Introduction to Parkinsonu2019s and Constipation

Welcome back, everyone, to the Parkinson's Solutions Summit. I am your co-host, Dr. Sandra Scheinbaum. And I have with me today a very special speaker.

Her mission really resonates with me. She believes that healing is always possible. And her training is so impressive. She is a naturopath. She has also trained in acupuncture as well as homeopathy and in functional medicine.

Today, we're going to be talking about a subject that might be embarrassing for some people, so they may not bring it up with their doctor. And that has to do with bowel functioning, specifically with constipation.

We're going to talk about how this is a big problem amongst people with Parkinson's disease. So let's start. Take it away, Carol. I'd love if you could tell our listeners about who you are.

A little bit about your story. Well, thank you so much for having me in this really phenomenal summit. And it's part of my mission because Parkinson's is not like a super duper fancy illness.

Some illnesses such as breast cancer, which is also my specialty, know it's she she unfortunately. But Parkinson's is less well known and it is impacting more and more Americans as people age.

How did I get to Parkinson's? I you know, I have a family member who has this illness and his father had this illness. And I really specialize in chronic disease.

I'm interested in understanding the metabolic nature of just not breast cancer, but infertility as well as Parkinson's, as well as emotional stress. So anything that's a little deep in the functional medicine world really piques my interest.

Now, let's talk a little bit about Parkinson's disease. People are very familiar with the tremors of intention and the difficulty with the movement of the legs.

And then there is this constipation problem. It's difficulty eliminating and there can also be swallowing problems. And all what all of those symptoms have together is a decrease in the smooth muscle movement and smooth muscles.

B6, Diet, and Hydration Basics

One of the items that they need to function properly is vitamin B6. And unfortunately, the medication for Parkinson's, which is carbidopa levodopa, it decreases the serum B6 levels extensively.

And this is not well known in medical Parkinson neurology treatment. So one of the first things that I recommend is taking a very specific form of vitamin B6 at pretty, what people would call high doses.

B6 is a water soluble supplement. It's a vitamin. It doesn't there's no such thing as B6 toxicity that people can be concerned about because you need to support the smooth muscle movement, not just in the neck with the esophagus in swallowing, but your hands and your legs and the small and large intestines.

So let's take it a step further. Let's dive into the standard American diet, the standard American diet literally quadruples the cancer rate. Now, I know we're not talking about cancer here, but Parkinson's and cancer have a similar thing in common, which is called inflammation.

So when you have inflammation that leads to chronic disease, the standard American diet with processed foods, unhealthy fats, not enough nutrients from vitamins, from fresh foods and organic vegetables, it leads to a diet which is lacking essential fiber.

Unfortunately, when you go to your regular doctor and they tell you, well, you don't have enough fiber, if they even say that, the response is, here's some Metamucil.

Now, Metamucil is like eating cardboard. Metamucil is not going to increase the fiber in your intestines. And the other component of this is if you're not drinking enough liquid.

Then what happens when you use Metamucil is the intestines. Just sop up all the Metamucil and they it gets dry and it makes it more difficult to eliminate properly.

So how do you combat this? First, you need to really make sure you're pushing your fluids. And what I recommend is measure out eight cups however you want to do it.

Put it in a cup. Pyrex, measuring cup, whatever you need to do and make sure by the end of the day you have finished your eight eight ounce glasses of water, which means you're going to the bathroom to urinate quite often, but that is going to hydrate your intestines.

If you're drinking enough water, you should probably need to urinate every hour or every. And maybe you have a good bladder. You can do it every 2 hours.

But that's how you can tell you're getting enough hydration in your system. And then you need to take a deeper dive into how you're eating. Where are you getting real fresh food?

So fresh food is not anything out of a box. It's not something that comes frozen and then you put it in a microwave. Fresh food is organic vegetables that you steam or you saute salads that you make in the summer.

It's wonderful to eat salads in the summer. And notice I'm saying organic often because I believe that organic, when it ever possible is the way to go.

And I'm sure you agree with that also. Sandy, Right? Oh, absolutely. Now, why is organic so important? Because Parkinson's, one of the aspects of it is that there is a difficulty in processing exhaustion is or chemicals outside of your body.

And when you eat non organic vegetables or fruits, they've been sprayed. And so even if you wash them, you're still not getting that spray that's saturated the produce out of the produce.

