Estrogen: Lifesaver Or Toxin? Decipher What's Best For You Transcript

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Introduction to Cancer Breakthroughs

TJ Hills, I'm so excited to have you at this segment of cancer breakthroughs. I mean, we are here to really look at the nitty gritty and empower people to find what do they need to do in order to be able to deal with with cancer or if they are at risk for cancer, if they are concerned about cancer.

So thank you so much for joining me. Thank you for having me. I'm honored to be here. So for everyone out there, TJ Hills, she is an energetic speaker, bestselling author of Sex, Drugs, Babies and Breast Cancer A Health Benefits of Estrogen Gene Testing.

It guides women to better estrogen health with your estrogen map, which offer toolkit for making better decisions about the drugs who take and the babies we make.

I like that don't make or are done making better estrogen is better is better health to achieving to achieve long lifelong ambitions at work and home.

So before we get going, tell me a little bit about why you get going into this field. I mean, why why was this specifically of interest to you?

Personal Cancer Diagnosis and Research Journey

You know, I so I was diagnosed with an aggressive breast cancer in 2009. And the kinds of resources that are out there now for survival after cancer. Right.

Like or treatment plans after cancer or what do you do after cancer weren't there. Right. So the kind of support mechanisms that are out there now for living with cancer as basically a chronic condition.

I'm not I'm not I've never been a not since my original diagnosis. I've never been of the thought of, oh, you're cancer free now. You know, I think I think the word remission is is a better word.

And so I've thought of myself that remission and my numbers, as they were explained to me back then were not great. I had young children and I didn't want to die.

So what I do, what I have done in my career was I do research. So I research. Research. And I have done that for a very long time for hedge funds. And so what I did is I started applying my research skills basically to myself.

And at the time of my diagnosis, you know, cancer vaccines were just kind of coming up. There were a few other ideas that have now come into fruition.

Immunotherapy was just being thought about like, you know, some of the treatments that are now commonplace were just embryonic. So at the time, you know, the research on estrogen metabolism just made a lot of sense to me.

It was very, very robust. I delved into it and, you know, felt like improving my estrogen metabolism was the way for me to go forward. So when I look at my personal family history, which is actually somewhere in my in the front page of my website, you'll see like, you know, I've got a hysterectomy in the family and fibroid tumors.

And my sister has incredibly severe endometriosis. And now the other one does. And, you know, there's just this long line of women in my family. We have no we had no cancer in our family at the time.

We have tons and tons of conditions in which estrogen metabolism is a big factor. So it all started to make sense to

me. And I had taken a lot of drugs personally.

And I think that, you know, women are in this unusual situation where estrogen or estradiol is just being prescribed routinely. So. So you've got like this huge percentage of the women in the world of a certain strata who are, you know, being proposed to take drugs, either to stop making babies, to help making babies or when they're done making babies. And so it's like estrogen.

Drugs are a part of your life for your entire life. So I think that's why I stick with this, because I don't think there's another substance that has such a long role to play.

So as estrogen, I mean, so you're looking kind of on your family history. You're seeing that there is a dysfunction. I mean, there are a lot of women in your family, family lines sort of say that dealt with these issues.

So people then they metabolize they break down estrogen differently.

Why Estrogen Metabolism Matters

And I think that's really important for people to understand that, you know, one woman may break down estrogen and one way or another woman may break it down in another way.

And that will then put you at more risk or less risk as is what I'm hearing. Yeah, exactly. And so if you. So so the genes that are responsible for not just estrogen metabolism, but metabolism or detoxification in general, if they are impaired, you can do things to improve how they function.

But if they are impaired, that means that if you're loading up that you're not going to be able to excrete it as well as someone who doesn't have those mutations so that, you know, that will influence how much estrogen you have recirculating in your body, which can become toxic, can become toxic, may not like very many multifactorial, but it can become toxic.

So if you have, let's say, a young girl having issues with our hormonal cycle, you know, goes to the doctor or the doctor says, let's put you on birth control pill.

