Introduction and guest background

For the. Welcome back to this episode of the Reversing Marcel Activation and Histamine Intolerance Summit. I'm your host, Beth O'Hara of Marcel 360, and I'm really excited to have with us today, Doctor Lauren Laks.

She is going to be talking about how we can recover from food fears, especially around things like restrictive diets that so many of us with mast cell activation syndrome and histamine intolerance have dealt with, and not being sure what's safe to eat.

So if you've dealt with those food fears, I think you're going to find both Doctor Lauren's story and the tips that she shares to be really inspiring and invaluable.

If you want to tell you a little bit about her background. So she's a former TV news journalist who became a health detective and functional medicine expert, and now she helps clients worldwide take their health back into their own hands.

She's a doctor of occupational therapy, clinical nutrition, and a functional medicine practitioner. And her work is inspired by over 25 years of clinical and personal experience that made her a specialist in gut health, hormone imbalances, toxic mold recovery, and disordered eating.

And her personal story has been featured on ABC, Good Morning America, CBS, and USA today. Welcome. Lauren is so wonderful to have you here. I'm so excited to be here, Beth, and absolutely love that you're doing this summit.

It's so neat. It well, I'm really you know, we're really privileged to be able to have you, and it's a real blessing to be able to have you because you're going to bring an angle and a message to this that are very few people talking about around those of us who dealt with food restrictions and dealt with having to go on limited diets.

And I know for myself, I got down to ten foods at one point, and that's all I could tolerate. And I kept losing the weight. And it wasn't that I didn't want to eat, I wanted to eat.

But every time I ate, I was so sick. And a lot of people relate to that. And you had another angle on this. Would you be able to start us off by sharing some of your story and and your health journey?

100%, and I definitely can relate to you too, because that's part of my story in there. But my story begins back at age nine, when I was just a very healthy girl growing up.

Lauren's eating disorder and recovery journey

But all I wanted to do was fit in at that time, too. It's like puberty was starting to onset a little bit early, and I got like my first training bra for cookies for Christmas.

Santa brought that to me. That was very embarrassing. And, I'll never forget the day at fourth grade recess standing on that playground and, the Queen bee saying, oh my gosh, you guys, I'm so fat.

I weighed myself last night. I'm 69 pounds. And then turning to each of us in that gossip circle saying, what do you weigh? And one by one we had to go around the circle and report to our drill sergeant.

And at a healthy 80 pounds I was by no means a fat kid. But when the circle got to me, I gulped and I lied and I said, I don't know, I'm just thinking I want to be good enough.

I just want to be good enough. And I'll never forget going home that day, standing in the pantry and turning over, Doritos Snack pack that I oftentimes made after school and learning a brand new language which is fat, grams and calories.

And at age ten, and then by that time in fourth grade, my life path took a really sharp turn. And I would spend the next ten, 15 years of my life living behind bars, inside hospitals and treatment centers, where the classic diet for recovery from disordered eating is pop tarts, pizza and Prozac.

I became super obsessed with counting calories and burning them off twice as fast. And just my life outside of treatment. And so I was living in this yin and yang life for so long, and a lot of what drove that eating disorder and that the seeds, it really wasn't so much about, like being 69 pounds, like that other ten year old girl.

It was really, being good enough and finding, like, my value and worth. In my diet and my appearance, my achievement, and my ability to work out for eight hours a day or diet really hard.

And so this went on for years, up until fast forward to age 23, when I stepped on the scale the day before my second year of grad school was supposed to start, I was, in school for an OT occupational therapy at the time in Nashville, and I saw a number that I had not seen since I was that ten year old girl, actually 1 pound less.

And for the first time in my journey to date, it scared me because it wasn't like my parents saying, Lauren, you're not healthy. Or even doctors standing over me in a hospital bed and saying I'm not healthy.

And it was just really this big, Like I'm an adult. And this is explains a lot of why my body has been shutting down to the past several months, where I was having horrible, like, stabbing gut pains, chest pains and like shortness of breath and just still like, running on treadmills with stress fractures on my feet.

And I'll never forget getting in my car that morning and driving to the gym like I did every morning at 5 a.m. and praying on my way there. God help me make a change today.

And to me, a change meant a tablespoon of almond butter more. Or maybe like 30 minutes less. Working on on my StairMaster. Those little changes were super hard for me to make, and when I got to the gym that morning, I got out of my car and was collecting like my Bibles, my oxygen fitness magazines.

I read for my three hour StairMaster start of the morning and, not one but eight other people walk up to me and say, good morning, Lauren. And you don't really expect to see anyone at 5 a.m., but these were eight other gym goers who had seen me all that past year, and they knew nothing about my story.

But they stepped in and spoke up and said, Gwen, we're worried about you. And another one said, we want to help you. And they didn't let me go in that day.

So if I didn't make it to my workout and within 48 hours, I found myself in the CCU with a heart rate in the near 20s and doctor saying, I may not make it.

And to this day I called those individuals my YMCA angels. And it really was an answer to prayer that I didn't know I was praying for. And, I ended up spending another, well, four weeks on basically heart rate monitors and feeding tubes and IV fluids.

