Introduction to Long COVID and Chronic Fatigue

the more that you push yourself when you're sick or until you've recovered, because we're seeing a lot of this, you know, in teenagers or in kids or and people who are highly athletic, where they are, they're exercising and they go back to it too soon, then unfortunately that ends up taxing their mitochondria and it causes, it seems like it, causes the infection to go deeper into the body and to persist and increase the number of symptoms that people end up experiencing.

This is Dr. Talks. Welcome, welcome, and welcome to another edition of Overcoming Long COVID and Chronic Fatigue. Today, we have another really special guest, somebody who is, I think, looking at this from all the right angles.

It's Dr. Evan Hirsch. But what's really been important about Dr Hirsh is that he's focused on energy and how to fix your fatigue. In fact, he even wrote a book with that name, as you can see in the background.

But at the same time, he's focused on what is underneath, why you need to fix your fatigue and what the causes are that can be causing problems. And using those same eyes, He's been looking at COVID and like many of us, has been finding all kinds of ways to be helpful.

Dr. Hirsch, really a pleasure to have you. And, you know, just tell us a little bit about what got you down, what I call the thinking path. You know I love doctors.

I think they do wonderful things, but too many of them just do paint by numbers when confronted with people who they don't understand. They assign psychological diagnoses without looking further.

and I know that you're somebody who hasn't done that and i'm always interested in what clicked, What got Well, Dr. Eric, thanks so much for having me on.

I really appreciate the opportunity to speak to the audience today.

Dr. Hirschu2019s Path into Holistic Medicine

So for me, it really started, I actually was pretty early on this. Actually got board certified in holistic medicine when I was in residency. And a lot of that really came from having a more natural mom growing up and she kind of fixed her cholesterol by going all Opran for about six months.

We also ate all oprans and it was really nasty, but it helped her with cholesterol. It was interesting to see that. And then as I went into medical school, I just had lots of questions.

I've always been very curious. And my professors and my attendings really could not answer my questions very well. So I started looking outside, found holistic medicine that led me to integrative medicine, that lead me functional medicine.

That led to environmental medicine and I came out of, started my residency program already knowledgeable in a lot of holistic medicines. But then my wife, my soon to be wife or we, we just started dating.

We fell in love. And then a couple of months later, she got chronic fatigue and it lasted for about three years and she was about 80% better at that point.

and so our relationship continued and we got married. we had a kid, I graduated from residency. I started my own practice and a few years later I got Chronic fatigue.

It lasted five years. And it just about destroyed my life, just to about destroy my relationship with her where she's like, Hey, can you help out with the dishes?

I'm just getting over chronic fatigue. And when we have this new baby and all I could do is lie on the couch, Just about destroying my business because I was napping underneath the desk every day and I had to keep hiring people to do my job because i was so tired.

And so, yeah, so then I, but I when I realized one day after looking up at that desk for the thousandth day in a row that I had to do something and I said, okay, I was already doing a lot of things from an integrated perspective, But I have to find all the causes.

I know that if I find it all, the cause is I'm going to be successful. And at this point I. that there's 39 different causes that we look at, but at that point I was at around 20 or 30. But I found all the causes I had, worked through them, got my energy back, wrote a book about it, have helped thousands of people.

Now I'm 100% online so that I can work with people all over the world. And that's my story. Well, I love it. I just love that it's those insights that people bring when they've had to sort of heal themselves that's often so helpful.

And now we are dealing with COVID. So unfortunately, what COVID has done is brought chronic fatigue really into the mainstream. Long COVID is getting so many people and the symptoms, I mean, that's why we called it overcoming long haul and chronic fatigues, because basically any chronic inflammation, we could have called and chronic inflammation can cause, does cause chronic fatigue.

It just depends on what your triggers are and how your body responds, what flavor you're going to get. But so with that background, how are you looking at long COVID, I guess?

How do you see it different from just chronic fatig? Yep. And so I don't see that different than chronic Fatigue because when I'm looking a chronic I have found that people have around 20 or more a combination of 20 are more different causes out of the 39 different cause that we're looking at and when we looking a long covid that is just another infection that we look at.

So whether somebody has Epstein-Barr virus, that's one of those 20 causes that causes their chronic fatigue, or if it's Lyme or it is mold, like what's the biggest one?

