Introduction to Menopause and Fasting

Hi, everyone. This is Dr. Joseph Antoun again with you and happy today to host Dr. Sharon Stills and what's going to be one of the most important episodes today, because it deals with half of society, women's health, and we're going to focus today within our fasting and longevity talks.

We're going to focus about the intersection of fasting and women's health with zooming in with our lenses on menopause and fasting for menopause. Definitely it's a part of every woman's life.

So it's critical. And it's it's it's a big it's probably the biggest symptom of aging. So that intersection, as you guys know, between fasting, reversing aging, helping women and women's health and longevity is the big purpose of this summit.

So with no further ado, Dr. Stills welcome. I would love for you to say a few words about yourself and detail about what got you here. Your passion, your expertise, and then we'll take it from there.

Thank you. It's lovely to be here. Just bring in my microphone on board here. So a lot of you probably know me because I hosted the Menopause Summit for DrTalks.

And so I'm a Naturopathic Medical Doctor. I've been in practice over 21 years now, which always like blows my mind when I say that out loud. And I have a focus on women's health and menopause, obviously.

But I also do a work, a lot of work in the field of oncology and autoimmunity and now long haulers, COVID and vaccine injuries and I pretty much do it all.

I'm trained as a natural path, but I also trained extensively over in Switzerland and Germany, studying with the alternative doctors over there.

Dr. Stills' Background and Holistic Practice

So I take a very terrain based approach to how the body heals. And so I'm not just like, oh, you have muscle pain, take magnesium. Oh, you have a hot flash, take black cohosh.

I look at the body not only as the physical terrain, but also the emotional terrain. And so I combine emotional, mental, spiritual work into physical work.

And I am very passionate about healing naturally. And so although I have a license to prescribe and I do prescribe a lot of bioidentical hormones, I don't prescribe pharmaceuticals and I've treated everything from acute pneumonia or acute COVID to end stage cancer and everything in between.

And I've always been able to do that using the tools in my toolbox, which are all natural tools. Well, appreciate you and and lovely to have you today with this.

Can you can you I mean, a lot of women and men, I mean, we go with our, you know, spouses and partners through menopause. We all think that it's it's an acute thing.

We don't know when it starts. We didn't know what are the phases. Can you, in few words, summarize what is menopause and perimenopause and perimenopause and post-menopausal that we start talking about what to do at each stage and how you approach it?

Yeah, there's there's a lot of confusion around that. So I'll start with menopause because that's an easy definition.

Menopause is 12 months after your last menstrual cycle.

So if you had your period January 1st of 2023 and you haven't had it since, and then January 1st, 2024 rolls around, congratulations. You are now in menopause.

And then on January 2nd, the next day, you'll be post-menopausal. So it's kind of a blip. But getting there is the perimenopausal road and that is different for every woman.

And like you said, this is something that every woman is going to go through. So I don't think of it as a disease process. I think of it as a natural transition that is part of the aging process.

And so I'm really clear, I used to say a lot of, oh, I'm an anti aging physician, but I realize that is not true. And so now I say I'm a pro aging physician because we are all aging.

You can't stop that. We're all getting older. Eventually we are all going to die. But when we die and how we die and why we die and what happens on our journey, there can really be changed by the choices we make and the things that we choose to put in our mouth and thoughts we choose to think and things of that nature.

And so perimenopause, there's a lot of misconception about that because a lot of doctors will tell you when you're 39 and you're having hormonal symptoms, oh, you can't possibly be.

You know, it's not your hormones. It's in your head. Take an antidepressant or just deal with it. But you can be perimenopausal at the age of 39. And so it's different for every one woman.

And some things you want to think about if you're listening and you're like, menopause is not on my mind right now. I'm 31 years old, but you want to be thinking about just hormonal imbalances in general.

Have you had a hard time getting pregnant? Is infertility something you're dealing with? Do you have PCOS, which is polycystic ovarian syndrome? Have you been diagnosed with endometriosis or fibroids or breast cysts or any migraines or weight gain or acne or hair loss or sleepless nights or mood swings?

All of these things. And I could go on and on because there are so many symptoms that tell us we're having hormonal imbalances. But all of these things in your mid to late 30's can actually be the onset of perimenopause.

And when we're going through perimenopause, cause I just got done with my last patient who is in the throes of perimenopause, and I'm like, you know, you are on a roller coaster and your estrogen is going up and it's going down and your progesterone and your testosterone.

And that's a normal process that everything is winding down.

