the world back in the, like, 1930s and found out that they had they had straight teeth.

They didn't have cavities. They they weren't having airway problems. they were healthy and vibrant. And, so he started trying to figure out what's so different about us.

And he, and he discovered it's basically the food we're eating. So, you know, we're back to your awesome book, really, which is about, you know, not only about food, but food is such a key stone marker of health.

And so, of course, K2 is in, you know, all these leafy greens, you know, all of this real food. And and when people started eating more of the process, ultra processed foods, the things that, we thought were so, so fun and convenient, in the 1950s and 60s, then they started getting sicker.

How Dr. Ozment Shifted Into Functional Dentistry

You know, and so, goodness, listening. When when I was growing up, the milk cows ate grass. And so we could tell that their milk became very rich. The, cream was much richer.

And, the cattle and the hogs were out in the field eating grass. and they ate hay during the winter, which was dried grass, and alfalfa and clover, and now most of the core, most of the milk comes from cows that are housed inside eating corn.

And most of the meat is come from, a large confined animal feeding operations that are housed inside eating corn. They're not eating grass. And so the meat, in the poultry, the meat from the hogs, the swine, the beef, don't don't have much vitamin K in them anymore.

Right. So when I read the literature, the, blood levels, Ms.. Patients are remarkably low. Vitamin K, two levels, and, in the population in general, also we have much lower vitamin K two levels.

Do you have any comments as to what that means for, we we'll talk first for our mouth and our teeth and our bones, and we can talk about what this might mean for our brains.

Well, I think we're we're designed for that vitamin K, and when we leave anything out that's essential, you know, we're going to suffer and it's not going to be an immediate thing.

It's going to be, you know, this slow, insidious, oh, I'm tired. And and as, as you and I talked about earlier, you know, people too often just settle for not feeling good.

They they think, oh, I'm just getting old. I'm not. You know, there's nothing I can do about it. now, from a personal standpoint, after after reading Western Pride and attending the Wise Traditions conferences, we're drinking raw milk at our house, so, we don't drink anything pasteurized anymore.

I know a lot of people can't do can't do dairy, but it totally changed my perspective on, you know, these, commercially raised cattle even even to, the extent of the antibiotics that they're being given.

Yeah, yeah. Forget, forget health. So, the, the vitamin K, when I look at that, that improves the ability for the, teeth and the skeleton to take up, calcium.

Magnesium, and this, special form of calcium, that our teeth use hydroxy, hydroxyapatite. Hydroxyapatite? Yes. Yeah. and, can we get that in our food supply?

I mean, where does that show up? Is that or do I have to get that from, special toothpaste? Oh, I don't I really don't, I don't I'm not an expert in that area at all.

Now, I know it is in a lot of toothpaste these days, but so many toothpaste, they're really not on your teeth long enough to. To make. It make a huge difference. I mean, it's great to use those.

I think a factor that we really need to discuss here is fluoride because. Yeah, let's let's discuss fluoride. It's going to inhibit the, absorption of so many of the minerals.

And fluoride competes for the thyroid receptors. So so of course, you know, your as your thyroid is your master regulator of your body that's going to affect any neuro immunity.

Everything affects everything. I think that's, such a key point to, emphasize is that everything affects everything. Doctor walls and and what I found in my work, is that even early, early, early, gum bleeding is a big deal in terms of neuro immunity.

Like, so many times in dentistry, we have ignored early bleeding. We've like, oh, you know, your gums are bleeding a little bit. No problem. Let's just watch it.

No, I would tell every listener, if you have any gum bleeding, it is absolutely affecting your central nervous system for sure. So, and now in my practice, I give people a fresh toothbrush and I say brush really, really hard.

If you're approaching hard and I'm going to come in and I'll brush really hard, so they brush really hard, and then we pull it out and then we look for blood.

What now?

Vitamin K2, Fluoride, and Gum Health

You what were you doing to sort out? Were people bleeding? Well, you know, I'm using sharp instruments to see if they bleed. So a lot nicer than me. But.

But one thing I have people test themselves with, are these little these little brush picks. These are just these are

something very simple, that very affordable.

Forgettable, more clearly. So where do people find these, called gum soft picks? Where do you think they're soft? You can find these at any drugstore.

At any, big box store at Walmart. They're, online, but they're they're very inexpensive. They're plastic, which I don't like that they're plastic, doctor Wells.

But at this point, this is certainly a very safe place for people to start. Now, the thing, the thing that makes these different is that you can't hurt yourself and you want to get in between your teeth and scrub this, this biofilm, like this.

You know, these, this community that you mentioned. It's not one bacteria. They all they, they live in, a biofilm. A protected biofilm they secrete. Yeah. Like calcified material.