In this case, COVID is the straw that broke the camel's back, but the stage was already set. People had been accumulating toxins throughout their life, whether it was heavy metals or chemicals or molds or infections.

How Long COVID Fits into Chronic Fatigue

And then all of a sudden they get COVID and all bets are off and they end up with fatigue or muscle pain or a number, you know, 200 different potential symptoms that they can have based on where the infection goes in the body.

Yeah. No, that is something we have seen that most people when we talk to them who showed up long COVID, There was things boiling quietly in the back.

As you said, it's the straw that broke the camel's back, you know. So are there particular tests that you're looking at as you look at these patients?

There are for a number of the causes, but in terms of long COVID, there aren't. I know that there's different inflammatory markers with some of work of Bruce Patterson and such.

But the thing is, is that more times than not, somebody knows if they have long Covid. And we have a quiz on our website, But, the reality is is if you had some sort of cold, that result that morphed into weird symptoms that have become persistent.

And this is since November 2019, whether or not you've actually had an official diagnosis of COVID or Not. When I say weird, symptoms, it can be pain on the bottom of the feet, or it could be shortness of breath, sweating.

There's just so many different ones in addition to fatigue. that it's highly likely that that's the case. And so generally people know when they have had COVID or they've had some sort of viral illness.

Since 2019, we have to take that into account and see whether that is the cases. Now with COVID, it is going to be different than, you know, oftentimes there's post-viral fatigue, whether it from Epstein-Barr or something else.

But it seems like with Covid, there are more symptoms and the symptoms are just weirder. We can definitely talk about why that the is case Yeah. Well, that would be a very interesting, interesting talk.

I think we should cover that. Why? Because that is, you know, basically atypical usually means to me, chronic inflammation, and that's what we're talking about.

We're taking about the post-viral fatigue is a common phenomenon. It happens with many viruses in many people, but it's fatigue and a little malaise and flu-like feeling, goes away and isn't accompanied by the whole slew of odd symptoms that people with long COVID seem to be having.

So what are the big clues and where do you start going with this? So generally when we start, I have a four step process that I take people through. And the first step is to determine all the causes that they have.

So, you know, we've talked about there's 39 potential causes, everybody has a combination of 20 or more of those causes. Now, fortunately, 75% of these causes can be determined by symptoms alone.

You went to conventional medical school, I went into conventional school. What I learned there that was actually correct was that 90 percent of diagnosis is history and symptoms, 10 percent is physical exam and labs.

So much of this can actually be determined by history in symptoms if we're just listening and we are actually looking at those symptoms. The first thing is to determine all of the causes that somebody has.

Then the next step, even though this process is really all about the toxins that we want to remove out of body in step four, The next step really is to make the body stronger, more resilient, you know, have greater stamina.

Testing, Symptoms, and the Four-Step Treatment Process

And so that's to replace the deficiencies, whether it's deficities in hormones like adrenals, thyroid, sex hormones, mitochondria, deficancies in vitamins, minerals, deficiency in lifestyle habits, not enough good food, no enough water, good sleep, or neurotransmitter deficiences.

Those are all things that are not in the And so we want to replace those. And there's really nothing that gives people more of a boost in their energy and mood, et cetera, and sleep is what I call the big three, which is replacing adrenals, thyroid and mitochondria, you know, Which is responsible for 70 to 90% of all of the energy in the body.

So we boost step two, those deficiencies, and then step three, we're opening up the drainage pathways, the liver, kidney, lymph, neurolymph, gallbladder, intestines, so that the toxins in step four actually have a place to go, heavy metals, chemicals, molds, infections, COVID, etc.

So that when you try to grab one of those things and remove them out of the body, they actually have a place to go. So, that's kind of where step three comes into place.

And we find that that is a great process to take people through to get rid of their long COVID. It's so funny. I gave a short talk this morning for a different group for Rebel Health.

It was just interesting. And it's always so self-affirming when you hear people who develop similar processes. It's

just so true. You have to fix the deficiencies.

People are still sick, but they got their one leg up now. They got a shot. Opening those drainage pathways. Toxicity seems to be the issue. probably why we have so many chronically ill people.

It's not the bugs, it's the toxicity. And you have found that COVID, you seem to think it feels a biofilm disruptor. Correct. Yeah, so one of the things that we're looking at, for those who don't know, a biofilm disruptor.