And that young woman should first identify whether she's able to break down the birth control pill. Well, you know, how old is she, right? Because one one of the things about.

So, you know, there's a lot of girls who are starting their period, a lot younger than we used to. And so, you know, are you talking about a ten year old because, for example, a ten year old and this is not uncommon anymore, right.

This poor girl is going to school. She's got cramps. She doesn't know what's going on. She's bleeding like, you know, that's the last thing. It's there's a big difference between a ten and a 12 year old, you know, a 12 year old that's more within the norm.

A 12, 13 year old. They've been prepared to be able to start dealing with this. The boys are dealing with stuff on their own. But a ten year old first.

Yes. Anyone taking any estrogen drugs should should be taking this test to see how they're going to deal with it. But if you're talking about a really young girl, we don't have data.

There's no data on the long term consequences of putting a young girl on birth control pills. There's just no data. But but still, doctors do it. I mean, they.

Yeah, they do it. They do it routinely. I mean, my my personal view on that and I don't have daughters is that, you know, if you're going to if you're going to drug like a ten year old, for example, why not just stick them on like adult strength painkillers instead of instead of a birth control pill just because there's no data?

But but going down into it, it is then still important for mothers out there, you know, has a daughter dealing with, you know, hormonal issues, you know, excessive bleeding, painful or whatever it may be, to then check to see how they are able to metabolize estrogen prior to putting them any any drug kind of like that.

And obviously, this this relates to the mother themselves. You know, they're maybe going through menopause or maybe they are feeling like they need a little extra spank or maybe, you know, whatever it may be that they're dealing with.

Well, yeah. I mean, I think all women ought to know this. I think when you go to your first OB-GYN visit, you ought to have this test taken. So you know what your propensity is to be able to get rid of some of these drugs.

Birth control is a little different than, you know, hormone replacement is much stronger. And birth control pills have like a tiny fraction of the dose that they used to have. So, you know, I mean, I'm not a doctor, so I think everyone's got to make their own decisions with the patients sitting in front of them.

Birth Control, Hormone Therapy, and Young Women

But, you know, in my mind, birth control is for birth control. Birth control is there to stop making babies because if you get pregnant, there's a huge long list of consequences to a pregnancy.

And I'm not talking about actually having a baby. I'm talking about your own physical body and what age you are, etc.. And so when I think about birth control, I think about it as birth control because of all the risks of pregnancy.

But I think I think like, for example, what we're talking about, like a pain, painful menses, etc., a part of that can actually, if you delve deeper into estrogen metabolism function, a lot of that might be able to be improved, at least to be tolerable for a few days, a month with painkillers, etc..

If you improve your estrogen metabolism, you know, some of that pain may be because you're not functioning as well as you might be able to. And I want to later on get into the estrogen metabolism and how that can be improved.

But I know we're talking about birth control. We're talking about hormone replacement therapy, but we also have the issue of something called Xena hormones or xeno estrogens or, you know, chemicals and things that are around us that function like hormones.

And if a person has an issue to metab allies, estrogen, then you have an issue to kind of break these things down as well. Right. So, you know, in America, we're literally swimming swimming in estrogen like chemicals.

And and while I'm promoting that, everybody ought to get their estrogen metabolism genes test. I think, like there's really no one in America who ought to be drinking plastic regardless of how well you metabolize estrogen or not.

I think I think the issue for for those of us who do not process it well. So if you know if you know, like, for example, that you know, let's just say for sake of the argument, there's ten genes or ten mutations that you're going to look like look at and you have all ten you know, you're not doing this well.

And so what does that mean? That means you ought to be more careful with some of the ZAINO estrogen or estrogen like chemicals that you're just literally surrounded with.

And it's difficult to do so. Right. It means changing your laundry detergents and not using pesticides. It means maybe changing the clothes and your shampoo and everything you eat, literally everything you're ingesting.