Defining Perimenopause, Menopause, and Symptoms

It's just a matter of how it's doing it. For some women, they have a period and then they never get a period again. For other women, they have a period.

And then all of a sudden they're getting their period every ten days and it's heavy and it's painful and so it's just a different process. But you can gauge if you've had hormonal issues, if you were put on the birth control pill because you had some kind of menstrual irregularity, and they said, I'll just take the birth control pill that'll solve it.

You know, those are signs that menopause and perimenopause are not going to be so simple for you because you're already coming into it with a hormonal imbalance.

That's going to zoom even closer to why fasting, why menopause, why together? What could be the benefits, what type of fasting? What do you do in your practice and what could be the benefits?

So I'll start with what. So I've always said I'm going to live to 120 because I do truly believe that we're biologically designed to live to 120. And part of my passion is changing the way society views aging.

So I'm really I want to change when we see an 80 year old woman mountain climbing or hiking, I want to change the finger pointing of, oh, my God, wow.

Like, look at her. That's amazing, too. Of course she's doing that. I'm doing that, too. And I'm 85. I want it to become normal because if we take care of ourselves, that is normal.

And so when I learned about ProLon, which is a number of years ago already, I opted I was like, well, now that I'm doing the fasting and I'm introducing autophagy into my body and I'm decreasing inflammation, I'm like, I'm giving myself an extra ten years.

So now because of ProLon, I say I'm going to live to 130. And so it's really important that we, we take action that we just don't age. We don't have our mother's menopause.

Because I did when I was growing up and looked at my elders and they were mature. I'm 55 now and when they were my age, they were on the couch and they were in pain and they were getting overweight and they were getting put on lots of different medications.

And the blood pressure was going up and the cholesterol was going up and the cardiovascular disease was setting in and the diabetes was setting in. And I don't even though I have a strong family history of that, I don't worry about that for me, because I live my life differently.

I eat differently, I move differently, and I include fasting. And so as we age, it's really important. We have proteins that are dead and not functioning in our cells.

They need a break. They need to exhale. They need to be able to you know, we we wash our hair, we wash our faces, we wash our bodies. We need to wash our cells.

We need to give them a chance to be like, okay, we can regenerate. We can get rid of what's no longer working and rebuild and have healthy cells. And so that's one of the many reasons why I'm very into including this and obviously I'm very big on bioidentical hormone replace men and I do that in the context of healing the whole body.

And to me, adding this in makes so much sense. Like it's, it's this gift you can give to yourself and depending upon what your situation is, if you need to lose weight, if you need to get those inflammatory markers down, if your triglycerides are too high, depends upon how often I will tend to recommend prescribe it to a patient and I like to do like the three months just to get people started.

Some like five days for three months we do before blood work and we do after blood work and they see the difference and there's some. So personally I was never a good faster.

So I've been in the alternative medical field since my early twenties and I don't even like the days of Bernard Johnson, who is really into Colon cleansing.

And I studied with him and learned ideology and he would talk about doing these like ten day cleanses and you're going to get rid of them. You could plaque and all of these things and I could never do it.

I just was not a good faster. I would not feel good. I would get very hypoglycemic and I just I couldn't function and I would always end up having to abort in the middle.

And when I learned about ProLon initially, I'm I'm a big fan of like not one size fits all. So I was a little like, Oh, okay, a fasting kit. Sure. Good for everyone.

I was a little hesitant, but I have an open mind. I was like, All right, I'm going to check this out. And I did it first of

myself and it blew me away because I was like, Oh my God, I'm getting the benefits of a five day water fast, but I'm not feeling horrible.

I'm actually still working, still seeing patients, still eating taco crisp bars. I was like, this is like too good to be true. But it actually is, you know, it is true.

And so I was like, If I can do this, anyone can do this.

Why Fasting Supports Women's Health

And there's not only the physical benefits, but the. So let's talk about menopausal women or just women in general. Most women have been told by society they're too fat, their body is not the right shape.

They have some kind of eating disorder or they don't have, you know, whether it's like a full blown bulimia or anorexia or they just they binge eat or they don't, you know, they don't have a good relationship with food.

And it's always on their mind and their they lose the weight and then they go off the diet and then they go back on the diet. And it's it's a huge thing that I help women process through in practice.

And a lot of women in the menopausal age, no one's ever talked to them about it. It's just kind of been lurking below the surface and something they've been handling and with people on it.

Actually what I've noticed, it helps to reset your relationship to food. It helps to give you this opportunity to look at your cravings and to conquer them and to not eat so much and to reduce your portion sizes.