Biofilm is this kind of this collagenous material that exists on our mucous membranes where things hide underneath it, oftentimes infections and other toxins, and the infections will swap DNA with each other and create superbugs.

and do all sorts of things that we don't want to talk about. But what we're seeing is that sometimes we can go directly at the COVID and start to remedy it because we do believe that COVID is a live active virus.

When people have long COVID, they have a active live virus in the body. Sometimes we are actually seeing where they're acting as a biofilm disruptor and they are letting other infections out.

Where sometimes the pain on the bottom of the feet that somebody is experiencing and the cramping in their legs that they experience is actually from Bartonella.

It's not from COVID. And so if we're going after COVID and we are not having success, and then we start going to Bartinella and were having a success.

Then we know that COVID was actually acting as a biofilm disruptor. Breaking up the hiding places, the Bartonella was coming out and it was causing these symptoms.

Yeah, that's something we see often as you get one bug, you can then, new symptoms will sometimes surface. The whole question of, as we spoke about the question, of whether there's COVID, whether it's competent viral, Whether it is competent to replicate or whether its only pieces, but at the end of the day, it causing inflammation.

I mean, the persistence of a spike proteins is definitely an issue. And the other big area that a lot of people are talking about, and it seems that you're interested in as well, is the effect on coagulation and blood clotting.

And that's been a big issue. Dr. Pretorius has made a lots of it. How important do you feel this is? I think it's incredibly important. So one of the ways that infections will travel around the body is by making the blood thicker.

And COVID is especially good at that, forming a lot of microclots. I thing that there's a lots of awareness that's now being brought to ME-CFS or chronic fatigue and some of these other chronic states of inflammation that their is hypercoagulation in all of it.

and that we're finding that people who are hypercoagulated, they're more likely to have heart attacks, heart disease, stroke, Alzheimer's. And so it's just really important to, we use natural anticoagulants in order to be able to decrease the ability for the infections to get around the body, as well as to improve the oxygenation.

Because if you've got thick blood, you can just picture how stagnant that is and how you're not going to able exchange the nutrients the way you want to.

To get rid of the toxins and the waste and to get oxygen where it's supposed to. Yeah. Hypercoagulation has been, you know, and I'm really glad to see it coming back up again.

It was a big thing about 18 years ago and Dr. Berg, David Berg did a lot with hypercoageulation. And then, it like so many great ideas. The problem we have is that we don't have, I don' know.

In the world we treat the people with chronic complex illnesses, what works wonderful for one person doesn't do much for the other, or sometimes it's just not using it in the right order.

And so, so many good things, because they're not home runs, they don't make people all better. They only give them part of the way, they get lost. They don't get used enough.

I think one of many benefits of this terrible illness is that we're going to get a lot more research and a more work in how to improve the blood flow, especially in the microcirculation.

You know, I mean, that's, yeah, cause in your world, when you're doing the work with detox, like you keep saying, That's probably one of the key points.

Biofilms, Coagulation, and Hidden Infections

So, you know. You, so when look at, maybe you have a lot of patients. I would imagine, do you, have any good sense of like why some of them never got long COVID and some them have, it's just one the things that a, lot the doctors that I've talked to, and I speak to have seen that their own patients, even though they were fairly ill.

didn't wind up with long COVID. Yeah, and I think that it has to do with the number of toxins that are present. When you have heavy metals, chemicals, molds and maybe another infection, the immune system is often left field.

The immune systems been hijacked by those things and then consequently the COVID can come into the body and it can wreak havoc. You know, and so, go wherever it wants to go.

You have to have a somewhat intact immune system in order to get rid of any infection. And COVID is really no different. The more toxins that you have, unfortunately, or the more that push yourself when you're sick or until you've recovered, because we're seeing a lot of this in teenagers or in kids or people who are highly athletic.

where they're exercising and they go back to it too soon, then unfortunately that ends up taxing their mitochondria and it seems like it causes the infection to go deeper into the body and to persist and increase the number of symptoms that people end up experiencing.

Yeah, that is something that many people are talking about. They need to really be careful as you return to your activities of life. Don't overdo. In the old days, people would say, oh, you were just taxing your adrenals, but clearly it's much more than that.