And then at the end of that four weeks, the doctor said, you know, you have one of two choices. You can stay here and continue to be, like, nourished with our Nestlé Toll house, formulas or go to treatment and I chose the latter, even though I just like, was not really encouraged that it would be much different.

And suffice to say, I said I would say stay six weeks. I ended up staying a year, and it really was what my body needed at the time. From the mental, emotional, healing.

And I just allowed, like made up my mind. Life would be different on the other side, no matter what. How many Pop-

Tarts I ate or, egg mcmuffins that were served in treatment.

And so, and I did, and my wife was different on the other side. I got out and began to cultivate this new life, this new relationship with my body and food.

I was introduced to, like, working out in a different way, through a CrossFit community that helped me get out of, like, my gym and my stair masters, as well as, like, a real food diet.

More so, like a Paleolithic kind of approach to eating, which really our ancestral eating. And that really gave me a very, good, better relationship with food than I had had before about calories or about burning more calories on stair masters.

And then part two of my story really began where, you know, after years of chronic stress in my body and chronic, just like not taking care of my body, too.

I began to develop some auto immunities and gut issues and hormone imbalances, which really set my immune system up for not being the strongest that it could be.

And when I was exposed to mold in 2018 is really when my body took a turn that many of your listeners may relate to as well, where the muscle activation syndrome, symptoms began and I was being diagnosed with a different condition every like 6 to 8 weeks, ended up being diagnosed.

There's ten diagnoses to my name on my charts of conditions I had never had before I was diagnosed anything from diabetes to lupus to Hashimoto's. Colitis flared, my celiac flared, and then, like, chronic migraines and just like the list kind of went on.

And then Lyme disease and environmental illness was also like kind of underneath. And what I've learned from my own journey is a lot of times, like we may be susceptible to certain conditions, but it's really when the terrain is disrupted and stress is really elevated and or the environment is not serving us, that those triggers really get pulled.

And so I ended up kind of like you did. That's where I was restricted to like 5 to 10 foods, and not because it's all I wanted to eat or because I wanted to be a negative five genes, but because it's all my body could handle.

And this went on for about three years that I was struggling. Thankfully, I had this functional medicine background. I was actually in training at the time, just continuing to study under my mentors.

And so I had this inner circle of really wise minds. And about 3 to 5, five years ago, like mold illness even wasn't on the radar as much as it is today.

And and mast cell as well. And so it's just kind of like I had to learn by trial and error in the healing process. But I can say, like the mast cell is in remission.

And then the mold illness is as well. I don't believe I could ever live in a toxic mold environment. However, I do know that, my body is so much stronger.

I ended up gaining back the 15 pounds that I lost, just without quote unquote trying, just by calming down and rewiring my limbic system as well as healing my gut.

That's been a huge part of my own journey. And so that's kind of brings me up to speed today, where I do call myself a health detective, because I love helping folks get to the root causes of whatever their health challenges.

And, really just know that you're not too far gone because I, like, really was on death's doorstep in my own life. And I was one of those cases that many people on the outside never thought would recover, even doctors.

I actually had a doctor tell me when I was going to the mass of mold illness. Even in that journey, like Laura. And

there's times conventional medicine will fail you.

This is one of them. And that was when I was in the E. R.

Mold illness, mast cell symptoms, and food restriction

with like, a mast cell reaction that I didn't know at the time was a muscle reaction. And just it's like, wow, knowing now what I wish I knew then what I know now, but I do know now, so I can help folks today.

Thank you so much for sharing one. Your story is very, very powerful. And, I love your vulnerability that you share, share it with and your courage and authenticity.

And then this piece of having gotten to the other side and then these food restrictions hitting you with the mass activation of mold toxicity and going, oh my gosh, is all my past going to resurface here?

How do I but this healthy relationship you found with food sounds like it really served you and bolstered you. So we were talking about things we wish we knew.

And one of the things I wish I had known when I was dealing with the food reactions was that with my cell activation syndrome, sometimes things like a low histamine diet can be really helpful.

And lowering histamines helped me. Lowering lectins helped me a lot. Oxalates were a huge part of my journey and made a huge difference for me. But I fell into a trap about 15 years ago where I was documenting every food that I was eating, and then every time I had a reaction, I would pull that food out.

And what I didn't know that I wish I'd known now is that with mass automation syndrome, you can react to even low histamine foods. Just the act of digesting and swallowing.

And it may have nothing to do with the actual foods it may have to do with. I didn't know I had mold toxicity at the time. I don't even know a whole lot about the Lyme that I had back then, and that those things could be triggering the reaction.

So I willed my food some way too far and unnecessarily. I just didn't know when it was doing the best that I could. And, can you talk more about what happens?

We're not saying that people shouldn't try low histamine and things like that at all. That can be so helpful. But sometimes this can backfire for people and, people can slip into being afraid to eat at all.

So can you talk about that? How does that happen? Yeah, 100%. I mean, it's a similar story and experience in the initial stages of like, oh my gosh, I remember reading A sweet potato and like my blood sugar at the time.

That's kind of the symptomology. It went from 80 to 180 back to 80 and within 30 minutes. And now it's just like riding a roller coaster in your body.