And so you're thinking you're doing something good for yourself by eating steamed fresh broccoli. But actually, broccoli is one of the A number one chemicals where when you spray it, the positive antioxidant and cold.

So paraffin is removed. It's killed actually by the spray. So people say to me, I can't afford organic. It's too expensive. I actually have done a lot of research about this.

If you stop spending money on boxed food, you will be able to afford fresh produce. When you think about the amount of money that went into taking out the real nutrition, putting in the chemicals, putting in the dyes, designing the box, having the box made that is then contains that food item that is expensive compared to a farmer is growing food.

You go to the farmer's market, you go to the Whole Foods and you buy something that's not in a box. And there are lots of easy ways to cook steamed vegetables or sauteed vegetables.

There's lots of online places to get good recipes for, so you don't need to get bored with your salad or your steam or baked vegetables. So you're increasing your fiber.

That's number one. You're increasing your you're increasing your nutrition through life food. And the third aspect is something called what I call a smoothie.

Now, people like think, oh, a smoothie is a banana and peanut butter and milk and maybe sometimes even put an ice cream scoop in there. That is not a smoothie.

That's a dessert. That's dessert. And very few people should be eating that way most of the time anyway. So what is a smoothie? A smoothie has specifically a pea isolate protein in it or whey and both of those need to be organic.

Organic Foods and Anti-Inflammatory Eating

You do not want to go to Costco and buy some kind of normal, what they call normal, isolate protein. You have to be very particular about you bought what you buy.

And then I put in two scoops of organic dark flax seeds. The reason it's they're dark is because they contain more linoleic acid, which is a beneficial fat than the light version.

And the reason I say flax seed as to as opposed to ground flax is that when you grind flax, it's a very sensitive oil and it oxidizes very quickly. So you want to not use ground flax, you want to get the flax seeds when you bring them home, you want to put them in a glass jar and keep them in the freezer or the refrigerator because they're very sensitive to heat.

So if they get too hot, that beneficial oil will oxidize and turn into an unhealthy and not a good tasting fat that you want to when you put it into your smoothie.

So one or two scoops of the organic pea isolate protein or organic whey, two tablespoons of organic dark flax seeds. And here comes the mucilage in this item, which is chia seeds.

Chia seeds are these little tiny dark seeds, and they're easily found in any health food store. Once again, look for the ones that say organic. You can start out with two teaspoons.

Now, if you want to see what chia seeds does, take a teaspoon, put it in an eight ounce glass of water and just let it sit. And within, I don't know, ten, 15 minutes, if you go to stir it, you'll see that it's become this mucilage and it's a blob, which is what you want in your intestines, because that is going to help propel everything through the intestines and out your body easily so you can start out with one or two teaspoons of chia seeds and you can increase it if needed.

The other item that I use is organic, either fresh or frozen blackberries or blueberries. In the summer. It's nice to use stone fruit, peaches or nectarines.

I don't recommend using banana number for two reasons. One, it's a very high glycemic food. It has a lot of sugar in it. And number two, banana is what you want to eat if you're having loose stools, you don't want to eat it.

If you're having a problem with constipation and then you want to put the liquid in there. So it's about a quarter to a half a cup of this fruit. And then the liquid is eight ounces.

You can use water, you can use nut milk, you can use a combination of water and not milk. Notice I'm not saying cows milk. I do not think you should be putting cows milk in your smoothie.

Cows milk can lead to constipation. It can lead to inflammation. And we want to reduce that. So when you first start making your smoothie, you may make it with eight ounces of liquid and you may say, you know, it's too thick or you may make it with eight ounces liquid and say it's too thin.

It's important to realize that when you first start making your smoothie, you may not like it. You may have to figure out, oh, I need more liquid or I need less liquid, or I want a little bit more fruit in the summer when it's warm out.

It's a nice thing to put it in, to put a frozen some frozen ice cubes in there and put the fruit that's been frozen in there and makes it a little frothy.

Sometimes you can change up the recipe, You can put in a little bit of coffee, a scoop of instant decaf coffee if you want to make it taste like a coffee milkshake.

So there are ways of altering the recipes so they taste good and it should taste good. I don't want to drink anything that tastes not good myself, and I wouldn't want to recommend that for the community that I'm serving.

Wow. There is so much to unpack here and so many practical tips. Thank you. So I'm going to go back to water. Is it just water? What about if people say, does ti count coffee count?