Any other ideas about, about why people have to be careful with return to exercise? I mean, I'm just trying to, you, yeah, think you've kind of put at it, but I thinking about the hyper coagulation issue.

If that plays a big role in that, and I would love to know your ideas. Yeah, I definitely think that it does. You know, if you're going to push yourself and you are hyper-coagulated and your blood is thick and not exchanging your oxygen and then you go and train for a marathon, like I've heard so many stories about people who are training for marathons and they get COVID and go back too soon and all bets are off.

Now, some of it may have to do with the fact that if they are runners or they're exercising, they've got increased musculature around the heart. perhaps their oxygenation needs to be working at a certain level and then they get hypercoagulated and they're not able to do so.

I think that some of it has to with the damage that's done to the mitochondria, that you're asking a lot of your mitochondrion and that if the virus gets in, then the viruses can actually cause more damage to mitochondrial when you are asking more of the Mitochondria.

So those are just a couple of theories based off of research that I've read and extrapolations in clinical practice. Okay, but thank you. To me is always what's so exciting is when you combine exploring the research and being a clinician, you notice things.

I think that is just so important, so, are there, as far as your general steps, particular supplements and things that you have found that people can start with as just a way to get to begin their process that find most helpful?

Absolutely. So, you know, the, when I talked about the big three, well, I would say, first thing is lifestyle habits, obviously start drinking more water, eating more good food, et cetera.

But the supplements that I find to be most helpful are adrenal for adrenal support, mitochondrial support thyroid support. Those are the ones that, that's why I call that the Big Three is because They make the most amount of difference, at least initially, to people.

It takes their energy atleast up a point or so. Their energy is like a 5 out of 10. And it takes it up to about a 6 out 10, so that then they have the strength to go through the rest of the process.

If you want some specific brands, I'm happy to share those with you. Oh, sure. Just throw out a few things that you have found to be helpful. I think that's, you know, one of the things I'm hoping that people can take away from our series is some to-do's.

And so if you've got some good ones, I'd love to hear them. Yeah. So my favorite adrenal product is Adrenal PX by Restorative Formulations. And my favourite mitochondrial product BCATP by Cellcore and their CT Minerals.

That's a really nice combination. We always do it in the order of replacing the adrenals and then the mitochondria and the thyroid because oftentimes you can improve thyroid thyroid function by doing the other two.

And so you don't want to take thyroid support first and then do adrenals and do mitochondria because consequently you may get hyperthyroid and you have to decrease off the thyroid you just started.

But so we'll take then, I do like the pure encapsulations, thyroid-support complex for making the thyroids work better. and then I'll use different glandulars, which are ground up beef, thyroid, and ramp up on that to get people to an ideal dose of thyroid because everything works better when adrenals, mitochondria and thyroid are optimized.

Yes. Yeah. The happy glands, they do help. And as far as the hypo coagulation, is there any, what's your favorites there?

Why Some People Develop Long COVID

Yeah, I'm mainly using not so kinase these days, the one by Allergy Research Group. So generally a hundred milligrams, one to two times a day. There are some other bigger players, you know, lumbro kinases, beluca, stuff like that, that I will use in certain circumstances based off of some labs, but generally the not-to-kinase works really well.

It's a good place to start. It definitely is. Are you ever concerned about further biofilm disruption when you start these supplements with people? Absolutely.

With natto kinase, as you know, that's also going to disrupt biofilms. you know, potentially it can release some of the other infections that are present.

And so you do want to make sure that you've got binders on board, so that if you are starting to release, some, of these infections, that, you got something to do.

You want, to, make, sure you, got a mentor in your back pocket, So that. you can ask questions. and this is what I call the whack-a-mole, when other, infections start popping up.

And you start to have to address them because sometimes you got to put a little bit on Bartonella and then, oh, you started sweating a whole bunch. Oh, but you've got put little on Babesia.

And then in addition to what you're doing for the COVID. That makes it, yeah, I think that is why physicians are still useful, because it's just interpreting all these symptoms can be very difficult when you're, when, you know, it just your body and it is the first time you walk down this path, cause it it confusing.

And as you said, the testing is informative, but it the history that really tells us what's going on. It's one of the biggest problems we have with conventional doctors is that they're looking for the black and white test, At this point, when you see a long-haul patient, any particular diet or is it really more tailored to the individual or do you have some basic rules?