They are on there. So you just have to get in there in, like, scrub scrub way down there under your gums. You know, where the sun doesn't shine. And, and keep that biofilm disrupted.

That's what these do. They keep the biofilm disrupted. It's, you know, it's a you want to have a good dentist who's going to address every single bit of bleeding.

But if, if your guns are bleeding with brushing, then, you know, you're pretty far along the spectrum of disease. you want to be aware that any bit of bleeding is a big problem.

So, the simple things that our listeners could do to improve their mouth health, we've already obviously been talking a lot about food. and I think, if I picked up correctly, you want us to probably brush and floss our teeth and also get these gum picks and to, use that gum pick between each tooth.

let's scrub the barnacles. You know, there's two sides almost everywhere. Just grab so you can hear it. Okay? It's squeaky. when we scrub that and we do that once a day, once a week.

Once a day, once a day, that the biofilm will start reforming in 24 hours, once a day. in, in terms of simplicity, I really like to start with simple things.

there are a lot of, awesome mouthwashes and all that out there, but for patients, I say get started using some, naturally harvested, sea salt water to rinse your mouth.

That, there's a there's an easy to find brand called Baja Gold that is, tested for impurities. I tested for microplastics, for heavy metals, as well as for pesticides.

And I'll just have people make a little salt water and, you know, do a vigorous swish. That's a great starting point. I think the fewer barriers that we can.

Now. remove. One of the things that I, I've like, had people do is to do an oil pull with, sort of swishing around, a teaspoon of oil in their mouth and then, you know, spit it out in the waste can, And then I chase with, saltwater.

Awesome. that is a fantastic stick protocol. I think oil pulling is incredible. Thank you. Enough. Why don't you describe that a little more detail? Because people may not understood from my basic description what to do now?

Get a about a, you know, a half a teaspoon. It's going to expand in your mouth, of either, you know, organic coconut oil or organic olive oil, organic if possible.

And just put it in your mouth and you're going to swish so vigorously, you're going to you're going to be thinking about pushing that oil through your teeth.

Practical Mouth Care Strategies

So, you know, you're I don't know if you can hear that on the recording, but you're going to be really swishing aggressively. And, you'll, you'll read things that you need to do it for 20 minutes, but I tell I tell my patients, five, five, five minutes, whatever you can do, because that's going to stimulate saliva and pretty soon you're going to need to spit it out.

So you want to spit it out in the trash can, but it's an it's a diabetic mouth cleansing system. And it really, really, really works. Now doctor walls I, I've not seen research or experience that it you know unloads my dishwasher.

You know that it does everything in the world for your life or your body. But when you keep your mouth cleaner, that is going to help you head to toe, as we talked about, it's going to help your blood brain barrier.

It's going to help your blood sugar. it's going to decrease the chances of everything that's going to steal your healthspan. And, it's very, very anti-inflammatory, very inexpensive.

I love that you're telling your patients to do that because, it's everybody can do that where they live. The reason I found these brush picks, I was on a medical, mission trip to Nicaragua.

I used to go a lot, and there I would see, you know, basically, were taking teeth out all day, but there would be people who, would come and have me look at their teeth, and they would look fantastic.

And they were using what they called chew sticks. So we were out in the, you know, jungles of Nicaragua. And here are people with these beautiful teeth.

So they were getting a little twig and tearing off the outer part of that twig to get it soft. And they were using that in the same manner. two rub between their teeth and, you know, they weren't in the line to get teeth removed.

They had gorgeous teeth. And and that correlates with, you know, more resiliency, just, you know, better health overall because these oral bags, they travel and and really the teeth are the last to go.

When you think about dentist, you think about teeth. But I really implore people to think when you think about your mouth, think about your body first because, your teeth are, you know, you're going to probably take your teeth to glory.

You know that your teeth are the last to go. Absolutely. When it comes to, these oral bags. Okay.

Where to Learn More and Closing

This has been a wonderful conversation. I'd like to have you tell our listeners where they could find you to learn more about your wonderful work. Oh, well, thank you for this opportunity.

you can find me on my website, drdebbieozment.com you can, I do a research update every month. So, these, these research articles I've summarized and put on there for you to read, they'll be very to inspiring, I think, listen, you know, join me on the podcast Vitality Made Simple.

Dr. Wahls was on recently. that has been one of the top podcast Dr. Wahls I've had more text about that podcast. You've helped so many people. watch my Ted talk.

it's called their forgotten Orifice. So, just check that out and join me on Instagram. @drdebbieozment Okay, well, this is wonderful. Thank you so, so much for being part of the MS and Neuroimmune Summit.

Well thank you.