I, I was watching that Blue Zone documentary by Dan Buettner on Netflix. And is it a geeky geek guy? It's that one of the things from the Japanese where they only eat till they're 70% full.

And I've been teaching people to do that for a long time, but I didn't know the actual term, the the term for it, and I still may be watching it, but that's something that I have noticed that prolonged helps my patients do.

It helps them incorporate that naturally. And it's just five days and it's like you know, how many days are in a year? 365. This is five. And the the benefits just, you know, four, five days of input, of paying attention and doing the diet are just, you know, ten fold it. Yeah.

And I just cut up 2 minutes before recording this. So for everyone listening, this was not even recommended or staged. But it heals my heart to hear a fellow physician talking with such a passion about it.

And, you know, we have 15,000 clinics now registered with a plan to provide it to their patients. And the most passion is the only people are more passionate than their patients or their doctors about it.

And by the way, the top two record promoters, 26 and 24 boxes are both physicians. Wow. So it just it just and it shows that this is a product of vitality to everyone.

Right. You know, and doctors are known to be a little bit, you know, sometimes resistant because of their stress, their lifestyle to do healthy diets or to endure them and or to trust them.

And I always ask the doctors, you know, show me any diet recommendation you give it. You have randomized clinical trials behind and it's physical. And they don't trust that and rightfully so.

Withdrawal and the fasting nutrition. We have now 34 clinical trials and 200 patterns, 550 of which are issued the only pattern in history to be given to the product for promoting longevity.

And this is why doctors such as yourself are big believers in an adventure for their patients. I want to I want to ask you about the fasting or how you scroll on for a snapshot of women.

And you said you do three cycles with them. So five days for three months. And I don't know if you're aware of I mean, you mentioned that with menopause, women obviously lose muscle as well and there are fast skin changes.

So what we have done because women's health is very big for prolonged, we're recording this now in October. It's breast cancer month and we have actually the people on all this month we have special boxes.

And because we do the age for breast cancer and cancer research in general. So women's health is very core to us. And we looked at we did the fully randomized clinical trial just to show the overall impact on skin, because this is one of the, you know, women going through menopause.

You mentioned all the the symptoms. But but also it's depression. It's loss of confidence. Right. It's a lot of women say, I feel like, you know, it's an expiration date almost.

And it's a big symptom of aging and so we went and we did a full trial. First ever nutrition to rejuvenate this can change the skin glow and skin hydration and get rid of the the the waving of the skin and the two very statistically significant benefits that the trials showed.

And it's fully published online was confidence, woman's confidence and a woman's happiness. And so I think a lot of men, a product women can can benefit from that and that we've done to trials on muscle as well to show that a problem protects relatively body mass which is critical because a lot of metabolic changes happen with menopause.

But one of the most drastic is when you lose muscle. This is when the engine of burning carbs decreases, mobility decreases, you pick up, you know, transform glucose to fats faster because in that burn that glucose and then blood pressure, everything starts rolling downward.

So these are two things that I that I really that we are focused on in our trials and potentially how we can support women and women's health. But do you want to say something also?

Yeah, no. I love how you you support women and do all those trials.

ProLon, Autophagy, and Patient Results

And I love the trials. But, you know, for me, I'm a clinician, so like my trials take place with my patients. And and I think that it is I that I love that it preserves the muscle because muscle is commodity when as we are aging and it's something that we really need to focus how women need to start lifting weights and not do so much cardio.

And we need to eat more protein and we need to make sure we're absorbing that protein. So proper hydrochloric acid levels are something that I see very depleted in my patient population that we have to replace and repair because it's not just so much of what you're eating, it's that you're eating it and you're absorbing it and make sure you're chewing enough and sitting down and being in a parasympathetic state, not eating on the go and running.

And so I think Proline also gives women this opportunity to just because it's like it's all done for you, it's like it doesn't get any better than that.

You get your little box, it's all nicely packaged and you're just like, This is what's going on for me today. This is what my diet's going to consist of.

And so it gives you that time to just really look at I think there's always and has been for eons, a spiritual component to fasting. And so even though you're still getting to eat some foods, and I always am, I'm like, you get to fast and get all the benefits and you get to eat chocolate.

I mean, I, I don't know. I hope you have like billboards that say that because that's that's what I say to my patients. That's like the most amazing thing to me.

And so, you know, while you're fasting and doing this, having you're. By the way, just because you mentioned chocolate. Because chocolate the way we perceived it, because how the business is the typical for profit business is sold as chocolates full of butter, full of milk and full of sugar.