I do have basic some rules. There's definitely some benefit to intermittent fasting, though fasting can definitely be stressful on the body, so it depends on how well they're able to tolerate if they feel worse on intermittent fasting.

And for those who aren't familiar, it basically means skipping a meal and trying to eat two meals in a five or six hour window. So usually that means that people will eat lunch at noon and then they'll eat dinner at five to six.

So that can definitely be helpful. And then in terms of food, a paleo diet, or even leaning more into a keto, where you're low to no sugars, grains, you are focused largely on vegetables, meat, little bit of fruit, but you know, the less sugar and grains you consume the better off you going to be.

Yeah. During the healing process, yeah, the sugar is a difficult one for so many people that is their instant source of energy. And I guess that's why it's really important that you go through your, as you say, your adrenal mitochondria thyroid so they can begin to have a little bit of real energy and not need the.

Yeah, I just want people to understand that it is often a sign that your mitochondrial are asleep at the switch when you really need sugar to function.

That does help through the day. I worry more, caffeine doesn't bother me as much as the sugar.

Supplements, Diet, and Recovery Expectations

Because of the way it feeds the wrong bugs in the system, it's a problem. But understanding that so many people with chronic illness, their body's ability to metabolize fat and protein is not working well, and so they get stuck with the feeling like they're dependent on the sugar buzz.

At this point, what are your responses? How quickly are you finding patients responding to your program? It really depends on how long they've been ill.

The longer they have been, the longer it takes them to get better. All of our programs are 12 months. So much of this is about expectations. If they had heavy metals, chemicals, molds, and a couple of infections, including COVID in their body, You know, it's going to take a while, you know?

It's gonna take at least a year to get people better. So making sure that people understand what the expectations are, understanding that it is a marathon, this is not a sprint.

Understanding that is going take half an hour to an hours a day of self-care, that may be taking supplements or might be using the sauna or it might taking an Epsom salt bath or I might doing a mindset practice or maybe meditating, so we include all the mind the body and the emotions in our program in order to be able to, to go through this process successfully.

But unfortunately it's taking longer than I think everybody anticipated. Yeah. And that, that is, I you kind of nailed it, you know, is that if this was just a regular post-viral fatigue and it hung around a little while longer, than usual, and you saw someone within that first year, You could probably get them better in a few months, but because this is different, You know, this is not the usual post-spiral fatigue.

COVID and our response to the spike protein seems to really change a lot of physiology. And that makes the rebuilding process a whole lot harder. I think it's important that people understand that the magic bullets that are out there, they may help, but the healing process still is going to take time.

It's not going to be as straightforward. I was just going say that it doesn't mean that people aren't improving along

the way, but generally it's much like the ME-CFS picture where people are experiencing the first month that they're with us.

they have, or the second month, they had like, you know, six bad days and one good day. And then the next month they've got five bad day and two good days, right?

And so it kind of continues on like that, where there are days where you feel like oh my gosh, I'm not making any progress. Then there're days when the lights are on, when you're like things are much different now, so once again it comes back to mindset, to understand what's actually happening, be grateful for the journey, even though it's incredibly difficult, seeing what the Journey has to offer you.

You know, if there is trauma, working on that so that it's an opportunity to heal on a number of different levels if you actually have the patience. Yeah.

I was speaking to, I think it was Oz Garcia the other day and you know what I, what i was complaining about was that most of the people who write about biohacking are athletes and they are people, who are really willing to You know, put four hours a day into X and an hour a days into Y and, you know and show up to the gym every day.

And I sometimes, I'm impressed by those folks, but I would say like, and there's people who are, more like me, my question is when's lunch? And when you're sick, that's really difficult.

Okay. Because the healing journey is not. for the week, unfortunately. Just when you're feeling weakest is when have to find the most inner strength. That's what's so exciting about it.

It sounds like your program is how you really sound like you are bringing that in right in the beginning of mindset. Are there any sources or books or programs that you use or is it your own that work with?

Well, I've cultivated from a number of different places. We have a four-step process where the first step is gratitudes. So, you know, just three gratitudes a day, and it can be on anything, it could be the same thing every single day.

But that has been shown in research studies to be incredibly helpful, not just for anxiety and depression, but also for chronic illness. And then the next step is to have a vision for your life.