It means the way you do your dishes. And so so it's time consuming. And I think for a lot of people, it can be overwhelming. And I actually was just talking to someone else and it was like, okay, so here's the deal.

Vinegar, like there's only vinegar, there's only vinegar. You may only clean with vinegar and you may not drink

water. You don't drink any food, just have some organic broccoli.

And that's it for you. And she was she was making fun of, though, like, you know, how to keep yourself safe in our in our world today. But you know she's not that far off.

Like, for example, it's a little pet peeve of mine, but it, you know, I, I went on this mission to try and find you probably don't know this. I'm being misogynist, but, you know, there's this jet dry stuff that you put in the dishwasher so that when you are done with the dishes, they're not all wet and they don't have spots on them.

So I went on this mission to see if there was something that was not completely toxic where you could do this. And there isn't there's there is dishwashing alternatives that are cleaner.

Right. But there is nothing for that. And so it's like, okay, well then, you know, I'm going to have spots on my glasses and when I'm done with the dishes, they're still going to be wet and they're still going to have to air dry.

And that's the price of not picking up a glass and filling it with water and literally drinking a bunch of chemicals that I put on my own glass. And so I think, you know, it's important to know how much you can tolerate and how careful you have to be regardless of whether or not you have any of these conditions or breast cancer.

You know, just in our U. S. United States world, how careful you have to be because it's really hard. You have to you have to really invest some time and energy into into going cleaner.

Yeah. I mean, like like you mentioned, none of these chemicals are beneficial and in a way and so no matter what, how well you metabolize something, you should still stay away from them.

But it is good to really understand what your level of risk is no matter what. And I like you mentioning that.

Xenoestrogens and Everyday Chemical Exposure

Yeah, there at the dishwasher, you also have the issue when you wash plastic like plastic Tupperware or anything plastic and you have, you know, you get these, you know, the dishwashing liquid actually creates these micro abrasions.

Yeah. And the plastic. Yeah. So they are then continually leaching as you are then eating out of it or storing food out of it or you know. So yeah, it's just you should stay away from plastic.

I mean, it's just as simple as that. You know, it's, it's, yeah, it's, it's, it's overwhelming. I think it's really overwhelming when you start getting into the nitty gritty of it.

And, and one of the things that I've been thinking about lately is that so my mother's world and my grandmother's world, where there were just certain rules, like, you know, you had to have liver and onions once a week and and there were none of these plastics.

Right. That they just didn't exist. And and, you know, so there wasn't this whole thing like, oh, you know, I have to use glass storage. You know, that's just the way it was.

And and, you know, I so I've been trying because it is difficult. And even though I spend a lot of time promoting this, it's difficult for me. Like I just went on my mission for the jet try replacement.

It's hard. And I just went and bought a whole bunch of new glass stuff and it is what it is, right? Yeah. Yeah, exactly. So what should be, you know, what should be the next step for an individual to understand how they metabolize estrogen?

I mean, what where did they where did they go? What did they do to really understand and, you know, where they're at? So I think well, it's always good to start with your doctor, but a lot of doctors or the majority of doctors

have not been trained in, you know, functional genomics or genetic testing or nutritional genetics or modifiable genes.

And so you may you know, what I encounter a lot when a woman tries to go get help, she'll go to her doctor. And the doctor will say, like, even if they do understand a little bit, they'll be like, oh, no, you don't need that because I just did test your estrogen.

Normally it's menopausal women asking me, this is like, Oh, you know, your estrogen levels are fine. And and my response to that is, well, that doesn't mean anything, right?

Because that has nothing to do with your life line tendency to be able to actually excrete it. This moment in time, when you took that urine test or blood test or whatever, they were fine and that's great.

That's great. I'm glad they weren't. Not fine. But, you know, you have to get that information. And so if if you need to do it yourself, what I would suggest is a lot of people have taken 23 in me tests or ancestry DNA tests, and you can take the raw data from that.

So you go into your account and you take the raw data from your 23. In my account and there is a website run by a fabulous scientist, it's called Genetic Life Hacks, and there's several of these out there, but I just prefer hers.