And therefore, chocolate is always bad, actually, chocolate. The cocoa, a part of chocolate is very fasting mimicking and is very pro longevity. And, and it's, it's, it's an ethical investment and the science and developing and producing things for the help and the benefits of people.

You know how much I love my chocolate bar. So why the longevity spread? I don't know if you know, we just launched the spread. I, I just I have it sitting on my counter.

It got, I just found it this morning. I was like, Oh, my God, I can repeat this later. This is 74%. Almonds is the opposite of any chocolate in the market.

Mark three quarters almonds from their pool mountains, which is where they have one of the highest concentrated concentration of centenarians live in Europe and little bit of cocoa and very tiny bit of sugar.

So it's it's an unbelievable throw healthy aging, you know, with chocolate. But anyhow we're the great thing here. Is talk about chocolate. But yes. So when you're fasting, you know, there's that spiritual aspect of where you can really look at your relationship with food and you can really I know when I first did like my first couple of boxes of protein, it was really interesting to me because all of a sudden I couldn't, you know, I could only eat what was in the pro lunch box and I would get like fixated on something, you know, I want a paleo brownie, and I had to, like, work through, like, what is this craving about?

And and then I would start thinking because usually I'd do it like Monday through Friday and I break it on Saturday and I would think, Oh, well, Saturday, I can eat whatever I want.

And always does every time. And patients report the same thing. By the time you get to Saturday, you're you're like a whole different person. You're a whole different set of cravings or non cravings, and it's like you don't even want that.

Your stomach has shrunk, your mind has shifted, your relationship to food has shifted. And to me that is such a huge it's like that day six is such a huge benefit because then it carries on with you.

And so we often are are resistant to, you know, whether I'm telling a patient to do prolonged or I'm telling them they need to give up grains or dairy, you know, if we're really addicted to something and we're using it for the wrong reasons, a lot of times patients like, what do you mean, I got to give that up.

You know, we get very indignant and we don't want to do it, but when we do it, we are able we give our body and our mind that time to shift and to deconstruct the addiction we have.

And a lot of food, unfortunately, especially for women, is addiction. And so I feel like these five days give you back the the knowledge, the reminder, the impulse that that food is nutrition, food is healing.

And I think often if we could see if we could like watch ourselves eat a Big Mac and then we could see inside the body and see the cells getting stressed and the triglycerides raising and the insulin.

Like if we could see it, we'd be like, Ooh, I'm not going to do that again. That's really and the gut lining, getting breaches and then the leaky gut which is increasing Hashimoto's increasing autoimmune inflammatory status, it's just all these side effects starting all the way from the oral cavity all the way down to metabolism.

Exactly. Every time I have a patient who has an autoimmune process, there's always an inflamed, leaky gut involved. And it's something there's so many things that stress the leaky gut and we all, you know, we also can get leaky brain in the blood brain barrier.

And so it's a constant, you know, decreasing your stress, not taking unnecessary pharmaceuticals, being hydrated, doing practices that get you in tune with your circadian rhythm, getting your feet on the ground, watching the sunrise in the morning stretch, you know, doing good stress to your body like a cold plunge or a sauna.

And so it's a constant thing that we need to be policing and so, you know, I always say like, yes, bioidentical hormones are really important, but but they're they're not the be all end all they have to be in context.

And so, you know, just to be clear, like I'm not saying you're going to do one box of pearl on. It's going to change your whole life forever. But it's part of the pieces that you do for a healthy aging process and to be able to clean out and decrease that inflammation to induce the autophagy process, which is also regenerating immune cells, it's improving your microbiome, it's improving the gut.

Fasting, Food Cravings, and Metabolic Reset

To me, that's like golden medicine that you get. It's really hard to to do that without fasting and that you're that you've traded away to do this with, you know, still being able to eat that I can still work, that my patients can still function and they're not on the couch for five days is to me it's like a no brainer.

Like why wouldn't you want to do this? And when you're doing it, having the attitude of, here I go, I'm adding years to my life. And not just quantity, I'm adding quality to my life.

Like bring it on five days, you know, this is the gift I give to myself. And and after you do the first three months, if you do those first three like, like the loading dose, you know, then we see where you're at because most of my patients who do it, it's five days, they lose 5lbs.

And that is also very encouraging and exciting to them. And so it depends if I have patients who are really on heavy and have really elevated inflammatory markers, you know, maybe we're doing it a little longer for someone like myself, if, you know, then you can do it quarterly or twice a year or you know, you can incorporate it the way you need to.