You know what is your ideal day look like and being able to hold that for what you want your like to look, like from a personal professional perspective.

and then there's looking at any sort of limiting beliefs that you have. You know, I'm never going to get better, not enough, too old to do this or whatever it is.

Flipping it into empowering beliefs, knowing that life is always working out for you, that all you need to is take a step every single day in order to be successful.

And then the last step in this process is asking yourself empowering questions as opposed to disempowering ones. Oftentimes people are asking themselves, why is this happening to me?

And guess what? If you ask yourself a dis-empowered question, you're going get an answer that you are not going want to hear. Yeah, because you're blah, blah blah.

You know, your brain is going to tell you when in reality, if you ask yourself, how can I love myself more today? Or what can i do today to move myself forward in my health a little bit more, right?

So, so much of this is understanding that as humans, we overestimate the amount we can get done in a day and we underestimate the number that we could get in the year.

Okay, you know, but a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. And if you take a step, if take action, even though it's a little bit every single day, at the end of the year, You're going to look back and you're gonna be amazed at what you accomplished.

Mindset, Gratitude, and Emotional Healing

But if You just sit on your haunches, If you don't take actions, guess what? A year is going To have gone by and You are going be in the same exact place.

That is excellent. Thank you. Those words, I hear them, they sound so simple, but they are so profoundly helpful and move people. You strung them together so beautifully.

I just think people should listen to that again a few times because it's getting rid of the idea that you have to climb the mountain today. Like you said, that, cause it is a mountain when I mean, I have to admit that all it takes for me is, is the cold and I, or just, you know, a belly ache.

And I go, my God, how do my patients actually get up and function every day? You know that the strength that people with chronic illness have or find in themselves is really always amazing to me, to see, despite how you feel.

And that was my story, you know, like when I came out of my chronic fatigue, so much of it was the emotional work that I did, the mental work, that i did.

Yes, I removed a bunch of toxins out my body, but I never wanted to go into the mentally and emotional stuff. That just scared me. But the reality is that, i had to in order to be successful.

Yeah, and I think that is also an important message for patients that so many times when doctors try to convey the importance of your own belief systems and moods, people hear it as being told that it's their fault or that, it is how they think, that got them there, no, but how you think will help get you out of there.

It's not necessarily the cause. Because I say, I've never found anxiety to cause an illness, but it will make any illness a whole lot worse. You know, and so, yeah, so thank you for bringing up the importance of that because we, you know all the medicines and supplements and body work in the world pal in what can happen when you can engage your will.

And at some level, I think that is the, nobody wants to be told when they're sick that it's a gift. I mean, believe me, right? I totally, don't say that lightly, but that if there is one in there.

as you're picking up the shreds of your life after you've been ill, is the fact that you have gone through a process that has had to make you stronger.

Well, I think that's the only way to look at it. You know, like, whether it's, you know… I mean, everybody has struggles and you can either resist them and hate them or you see them as, okay, well, what am I here to learn from this?

Right? I means, this sucks, but what can I learn? And I believe that, that really helped me in my journey and I see that that has helped a lot of people out there.

And so people may be like I don't want to do that. Just try it on. See how it feels, see if it works for you. It's such a pleasure to talk to you and I really feel, it's just so nice to know that you can be available to so many people.

That you figured out how to spread yourself out without spreading too thin and your wisdom, you've done a lot of good work. So I recommend, most of this is in your Fix Your Fatigue book or a of it is there?

Closing Remarks and Where to Learn More

The book is five years old. So it doesn't have anything on COVID in there, but no, all of it's in our programs online. I've got lots of YouTube videos.

Our website is energymdmethod.com. And if people click in the bottom right hand corner, it says, Hey, you want to text with me? You can actually text directly with and we can have a conversation, get on a free call to see if we're a good fit to work together.

Yeah. Yeah. Well, I think that sounds like a very good idea. You know, it's really been a pleasure. It's just so much fun to talk to somebody who has such a breadth of knowledge and wisdom in this field.

And it really bringing it over to COVID because COVID is just an extension of those same illnesses with a twist. That spike protein has done something that I don't think any of us quite yet understand.

Yeah, thank you, Eric. Thanks for having me on. Okay, a pleasure. Thank you for being with us. Stay connected, stay healthy, and join us next time on Doctor Talks, real talks from real doctors on the issues that matter to you most.