And so like having food reactions that were like, didn't feel good, but then feel like X marks the spot. I definitely don't want that food. And it is like a whack a mole with foods.

And yeah, I think where we can run into roadblocks and what I like as soon learned, is like, if we don't have a strategy, like we take the food out, but like we have to have a strategy or we can and should have a strategy that is like, what are we doing?

What are the push ups we're doing to build up the gut, or to build up the body, to then tolerate foods that like, okay, breather, we need to take a break from the sweet potato.

However, I also like just by repopulating my gut microbiome, for example, where there's going to be more resiliency

to degrade than that, glucose or that, sweet potato or whatever the food is.

So like, the oral tolerance can increase. And I mean, what we find a lot is like, you know, the immune and the gut system gut are directly connected here.

Immune system is in your gut. So that's why I'm talking about the gut in that way. But, I think even strategies of like, you know, what are the natural antihistamines like?

I kind of like integrated those and later into my, like, supplementation strategies as well around, meal times with certain certain foods so I could build up that tolerance and that resiliency versus just tabling food after food after food and then just being like, you're pigeonholed and it's just like, okay, well, I feel better without these.

But like, is there any strategy for expansion? Because healing is really going to happen with, like expansion and like continued healing of the immune and the gut, from the tolerance of foods perspective.

So I think just having, a, not having a strategy for like rebuilding was like a roadblock I ran into that kept like whittling my foods down until I was like, you know what?

I'm going to take, like, proactive steps towards, like, building resiliency to be able to tolerate. And I did all the diets, too. It was like a low histamine phase.

Now I can eat histamine rich foods. And like it's all about the load. A lot of times too. So a lot of folks on oxalate or histamine diets oftentimes are like, whoa, these are all the foods I'm eating are a lot of them.

You kind of realize that. And so it's just kind of like learning how to like, whittle those down and then build it up slowly versus those being, like the majority of what I was eating at a meal.

Yeah, it's so helpful to think about that in terms of we can't just look at taking all those foods out. We have to look at how do we recover our health, how to recover our digestion, the immune system, reset the immune system.

And one of the other things that I wish I had known was to look at replacing instead of removing. So I work with people a lot now, like, okay, if we're going to take out super high histamine, high oxalate spinach, don't just take that out and you know, you don't have leafy greens.

Let's bring in let's bring in a rubella. Let's bring in, the lower oxalate dino kale, where even if somebody has, salicylate intolerance then let's bring in cabbage.

So let's bring in something in the leafy greens. Let's bring in some kinds of lettuces and things like that. Swapping root replace and I yeah, I think the languaging I think even with our foods and the way we talk to ourselves about foods like so for foods that I like will encourage folks to maybe avoid for a time, I just call them not right now foods, because it may not be forever.

It doesn't have to be forever for a lot of them. And so, and then I mean, there's like the discrepancies of, like, if a person really has like celiac disease or gluten intolerance and like the that's the spectrum.

They're like with a lot of our real foods that are found like just with these like components of higher histamines or oxalates, etc.. It's like, okay, in the not right now in the simple swap, what is the swap?

And focusing on adding versus taking away. So typically like that's what I'll lead with is like what to add to your diet versus taking away. Because sometimes when we focus more often than not on what to add, it kind of then like cramps out what we can't have anyways or are not having right now.

So just focusing on how can I nourish my body? Am I got bugs and not languaging? It really like going back to the limbic system and how that limbic system?

If your brain is trained like and attaches to memories or stress? So if we already are going into a meal thinking like I can't have this or I shouldn't have that, or like, this is my like plate of chicken and whatever.

Then we're kind of in that negative state already, so the body is primed to be more stressed out too. Yeah, that's such a great point. And I think about I love I love this tip on the Languaging.

I'm going to start using that myself in the not right now foods instead of a guess and no less. And one of the complaints that we get so much is people say, well, there's nothing left to eat, even just looking at a low histamine list.

And I have myself. I've had to eat low histamine, low oxalate, low lectin, low Fodmap and low glutamate. So that's a lot of getting creative there. And that's been the real key was to get creative.

It's like okay, so I'm not going to be able to do oats. I'm not going to be able to do a lot of these grains, but I can do tiger nuts and I can do sorghum, and I love popcorn, but popcorn, selecting an entire and oxalates.

So I learned how to make pop sorghum. Yeah. And I love that. Yeah. And it's it's really delicious. And when I learned how to make, use tiger nuts, sliced tiger nuts as a cereal and use sliced tiger nuts to make, little popcorn clusters and things like that.

And I think that's really the key is to get creative and loosen up on what we, how we're used to eating. And I loved. So I had replaced mashed potatoes with mashed cauliflower, and I loved that.

And then I lost the FODMAPs when I had some major Sibo and CFO issues. So yeah, yeah, the mash cauliflower. So then I had to switch over and I switched to mashed, mix of mashed rutabaga and carrots and say root veggies, parsnips.