And you upload it into her site and I don't even know if she charges for like a single upload. And then you can go to her article on estrogen metabolism and it will just literally show you what kind of mutations you have.

And she does interesting things like last week she wrote about the genes that actually would indicate how well you metabolize BPA and all the other chemicals that are in the water, in the plastics, you know, the long list.

And and then you can use that as an indication. You can go back, you can talk to your doctor. You can see, oh, I've got ten out of ten. That's not good or I've got two out of ten and that's okay.

And, you know, take it to your doctor and make better decisions about the drugs you're taking and how much time you're going to spend figuring out how to get the toxins out of your dishwasher.

And so let's say you have eight out of ten or seven out of ten or, you know, you're at a higher risk. So what are some of the things I mean, would you obviously this this discussion between the patient and the doctor, but according to your research, is it then good for them to get on any kind of estrogen, a type of product like a hormone replacement or if it's bioidentical or, you know, would it be advisable?

And if it is advisable, should they then really make sure that they take a certain nutritional agents to help the process that. Yeah, so let's just talk about how do you improve your estrogen metabolism?

So I think the first thing is to keep a lower BMI, and that's because your fat creates a certain kind, not estradiol, but another kind of estrogen.

Testing Estrogen Metabolism and Genetic Risk

And so it just adds to the total load. So this is a very difficult thing, especially for people who are going through menopause or are post-menopausal to say, oh, keep a lower BMI, not so easy.

I mean, I struggled with it. I struggle. I struggled mightily with that. And then the other things are basically a few supplements which are gym pro or indole three carbonyl, which is the active ingredient in broccoli, cauliflower, mustard, dandelion, greens, etc.

and an antioxidant like vitamin C and fish oil. And those three, between the three of them, they will actually alter the way those genes function for the better to help you get rid of any toxins, if you have any mutations.

The question about whether or not someone's going to take hormones is really complicated. I think it depends on how sick they are. I think it depends how bad their symptoms are.

And it also really depends on how how intensely they're going to be monitored. So, you know, if someone if someone desperate is having a really hard time and I and, you know, it's not there's not great studies on this.

But, you know, in theory, improving your estrogen metabolism is going to help with some of these symptoms of menopause. It's not a be all and end all.

It's not the same as is taking estrogen, but it may help with some of the symptoms. But if someone's really suffering, they may they may be able to experiment with with some of the interventions, be they pharmaceutical or natural or buy or identical.

And that's like one really important point is that you got a lot of women who are going to Whole Foods or going to the pharmacy and they're just taking stuff. And that doesn't mean it's not dramatically raising your estradiol levels.

Like just because you can get it off the shelf doesn't mean it's safe. And then, you know, I think women like that have to be monitored more closely. So the they have to work with the doctor who is actually checking on if if it has improved, if it is improving, if they're able to get it out.

And then and then, you know, that would require like a closer relationship with the doctor. And how would they monitor that? Because, I mean, a lot of times, women, the frustration is and like you mentioned earlier, is that the doctor may not be quite aware as to how to monitor, you know, what are the risk factors and how to determine the risk factor.

So now the you know, the listeners out there, they know to check their genetics and see whether they have these kind of genetic snips or to say where the genes aren't functioning appropriately, they're a little dysfunctional.

And then, you know, they let's say they have a situation where they need, you know, to be on some kind of hormonal hormone replacement therapy and maybe choose buy identical or choose natural or whatever it may be.

How should they monitor whether they're doing okay? I mean, what should they tell their doctor? You know, these are the kind of tests I would like in order to be able to monitor, to see where I'm at.

Well, I think, you know, most functional medicine doctors are going to be familiar with Dutch test, for example, or some of the old Genova diagnostic tests.

Improving Estrogen Metabolism Naturally

And so most functional medicine doctors will know how to do that. They may not know about the genetic testing. They may not have much use for it or not trained in it.