So it's not that you have to do this five days every month, but I think when we when we turn around the way we're looking at it, when we instead of looking at it as deprivation and oh, God, you know, I'm not going to be able to eat sushi this week.

And we look at is like, here I go, here I go, participating in my aging process. I am a menopausal wise woman now and I know I have to participate. I know I have to participate.

Then, you know, we look at this as a gift to ourselves. So it's like when you're opening up your proline box, it's like, oh, a birthday present. And a lot of patients actually, and consumers, they gift it to their parents or to their spouse or husband.

Actually, it goes more from the spouse to the husband to do it together. And it happens frequently. And fasting together is a good period for compliance as well.

Absolutely. If the whole house is not cooking, then it's a lot easier and you know, just to say, because I do speak to menopausal women often, but I also end up having a lot of men because they're the the women I'm treating bring their husbands because they want them to keep up with them.

And so, you know, men go through and rapports and there's not enough talk about that. So I just like to mention that, you know, men have a deep decline of testosterone and it can totally derail them from depression to weight gain to man boobs to all sorts.

Of it starts at age 40. It's not age 70 or age 80. Like like many people think it's really starts very early in their in their lifespan. Absolutely. I mean, and the other thing is when we think about hormones, so when we take a hormone or we're producing a hormone, that hormone is only going to give you benefit if it's getting to the receptor site and

being received and absorbed by the receptor site.

And so, you know, I have supplements I use to help keep the receptor sites clean. You can use the title choline. But ProLon is another way of kind of going in and cleaning off, you know, wiping the windows, cleaning off the receptor sites.

And so, again, it's never just one thing. It's like doing all these things in harmony together. Well, briefly, you know, some people try to do the water fasts instead of calling it and trying to go for several days on it.

Have you tried this or are you for or against or with what kind of opinion you'd have on it? I mean, I'm I'm not against water fasting. I'm against people, like just winging it.

I think you should be doing it under a physician's guidance and, you know, being monitored. And because it's not for everyone, you know, especially for women who can have a lot of problems with their gallbladder, it's very common.

And water fasting can really exacerbate that. You can end up with gallstones. And so it's not something I often recommend. And it if it is something that I wanted someone to do, I'd probably want to send them to like a sanatorium in Europe where they could be in the right setting and, you know, really unplugged.

And so that's just my I'm a real realist.

Water Fasting, Safety, and Clinical Guidance

Like, I understand what it is to be alive in this day and age and to have a lot of responsibilities. And women in menopause, a lot of them are still raising children.

They have aging parents. They have spouses, they have jobs. They have they're being pulled a lot of ways. And so it's not a really realistic thing. And like I was saying to you before we came live, I work with a lot of patients dealing with cancer diagnoses, and I like them to fast to improve if they choose to do chemo.

I like them too fast. Water or fast to improve the efficacy, which I learned when we were talking that you're the guys who did the research on that. But a lot of my patients are just like, Are you kidding me?

Like, I'm already overloaded and I can't fast. And so that's when I can be like, okay, well then do the ProLon. And they're like, Oh, that I can do. And they're still getting the same benefits.

And so I like to make my patients lives as easy as possible. You know, I want healing to be something that you can, you know, I don't know if enjoy is the right word, but maybe enjoy be a part of not be stressed out by and so I just, you know, I'm a huge fan of this way of doing it because if you're going to water fast, you really need to go in and make sure that you have enough muscle composition that your bile is flowing, that you're pooping, that your sweat thing that you breathe properly, that your liver knows how to detox.

There's a lot of things that need to be looked at before you undertake something like this. And with Prolia I feel really comfortable even though I do all those things with my patients.

But I might have a new patient who we haven't really got into all that work with, and yet I still feel comfortable being like, I want you to do the ProLon on five day.

I know they're going to be okay. I know they're not going to have side effects or nothing bad is going to happen to them. I know that they're actually going to be, like, empowered, like I did that.

I feel good. My mind is clear. Wow, I lost a few pounds. It's a good experience for them. And Dr. Stills, I so appreciate you today for your time. Time flew by very fast in and this is a wealth of information.

I think again, the approach, the holistic approach to menopause is critical. And in considering women's physical change, emotional change and status, metabolic change, and addressing all of those, whether through fasting or the other approaches that you do and other, you know, a functional medicine body and integrative medicine blog and lifestyle medicine bag approach, I think is is helping a lot of patients.

So I really appreciate you for it. I appreciate you for your time today. And and we'll see you soon, hopefully. Thanks for having me. Always a pleasure.