Why food reactions can backfire

Yeah, yeah, yeah, I think it's kind of like to, see it as an opportunity to, like, it's like, you know, for this season, consider just like health makeover, life makeover lifestyle maker work and it just being a season and to know like you're just kind of in that training camp for whatever like the challenge is at hand right now and like to like I think focusing on like there is an end in mind to it's and there's no I mean, we eat differently today than we did ten years ago than we eat five years ago.

Then we're going to eat five years probably from now. Just I go on cakes, even just from a taste perspective of like, what I like, I've been into, I call my gut love shakes every single day.

It's like kcal banana and protein powder. Have almond milk, and then I can actually eat those foods again, which is cool. But, like, you know, to even a year ago, I wasn't eating that for breakfast.

And so I think there's just like seeing it for this season in this stretch and like, what's the opportunity here? For me to, like, learn about my body and to also like, try new, new foods that I can tolerate right now?

Yeah, that's a great way to look at it. And I think if I had known that it was shorter term, I it would have been easier for me because when I was down to ten foods as well at that point, I mean, I had even though there lectins, zucchini and yellow squash were one of the few things that tolerated.

I could eat chicken, I could eat white rice, I could have carrots, I could have salt. I'm good buddies, sister. I still remember. You know what I would, yeah, but I couldn't really eat out because, like, I the histamine issues were such that I couldn't get food.

I couldn't get me. Yeah, if they had carrots, I could get steamed carrots, you know. Right. But I think that that starts to feel, at least for me, it felt really demoralizing.

And I felt depressed around that. That time in my life, I felt socially isolated. And I know you work with a lot of people who have all these food restrictions and are trying to navigate it.

What are some of the thought patterns? Like? What I just shared or other thought patterns that you see commonly, people navigating food restrictions and some of the other ways you might work with those.

Yeah. I mean, I think one of the biggest one is just like fear of how food is going to make you feel. So it's like already priming your body in your brain to know, like, this food is going to trigger this, or this food is in this list of foods.

So it's obviously going to trigger this. And so I think just that prefrontal belief system which can be accurate for some foods. Yes based on past experience.

But as you've also mentioned like massage activation syndrome in particular, we can have layers without it necessarily being the exact food. It's just like it's right time, right place, time to flare.

And so I think just like continually reminding and speaking truth over your body and your brain and your healing, is a road or like an empowering tool one can use because that is a huge roadblock.

And, yeah, I I'll go back to like the almonds example. And I don't eat almonds every day, all day. I used to at the time, and that did make me constipated and my gut not feel great.

But like as I was reintroducing those into my diet and just being like, you know, I'm going to try it and just see how my body tolerates it and get curious.

It was just like, little weird. Like my gut is being able to tolerate this great and not having reactions like I did before. And so I think just having an open mind, versus a closed mind, I think that closed mind is probably one of the biggest, with good reason a lot of times to that it's there.

So just speaking, your body has the perfect blueprint of health and healing already inside. And, I mean, we can see this like, overtly by, like, if you break a bone, slap a cast on it.

In 6 to 8 weeks, the bone is typically going to heal regardless of one's diet, like the body is primed to heal. And so same thing with foods like within a real food context in particular, your body is wired to be able to digest food.

And so I think yeah, just kind of like believing that truth and reminding yourself of that truth is one thing that I see folks just kind of forgetting.

Or perhaps just not tapping into that power and that truth of the healing. And then I think, just like food rules, like a lot of times just associating would be a roadblock. I see folks run into.

It's like whatever diet we're going to try, it's not always customized to you. So whether it's like low histamine or keto or carnivore or whatever's popular at the time for people and what they're following and adopting, it's still having this just curiosity of like, you know, this is a guideline.

And yeah, like, what is my diet? What is the Lauren diet? And diet means a way of life. So versus like, well, what is this food list like? Obviously I'm, I'm allergic or intolerant to all FODMAPs, for example.

There's a lot of categories of FODMAPs. I don't tolerate apples very well. But I do and can tolerate cooked broccoli and cooked cauliflower. Now. Now if it's raw.

Not my friend. But there's different. Variabilities. I think within all like even dietary guidelines that we, just forget. And when we see and so we begin to also associate perhaps identity getting caught up in the diet and following that or even identity within our diagnosis.

And you're not a diagnosis. And so that is also something of a roadblock. I'd see that, just doing that, the brain reminder and of speaking truth and healing into your body because it is resilient and I love the positivity around it, but also honoring the the role of the Olympics system is to monitor for safety, to monitor for fear and look for patterns, even if it may make that pattern recognition incorrectly.

And one of the stories that I use a lot with my clients is that I was in India several years ago, and I've got severe dysentery, and I, was almost hospitalized.

But it took a few days to set in and I know exactly where I got it. I got it at this Italian restaurant I had gone to for my birthday. I was dying for something fresh because I was there for several weeks and, you know, supposed to eat raw things.

There, and somebody else who was there at the time and said, well, I always get the salads there. She been to any like 25 times and said, I always get the sounds of this one restaurant.

I've never had a problem. So I naively thought I was going to be fine and think, oh well. Her gut microbiome is adapted to in India minds. On Tuesday.

So I ate it and I about. She took about three days for the severity to really hit me. And at that point my friends were bringing me Indian food to help me recover.