I'd heard somewhere that if you are drinking coffee, you need to even increase your water intake. But can you comment actually just be pure water? What about sparkling water.

Store coffee does not count. And if you're having a difficult with your tremors, I do not recommend drinking coffee because that will increase. Or it can increase the intensity of your tremors.

You need to decide that for yourself. Coffee doesn't count. Black tea does not count, but herb tea does. Okay. I think sparkling water maybe you like if you're drinking eight ounces of sparkling water, you can count that as four ounces of liquid.

I don't think it is 100% equivalent to water. You know, they have these powders that have stevia in there that you can make a drink out of that doesn't you don't want to be eating, drinking that stuff.

It's not healthy for you. You can put lemon slices of lemon in your water. You can put ice cube, you could put fresh lime squeezing in there. You want to keep it as real to nature as possible.

It doesn't you know, we've been brought up to drink soda. Soda doesn't count soda, just in case everybody doesn't know this soda is detrimental to your health, even if it is sugar and stevia free.

It's not anything that you want to be spending your money on which and then you can take that money and put it towards organic produce. What? What else?

Oh, drinking coffee. You need to drink more water. You know, I think that we've been brainwashed.

Smoothie Recipe for Bowel Support

You wake up in the morning and the first thing you do is have a cup of coffee. I would rather you wake up in the morning, eat a high protein breakfast if you're not intermittent fasting, and then have your coffee at ten or 11:00.

Now, coffee in my definition is not a Starbucks crappy sugary thing. Okay, let's get that really clear. Coffee is organic, dark coffee. If you want to put a creamer in it, I would recommend a coconut or almond creamer.

I do not recommend putting sugar in it. Sometimes people have to retrain themselves to drinking coffee with coconut creamer. It's actually quite delicious.

Yeah, I love it. And I'm assuming when you say water, you're not referring to tap water. I heard a report that 45% of this country's tap water is contaminated.

So would you recommend a purified water and perhaps avoiding bottled water? Well, that's a very, very important topic. Thank you. Now we're getting into toxins in the environment which influence inflammation.

Right. So when you go to Costco and you buy these big plastic things of lots of little water bottles or bigger ones and you bring them home, here's here's the truth.

We don't know how hot the plastic got when it was being transported into the store. We don't know how long it sat. And so when plastic is exposed to heat like that, there are byproducts of the plastics called BPAs and B assays, and they get into the food product, whether it's water or tomato products or whatever, it gets into the food.

So you think you're doing great. You have a whole bunch of these in your car and it's summer now and you leave your car and it gets hot in the car and you go in and you drink this warm water or you bring home these bottles that you spend money on in the store and you put them in the refrigerator.

But those byproducts from being exposed to heat are still going to be in the water. So I recommend buying a water filter. And I have I know Sandy also knows these people.

There's the Aqua true company. You can buy an under the sink filter, but you can also buy this fantastic filter that sits to the buy on the countertop, which is what I have in my house.

And it's when you think about how much money you're spending on these bottled waters, that is then giving you exposing you to chemicals in your body, this is well worth the investment.

It's not doesn't cost that much money. So I agree there's fluoride is often in water. And actually it's very interesting thing about fluoride. Nobody has ever asked you, do you want fluoride in your water? Yes.

There's no studies on fluoride as how it impacts people across generations age groups. There hasn't been any studies on the dosing of how much fluoride they put in the water, so there must have been some huge relationship, shady relationship between the fluoride companies and all these cities and the dentists making us think that we need fluoride in our water when we don't because fluoride actually helps keep leach calcium out of our bones.

Right. So fluoride is not doing a favor. It's doing somebody else a financial favor, but not us. So yes, I'm a big proponent of filtering your water. Yes, I am.

I have a reverse osmosis down at home and a whole house water filter because those chemicals get in your shower. Guess other sources of in your home. So and I carry a not a plastic but a stainless steel I carry go.

I have this. Yes exactly. Yeah. I'm going to ask you a little bit more about constipation. What is it? I think there's a lot of confusion. Some people think, well, I'm not constipated and I go once a week.

So what would be. Oh, my goodness. Oh, my goodness. What would qualify? There are people like that or who are not sure what constipation actually is. Can you shed some light on that.

Thought 100%? That's a great question. I'd say over 50% of Americans are constipated. Constipation is not just that you eliminate once that you eliminate once a day.