But they they will know how to how to monitor the estrogen metabolism function. I think if you're going to a regular doctor, you can ask for the panel.

You know, you can ask them to run like Quest and LabCorp run estrogen panels. So if if you're working with the doctor, whoever it is, who prescribed the the hormone replacement or bioidentical, etc., you can ask them, even if they don't understand the panel, you can say, look, I'm worried about this.

I've got eight out of ten of these. Can you monitor me quarterly? Can you can you make sure that these levels are okay? And and, you know, if you're whoever is prescribed that ought to be willing to do that.

And and tell me a little bit about you mentioned different names for estrogen. So explain a little bit what those different different components of estrogen are.

You know, how they work on the body and is one better than another? You know what what what should we know about those as we empower people out there?

So estrogen is really a group of hormones called estrogen, and the most powerful of those is called estradiol. And so when people say estrogen, normally they're talking about estradiol because that is the one that's made primarily in the ovaries.

There's another kind of estrogen, estrogen that's made in your fat, which is called estriol. And then there's this estrone which is also very prominent when you're pregnant and there's more.

And so each one of these has different numbers. It's a group it's a group of hormones. But the one that can potentially become more toxic is called estradiol.

And so that's that's what people are going to be monitoring for. And so the doctor will then monitor that. But, you know, obviously, for an individual that is unexposed to like the plastics and you know, xenoestrogens or estrogen like compounds, chemicals that are exposed all the time, that is not visible in that kind of a test.

So should they also monitor to see what the exposure that they have and that the metabolites of that? I mean, is is would that be a good idea as well.

If you can find someone who will do it right. So as as unusual as what I'm talking about is and regular conventional medicine, I think it's pretty it's maybe not the genetic part of it, but the monitoring of estrogen metabolism is pretty common with functional medicine doctors.

I don't know people who are commonly prescribing to look at your overall toxic load and how to improve that. You know, I know the tests are out there like the phosphate test and some of the metal like people will do metals testing.

But it's not common that people are actually looking at that. And also the difficulty with that is that, you know, it'll alter quickly. So that's even more difficult to to assess then an estrogen point in time test, because in theory, a lot of these chemicals will will go away.

If you clear out within a few days, theoretically.

Monitoring Hormone Therapy and Estrogen Types

So you can try I mean, you can ask, but I think the better situation is just to do everything you can if you have a lot of mutations to be cleaner and to commit yourself.

I mean, you know, organic, organic meat and dairy and cheese, etc., is more expensive. But, you know, so is food in Europe. Exactly. Right. Like like, you know, everything in Europe is organic and food is way more expensive in Europe for a good reason.

And, you know, we there's not like, you know, the industrial pollutants everywhere because they made a decision as a continent that they weren't going to do that to their food.

Yeah. And it is less expensive to not have to deal with consequences of, you know, excessive hormones. Yeah. Like cancer. And obesity. You know, it's not just cancer.

It's it's, you know, there's a lot of consequences to obesity just starting with insulin resistance, which, you know, they say like 80, 85% of the country has.

Yeah, exactly. And the the term estrogen dominance, you know, where it impacts your, the conversion from T4 to T3 from the inactive to the active thyroid insulin resistance that you mentioned, obesity, the the there's there's so many components that that it and that it impacts.

So it is important from from that aspect as well, just health wise. Well, TJ, this this is awesome. And you're doing such amazing work. And can you just remind the listeners where to go to get more information that you'd the information that you offer.

Yeah. So please go to my website which is betterestrogen.

Resources and Closing Remarks

com and there's there's a page in there about testing with links to to some tests which your doctor can order or even companies where you can, you can they, they will have the doctor available so you can have a consultation.

And then I just put up my TEDx talk in my website so you can also just Google me on YouTube and my TEDx talk will come up. And I watched that yesterday and it was awesome.

Oh, thank you. Thank you. It was hard to memorize. I can imagine you did great. Awesome. Well, thanks so much, TJ. Thank you for having me. I'm really grateful.

It's an honor to be here.