And they were bringing me all the dolls, you know, the wonderful soups and things like that and wonderful food. But that's all I could smell. And I had the nausea and I was so ill and I my limbic system, even though rationally, I knew it wasn't from that food.

My limbic system made the associate. So I still will get nausea and feel queasy around Indian food.

Replacing foods and rebuilding tolerance

Now if I really wanted to eat Indian food, I know I could retrain my limbic system around it. And I'm not motivated at this point because it's not my favorite cuisine.

But I never had a problem with Italian food, which is so interesting. Never, even years later, never had any nausea, queasiness, even though that's what caused it.

So that just illustrates how the limbic system can start to make this pattern recognition. But it may, mis coat it around a particular food. How do you help people rewire that?

Yes. Oh, I love their limbic system work. I call it gut brain work. But, yeah, I have multiple exercises that I'll do with folks. And it really is like, kind of like walking through the subconscious mind, like, I'll do timeline therapy as one, a tool.

So where we will identify what is the negative emotion associated around that food, whether it's fear, whether it is like, yeah. And I guess fear, probably the biggest one.

There's usually not like sadness, anger, hurt, guilt, shame or other negative emotions that a lot of times those emotions can be present in one's life when the illness or the intolerance onset.

So I'll give you an example. There was one client that developed a histamine intolerance to bacon in particular. And she didn't understand why because she'd always been able to eat bacon.

Well, when we did the work around that, we discovered that she had actually been cooking bacon at the time that she found out her husband was cheating on her, having an affair on her, and the way her body said, and, limbic system was just like games that match.

And she never associated that or remembered that. And, there is this, like, allergy model or theory that a lot of times with intolerances it can be, like onset with a negative emotion experience around that certain food we were eating.

So, I mentioned, like the sweet potato being one thing I became very intolerant to. And that was during a time of heightened like fear and anxiety in my life, just not knowing why my body was kind of like starting to it was mold in the house happening.

And yet, like that food in particular was a food that I was really, associated with my eating disorder past. Like there was a time where I was like and the clean eating and bodybuilding kind of dieting, and that was like a food.

I ate a lot, and, around the time of similar feelings of just, you know, like anxiety around my own body and self-worth. And so just, like, really interesting some of the foods that I kind of like, stood out on my, like, map of what foods I became most intolerant to around, like kind of the emotions, attached to them.

And what was going on. So helping a client kind of do some, digging into their health timeline of like, what are what was the onset of maybe some of these sensitivities because eventually it can become like a domino effect where you're like, I'm just experiencing that.

But like, what was some of the initial emotions around that time in your life when you began to experience the sensitivities? And then we will do some clearing work with timeline therapy going really back, the way you do timeline therapy is to go back to actually the initial time you ever felt that emotion in your life.

So not just that situation. So the first time you ever felt like fear in your life, and a lot of times that's going to happen before age seven, like when we're young and we're not processing fear very well, our emotions very well.

So we go back to that time and then, gain learnings from that time. Just, even a little bit further back. It's really powerful work, though, and a lot of times folks will even remember times genealogical.

So, like, I'm a Holocaust survivor, like ancestrally. So there is a lot of, like, negative emotions that I released at a genealogical level that allowed my body to, like, have less charge around those emotions in my life today.

Just by doing some subconscious retraining with that. So that's just one of many tools, that I'll use, but a very powerful tool that I've found with taking emotions attached around food and food fears.

I think that's that's so interesting. And I hadn't thought about it this way. But many people are developing food sensitivities as their, mass of symptoms are coming on.

And I really want to also acknowledge that it's not like, oh, well, you can just go, oh, well, I'm going to decide today that I'm not in a flippant way.

I'm not going to be have trouble with this food that there's really and it's neurological. It's much deeper than necessarily, what we think of as a conscious thought that it's wired in and we know we've got mast cells in the limbic system, we've got mast cells, whatever.

A nerve ending, that whole axis is there to keep us safe. And it and it's also not to say that people I mean people definitely have it. Food, food allergies, those, you know, it's very you know, people definitely have intolerances.

We have trouble breaking things down. But then what we're talking about is this immune triggering that is happening. And sometimes mis interpreting, a mast cell reaction or other type of reaction as being a particular food where it may not have been.

100%. And also, yeah, the association perhaps just in our conscious mind associate that together and so there in our unconscious mind, therefore like the, the reaction continues to occur, there's also a technique you can do.

I call it dislike to like. So it's like currently you're experiencing a symptom to like something that you've been able to eat before. And it may be on like one of these long list.

We could give, like the cauliflower example there became a time or even a histamine rich food. I like bone broth. I reacted to, for a time. And so if you can think about what is disliked, would be disliked, would be.

I dislike experiencing this. And like, you can maybe imagine what your symptomology is with that and then think about something that you then tolerate, like what is liked, like what would be something that you just really tolerate well?

Zucchini, yellow squash you mentioned at one time. And so then you get a picture, for both of these scenarios. So get a picture of what is dislikes, like when I react to that bone broth, or when I react to that sweet potato and that feeling like I really see that it's a visceral reaction.