People think that's great. Actually, if you're healthy in your bowel habits, there should be a major elimination and then two little minor ones. So that is the definition of not being constipated.

If you are only eliminating once a week that's setting up a situation in your body called auto toxicity. And what happens then is the fecal material stays in your intestines and the toxins that really ideally need to be eliminated every day are reabsorbed.

So you are not there's no way you can feel well if you're only eliminating once a week and that's that's a serious problem from a functional medicine perspective.

And it's one of the first things that practitioners deal with is outside of anything else, if we don't get you eliminating first every day, at least once, nothing else is going to get better right?

Right. So constipation is not as healthy. Bowel habits are eliminating every day one major movement and then two smaller movements. Wow. I think there's a lot of people not meeting that criteria.

Water Quality, Fluoride, and Filtering

What can we do? You mentioned basics for the smooth muscle. Is there anything else that would be helpful? Magnesium. I've heard vitamin C, Anything else you would recommend?

Well, there is a whole neuro support protocol that utilizes amino acids for Parkinson's disease. And that's really not the topic of this conversation.

And that's a little bit out of the box of standard medical treatment. So let's just put that on the back burner. But I'd say most Americans are nutrient deficient.

And one of the ways you can discover where you are with your nutrients is to work with a functional medicine practitioner or naturopathic doctor. To do a Genova diagnostic is the name of the lab.

It's called Nutrafol test. And what that does is it looks at all of your current vitamin and nutrient levels and that is a really great baseline to get started with.

As you then you can really customize your supplement regime. And if you can't do that, the best thing you can do is get a very high quality supplement supplements that are made to pharmaceutical quality standards and get a multi vitamin, right, a multi vitamin and mineral.

And you need to make sure that you're taking enough vitamin D three and D three. In my when I work with people, I recommend 5000 iu a day, not 2000 or 1000.

That's too little. And most doctors do not check your vitamin D level, but you can ask them to check your vitamin D because there is an enormous amount of research about the relationship between vitamin D level and inflammation and not feeling well and people have vitamin D levels of 20 now, which is very sub clinical and it's actually dangerous.

So if you get a vitamin D level of 20 and your doctor wants to give you a 50,000 IU dose of vitamin D, there is no such thing as 50,000 IU dose in nature.

How we get vitamin D right now it's beautiful. Sunny day out. You walk outside, the sun hits your face or your arms or you're on the beach or whatever, and that sun is hit, hits your skin, and then it's transferred from an inactive form to an active form of vitamin D in your skin, through your intestines and your urine. So in the winter, nobody is out there doing this, right?

So and also in the summer, a lot of us have a very inside work life, so we're not going outside during the daytime. So it's natural that we should be vitamin D low.

And that's why it's a very easy supplement to take to increase your levels. I like vitamin D levels to be 55 to 75, and as a functional medicine practitioner, that's standard reference range for us, right?

Thank you. That is very useful. Can you comment somebody who is constipated, they go to their doctor and they're put on Metamucil and now they say, I can't get off it because I won't have a bowel movement without it.

How can somebody who is a match predictor and go on, let's say they are interested in doing other strategies as you've been discussing? Great question.

Well, I think that the Chia Seeds are a great substitute for Metamucil, increasing your fiber and starting with if you can't do this smoothie at all, the ingredients are too much for you.

It's very easy to find organic chia seeds. Just start with the chia seeds, put them in water. They don't taste bad and drink it. As you increase the chia seeds, you can decrease your Metamucil so you can go slowly.

And the other item I forgot to talk about, constipation is a probiotic. Okay, so you want to there's lots of probiotics in the health food store and you want to ask that most health food stores have somebody who specialize in vitamins and you want to get out probiotic that's in the refrigerator section because it'll be a better version of a probiotic.

Defining Constipation and Daily Elimination

You want to get one that's dairy free. They have powder options that you could put in a smoothie or you can get a capsule and there's spore based biotics.

So it's a really good idea to replenish the health of your gut. With some probiotics, you can easily eat prebiotics. Probiotics are easy leave found in fermented sauerkraut or fermented pickles, and you may go, Well, I don't like sauerkraut.

If you eat a teaspoon of sauerkraut or kimchi every day, you are feeding your gut with the probiotics that it needs to help. You have healthy eliminations.