I have to that or your Indian example, India food. And then we have that smell, popcorn smell coffee. Like something to break state and then get a picture of what is actually like, like or like nourished.

And you feel nourished by in your body right now doesn't react. So when I eat, like the squash and zucchini, like it's distilled, I have no reactions.

So you can get a really clear picture of that. And then you'll then you'll break state again, smell popcorn, smell coffee or something just to get that out of your mind.

And then what I'll do is I'll walk through just like very specifics on each of those pictures.

Limbic retraining and food fear rewiring

So, like, what color was it, is it bigger that small? Do you hear anything, any sounds associated or visceral reactions you have either way with that?

And then you'll basically just swap them out so you can envision like what is actually liked or absorbed is the zucchini and yellow squash. So you get that same image, that same feeling you get when you eat that food, and then you just then picture yourself drinking the bone broth or eating the sweet potato with that same, those same feelings associated.

And this is just all in your mind. But it really begins to like, loosen the charge on those foods that are more reactive for your body right now. And that's a technique that you could try doing just to really help with clearing some of that, just negativity bias around certain foods that may feel like a long list now.

Yeah, that's a great way to do it. That's a specific limbic retraining technique. And I've gotten so many foods back, particularly on the histamine side, the oxalate side a little lectin wise that I had over two days, I ate a pound of strawberries is my favorite fruit.

That was a huge win for me. I love and no reactions, no itching, no sleep issues, none of the things that I used to get if I had even a bite of a strawberry.

But it took me a while to work back up to that. I can have a little bit of fermented veggies now, like there's the sauerkraut or the fermented, carrots to help repopulate my gut.

So those are been huge wins, and I know that's what we want for other people as well, to start to get these foods back. What are some of your once people are ready to start trying the new food?

Can we talk about some of your strategies for reintroduction? Yeah, I think going low and slow and then picking a food. Yeah. I mean any food really because there's sometimes there's just no rhyme or reason which one I'm going to react more to or less to, within these list.

But I think just like having us like 2 to 3 bites with your meal as well, I think with other foods that you're already tolerating actually is a better way to introduce.

A lot of times when we're trying to figure out intolerances, I'll suggest the opposite. Like just eat it by itself and let's see how you feel. But I think when we're reintroducing foods, to do it with foods that you're already tolerating, and then if you're able to tolerate enzymes, with meals up or apple cider vinegar shots or HDL, like just really supporting your digestive superpowers, along with maybe an alcohol and a histamine, that you're able to tolerate.

And I know you're the expert, Beth, on like that being super individualized for each person, but anything from quercetin to like the MK stabilizer, that's something that's just going to kind of like, even at a brain level, help you just, like, realize, okay, got my reinforcements here.

And then I think, just like, on the background, like doing the work and quotes to repopulate the gut. A lot of times that I find is like we do and just got treatment world a lot of overkill and sometimes less focus on the rebuild until like maybe the very end of your practitioner is like, okay, we've definitely done a killing phase of Sibo or whatever it is, then I'm actually using triple probiotic therapy quite commonly, more so for like actually reshaping the gut versus a lot of antimicrobials and antifungals for folks and finding, just finding the right strains for folks too.

So there's some definitely higher histamine strains. And I think a lower histamine strain approach can be helpful, along with like whether it's spore based or Saccharomyces baladi, which is a yeast based probiotic.

But I think like working with a practitioner to figure out, like how to repopulate your gut and, if yeah, that could be really supportive because it's just a lot of times that oral tolerance is reduced.

And they got an immune system so reactive because there's a lot of dysbiosis and like imbalance. And it doesn't necessarily mean you have a lot of pathogens or parasites in your gut.

It can just simply mean you don't have enough healthy gut reserves or army. So I think just kind of like doing that underlying backend work and building up go low and slow on that front.

That's just going to increase your tolerance and your confidence as you are introducing new foods as well. Yeah, I love that you talked about the digestive supports, and that's one of the big things that helped me get those histamine foods back, was to have a really good quality activated enzyme.

And to use the, the team, along with ginger and DL to help reduce histamine, the gut and use Deo. So I use that combination and the enzyme that I use also helps break down Salicylates.

It does a little bit on the Fodmap. So just as a it's a nice broad spectrum, I think we've probably used some of the same same one. So we have a resources page for the summit.

And I'll have links to the products that we're talking about over there. Mast a360.com/summit and some of the favorites that you listed as well. But one of the ways that I also have people reintroduce is I'll have them start with just, bite of a food.

And I get a lot of people who they're just they're reacting to so many things. I mean, they even have the salicylate issue. All, you know, pile on top of all of this IgG is ECGs, all kinds of things going on.

So when we're ready to start, we'll often if they've got all of these various things, start with things that are low across the board and histamine lectins, oxalate, salicylate.

So we might try something like a couple bites of steamed cabbage like really well cooked or iceberg lettuce or flat leaf parsley. Some of these things there's going to be a little across the board and I'll have them actually do some of their limbic retraining while they're holding this one bite of this food so that they're associating the safety with it and love that sense of safety.

And what they'll do is they'll cook that food. Or let's say we're introducing some other types of protein. So we're going to try to bring Turkey on board, or somebody might try to bring on some unaged bison or unaged beef.

Then they'll they'll cook it but freeze it because of the histamine. Freeze a little serving container so that we've got, they're going to start with one bite and then they'll have a 2 or 3 by a 3 or 4 by 5 or 6 bite, and then kind of a half of the usual serving and one serving little containers ready in the freezer.

And we'll introduce it gradually. So today you know, we'll have this one bite, wait a couple days and then have a little bit more and wait a couple days.

So we have this. It's like gradual entry and and see if we can get the mass on limbic system axis to feel comfortable with bringing that on board. I love that I love it, I'm going to start doing that as well.

It reminds me when I worked in the OT clinics. So have working with kids with just like food Pickiness and a lot of those kids just like eating 5 to 10 foods as well.

You can have them like kiss the food, smell the food, like just play with the food, getting interactive with the food to become more comfortable with that.

So I think that's beautiful. You also bring made me think about one of my patients to me. And she was reacting to like five different foods as well. And she messaged me on Thanksgiving this past year.

And said, Doctor Lauren, you're never going to believe it. Like, I ate anything I wanted. I Thanksgiving like foods I haven't eaten in like five years with my family and does not reacting and like has continued to this day.

And I think like a big part of that work that we did with the gut brain support and like the limbic system is really what made the biggest difference because we were focused so dialed in on, like, you know, whac-a-mole with bringing foods in at a time.

And it's kind of like, well, what we focus on expands is enzymes. And it's like, I can't eat this, I can't eat this, like, and we're just that charge is still there.

Reintroducing foods with confidence

So I think by just kind of like us doing a different strategy and not focusing so hard on the foods themselves and just more on like that, that gut brain access, it was huge.

Like just a really great, For me as a practitioner to, to just be like, this is where a lot of the work I think can also, we can lean into as practitioners to.

Yeah, that's a wonderful example. And I had a client I was working with a couple of weeks ago who had also been some I've been down to ten foods, and there had been a lot of both reactions have had mold.

There have been a lot of trauma. She been caught and, some of the forest fires that have been happening around the time she was, she was getting sick.

And so all this crashed in, and we've been working on this plan of reintroducing the foods to build up this comfort and a sense of safety, of trying new foods.

And then it was time for her to travel. And she she was still kind of locked into that. Well, I can only introduce these foods one at a time. And she said, you know, I've got to travel.

I don't know what's going to be available. I'm still concerned. I've got this is my safe list. Can you give me more foods to try? And she been reintroducing for a few months and having great success.

And so I just said, you know, I think it's time to loosen up on the individual food introduction. Now. It's like so there's stages to these things. So there may be stages to individual food production.

And then they go you seem to be fine with all salicylates now why don't you just eat salicylates freely and see how that goes? You seem to be doing really well with medium to medium high oxalate foods.

Don't go super high and have a sweet potato every day, or have sweet potatoes and beets all in the same day, but and and almonds, you know, don't pile all that together.

But maybe have a little bit of these various things and just loosen up. And just the relief on her was was wonderful to watch. And then she did she went to travel.

She, she didn't eat pizza. She wasn't eating, you know, real fast food, Mexican, Chinese. But she was eating healthily but with a lot more of this freedom.

And you talk about food freedom. I love that phrase. Let's talk about food freedom. Yeah. I think food freedom is exactly as you're describing it right now.

And it's just that ability to like, not let our food or our diet define us, our identity and like, really associating like our identity with whatever it is we're eating and just really being able to have curiosity with food and just be like, you know, what works for my body?

And kind of even within, I call it 8020 balance. And I have a hygiene hypothesis that a little dirt never hurt. So if you've ever heard of that from an immune perspective, it's like the cleaner we are, the sicker we get.

Just like sanitary wise. And so I think with food, it's actually a really great sign if you can eat foods kind of outside, like your wheelhouse, so to speak, that of healing, too.

So I think that's a good barometer. And something to stretch from. And I really developed that from my eating disorder days when I remember Operation Twinkie is what I call it, where first day of treatment, it was like Twinkie or Ding dong.

Which would you choose? I had to choose one, and I chose the Twinkie. Like more sponge, less dark, less evil in my mind. And like, just this epiphany that I had of like, I didn't feel great eating it at all.

However, it's like my body knew what to do. Like get recovered from that. And to this day, like I'm here, still standing. And so just the ability of that resiliency that was developed and a lot of my treatment days of like just the most extreme of extremes being kind of like forced fed foods that my body definitely had a lot of reactions.

Like I said, I have celiac disease and I ate so much gluten at the time, they just didn't even acknowledge that I had that. And so it just like I lived to tell about it.

After four years of that type of treatment, like overtly and my life accumulated inside. And so that food freedom would just be now we have say and but leaning into that and expanding that, even if your body seems to not agree right now, it's like so leaning towards that and feeling like there is hope outside of the box, perhaps of the list, that we put ourselves in.

Yeah, that's a great story. And I know and I just want to explain for people you're not advocating for people with celiac to eat gluten at all, right?