I love it. These are great suggestions. And I want to add that these are the kinds of things that health coaches can help people with. So if you are feeling overwhelmed and thinking, I don't know if I can do this, if you have a caregiver who is saying, I don't know if I can help in these areas, then looking at the possibility of working with a health coach.

So your present. Thank you and I love your message that healing is always possible. And can you comment on some of the mindset that somebody with Parkinson's who might be thinking, Oh, I can't do this, it's all overwhelming and just doesn't know where to start or just feels very, very discouraged?

I think the message from Standard Medicine is one of that. And so the more you can put yourself in a bubble of positivity and listen to podcasts which are going to support healthy movement and healthy ways of eating and all of this is free, it just costs money to go on to YouTube and do and listen to podcasts, you know, And instead of watching some program on television, which is not going to really move you forward, you can listen to a podcast where they talk about positive mindset, where they teach you how to do yoga or something, or if you can't get out of your chair.

I mean, there are chair positions that you can do in yoga positions just from sitting movement is health. And don't underestimate even 5 minutes of movement, how it can shift your physiology in your brain, in your gut.

And the more you move, the healthier you'll be. So I think movement is critical because Parkinson's is a disease of constriction. It's a disease where metabolically more and more is taken away from you and you want to really work very hard to keep as much of you as you can.

And our society doesn't really talk about work and health.

Supplements, Probiotics, and Vitamin D

You know, work has a negative connotation, but work gives you positive benefits for maintaining your health. And wherever you are, if you've let certain things slide, you can get some of that back.

You don't need to be where you are. You can move up. And as Sandy said, health coaches are great for that and it's very important to get the mindset support because mindset from where I sit, whether it's Parkinson's or breast cancer or infertility or whatever the illness is, is the beginning of health and transforming your life.

You have to believe that you deserve to get better, even if it's a little bit sometimes a little bit makes a big difference in the quality of your life.

Oh, that's so beautifully said. And the psychologist in me is thinking back when I was practicing psychologist and I did work with people with Parkinson's and all kinds of imagery around flow around, you see the expanding

expansion of the breath as you inhale and just the power of imagery to imagine stillness went a long way.

But I want to just touch on something you said about movement and how that could be helpful for constipation. If you care to comment on that. Movement is it stimulates your smooth muscles whether it's in your hands, your legs, your esophagus and your intestines.

Movement stimulates smooth muscle, and the more you stimulate your smooth muscle, the more easily the fecal material is transported out of your body. So, you know, the beauty of functional medicine is that the message is it's not just to Parkinson's, right?

It's also your lifestyle. It's your mindset, It's how you're eating. It's how you're spending your free time. It's the quality of your relationships. And that is the beauty of a functional medicine approach towards illness and disease.

It doesn't matter what the disease is. All of these strategies go into helping people recover their health to restore their life. And so when you have a diagnosed source of Parkinson's, and I think words matter.

So instead of saying I have Parkinson's, I think it's important to shift that a little bit, to say, I have a diagnosis of Parkinson's because that keeps you.

Mindset, Movement, and Functional Medicine

And the Parkinson's is they're out a little bit, which we want because you are not Parkinson's, you or you and you have a diagnosis of Parkinson's. So you want to create space in your psyche and that space enables you to do the work of transforming your life.

Clean up your diet, go on to YouTube, find some free content. If you cannot afford to hire a coach. There is a lot of free information easily, readily out there.

Switch to a more plant based diet. Be very conscious how you're spending your food dollars. I think that divorcing the standard American diet is a radical act for your health and that is what needs to happen.

More vegetables, more organic food, less boxed food, less processed food, more farm to table meats. The other aspect of Parkinson's is it's based in the substantia nigra.

So you don't want to be eating a lot of red meat. And if you are eating red meat, it must be farm to table organic. None of this junk from Costco or Safeway or over the counter hotdogs or hamburgers because you're increasing your symptoms when you do that.

So good to know, Carol. Where can people find you? Well, I have a Website, which is my name. It's Carol Lourie. And my last name, is spelled L O U R I E (CarolLourie.com.) There's a contact Me page.

I read every email I get from people and I'd be happy and I personally respond to everyone. Thank you. You have provided so much in this interview. So many practical tips and so much wisdom.

So thank you for being a guest on the Parkinson's Solutions Summit. Thank you so much for including me. Bye for now.