What you're saying is that we can we can take that experience that you had where where you were forced to eat these foods. And you can have choices, but we can go, okay, well, if I'm traveling and I have the option between this salad that might have some high histamine foods in it, or, you know, I've got to get some fat added in and maybe I'm, a little dairy intolerant, but I might be able to handle some butter, or I might be able to do some of this olive oil.

And I know it's not the best quality olive oil, that we don't have to be perfect, that we know that I might even feel a little gunky afterwards, but I'll recover and have that trust in our bodies.

I call them little Wins, and they're very unique for each individual. So it's like a little win, maybe like going to a Whole Foods market and be like, okay, the chicken that they have right now is non-organic, but I'm going to eat it and I can't eat it and feel like lived to tell about it or like you're talking about going to whether it's a restaurant or if it is even like a self induced freedom, so to speak, to just be able to like, try to incorporate something that may have been scary in the past are hard.

And I think there's also this context too, of like when we're introducing foods, to just kind of like do your barometer check on like what is your left off side of the food look like.

So if I was in a moldy environment, then like in fight or flight mode, or if I've, I've moved a lot in my mold journey, it's just like kind of knowing what is my barometer to be able to also experiment.

Like, am I really needing to kind of just focus on like baselines of like, what are my essentials that do help me feel good when I'm more stressed in my life?

And as the stress releases in the other areas, whether it's environmental or if it is like our work stress or we're not sleeping a lot, we can sleep more.

Then we have more bandwidth to be able to, I think, flex that muscle too, without like so much reaction, like to really get a clear barometer of how your body could tolerate more foods.

That's a that's a perfect tip there that if we're still really exposed to a lot of molds, it may not be the time we can introduce those new foods. And when I got whittled down, so little was when I didn't know I had those huge mold exposures.

Yeah. But then when we're in time periods of more stability in our lives, it's a great time to experiment.

Food freedom, gut hungers, and closing resources

If we're if we're really sick of already having lots of reactions, there's a huge stressor going on, then we're already going to be wired to to respond.

So can be timing and all of this as well. Definitely. One more thing I'll say is kind of like you were talking about and just introducing foods as well as just the power of breath and like as you sit down to a meal, like really pausing for a minute time yourself, make yourself take a minute, take 4 to 6 deep breaths and for your nose out there, your mouth.

And that in a way that definitely will calm that limbic system, that nervous system, and increase your digestive super powers too. Now there's one more thing that I really wanted to ask you about and can't wait to hear about.

You have what you call the five gut hungers. Oh yeah. Tell us about this. Yeah. So I think these are universal human needs is what I really call them as well of just like that have nothing to do with food.

But then that can indicate, why we may crave certain foods or why, like, even like the nostalgia of certain foods or diets can, can be really important to us.

So like, for example, the hunger for worse is something that is incorporated or at a human psyche level. So within my like eating disorder days, I definitely was there, like hungering for worth and restrictive eating became kind of part of that hunger for comfort can be another or just even like love connection is another one.

Hunger for purpose in our lives. And, and I kind of walk through this in my guide. My, it's actually seven types of hunger that I have. And it's a lot of times our relationship with food can tell us, give us an insight into what that type

of hunger is.

So I mentioned, like for love and connection. A lot of times there's this like nostalgia that we have with certain foods and like certain foods that may not even make us feel great and like, why do we crave those?

And sometimes it's not so much about the food, but it's about like, you know, my mom made spaghetti and meatballs. Now I love, like, pasta and like the way that our body and our brain remembers, like, and associates, feelings with certain foods is kind of where those hungers can come from.

The hunger for control is another big hunger. And that can kind of lead us down into this just rabbit hole of, like, really being militant with ourselves around the food list, or maybe not even militant, but really just like looking to abide by that food list so strongly and holding to that because there is this in the innate need for control.

And so in this guide, I share the seven types of hunger. And then kind of some signs and symptoms associated with, those hungers and what your food can tell you or your relationship with food can tell you about what.

Also maybe that, emotional tie to it or that connect that, what you're really hungering for. So this is called the seven gut hungers. Okay. And so you offered that as a free download.

I really want to thank you for that. And you can find this guide in our free bonus section. And you can download Doctor Lauren's stuff and that hunger is there.

Thank you so much for all the incredible wisdom and the experience, all the tips that you've shared with us greatly appreciate it. How can people find you? Yeah.

Thank you so much for having me on, Beth. And that's why I always love chatting with you. And, my website is Doctor lauren.com, and it's Dr. la r y n.com.

And, and that's my handle on most of my social medias as well. Just at doctor Lauren and I also have a podcast called The Health Detective. So bringing you insights to uncover truths for your mind, body and soul every week.

And you have some books and you have I know, tell me the name of your Your gut program. Yeah. So the total gut reset is my gut program. And that really health as an inside job is really what it's all about.

So beyond just bloating and constipation, your gut, as I've kind of alluded to, affects so much of our total health. So that's really the crux of that program is really helping heal the root causes, of your greatest health challenges.

And then my most recent books are eating Healthy is Killing you have this great for this, conversation today and then the total gut reset book as well.

Thank you so much again for all your time and generous sharing and just everything that you offer in the world. Thank you so much, Beth. You're awesome.