Functional Nutrition Strategies For Kids With ADHD, Autism, And Chronic Condition Transcript

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Introduction to Dr. Jokers and the summit

Welcome back to the Raising Healthier Kids Summit. I am here with the amazing Doctor David Jokers, who is a doctor of Natural Medicine and runs one of the most popular natural health websites.

You probably heard of it Doctor jokers.com, which has gotten over 1 million visitors monthly, and he's been seeing so many popular shows. He's also the author of several books, including The Keto Metabolic Breakthrough and The Fasting Transformation.

I'm really excited to chat with you today about nutrition and brain development, so thank you so much for being here. Thanks so much, doctor Marsh. This is, a great event to have and, so important that we get the kids in our culture healthy.

Thank you. So. And I'm excited because I feel like for the first time or maybe, you know, maybe not the first time, but certainly more than I've ever seen.

We're talking about kids health and kids nutrition. And I feel like there is starting to become a more mainstream realization that it's so important. And you've been talking about this for a long time, but maybe we can just start there with childhood neurological development and nutrition.

I mean, you've been speaking about this forever, but how does that factor in? And then, of course, we feel like nutrition is important, but maybe you can just talk about that and why you think it's important.

Yeah. So critical I mean for for brain development, for optimal health of the whole body.

Why nutrition matters for brain development

We've got to gotta have the nutrients on board. And unfortunately, in our society, most people are eating ultra processed foods, most kids are eating ultra processed foods.

And these are foods that are high in toxins, low in nutrients. And so one of the key principles I always talk about nutrition is you want to maximize nutrients, minimize toxins.

And when you're eating ultra processed foods, you're getting lots and lots of chemicals, pesticides and herbicides. Heavy metals, all these things that just drive up inflammation.

And then they virtually have no good absorbable nutrients. Sometimes you'll see some synthetic nutrients, like in cereals and stuff like that. But the absorb ability of those is significantly lower than when you get it from Whole real Foods.

So you're really not getting the right forms of nutrients and absorbing them properly. And so most kids out there are walking around, they're toxic and they're deficient.

So they're dealing with deep nutritional deficiencies. And the way that we see that is that they can't sit still, right? They can't pay attention. They're hyperactive.

I think it's like 7 million children in the United States right now. With ADHD. And so I think it's like 11% of the kids in America with ADHD. You see it with childhood obesity, right?

When kids are overweight or obese. You know, that's nutritional deficiency and toxicity right there. You see it with autism, which I think it's like one inch 36 kids now.

And so all of these things mental health disorders, anxiety, depression at an all time high, and these are all related to too much toxins and nutritional deficiencies, that kind of combination resulting in chronic brain inflammation and whole body inflammation.

And so we're dealing with an epidemic here. Yeah, I, I couldn't agree more. And I talk about that very specifically all the time because it's unfortunate that somehow we have taken out what our food is doing to us.

It's like, oh, we're just eating food and it doesn't make any difference. And then you look at the numbers and the increase, like you mentioned, a lot of great numbers like around ten, 11% ADHD, 1 in 36 autism, 1 in 6 neurodevelopmental disorders.

I mean, almost every kid has a chronic disease at this point. It's like half or more, which is insane. And of course, it has to do with the food. I mean, we're literally built of what we eat, right?

And if we're not eating nutrients, we're not eating healthy food, then there's no way our body is going to function perfectly and well and how it's supposed to be.

So let's let's dive into that a little bit more specifically because you mentioned ultra processed foods. Maybe we can get a little bit more specific and talk about what ultra processed foods are specifically and some of your favorite, like the worst foods that we really don't eat consuming versus the best foods where you want to be getting more of.

And I'm sure that's, you know, ultra processed versus real foods. But let's dive into that a little bit for sure. Well, there there's a difference in different types of processed foods.

What counts as ultra-processed food

So for example olive oil is a processed foods. So you take olives you press them and you get the oil out of them. Right. Olive oil can be one of the most nutrient dense things you put in your body where the healthiest, most anti-inflammatory things you can put in your body.

But ultra processed foods, ultra processed foods are things that don't resemble food. So, for example, pretzels, cookies. You know, if you go down the middle section of the aisles, you're going to see all these different things, right?

Macaroni and cheese, candy, all of that kind of stuff. It's mostly chemicals. It's most just ultra processed, meaning that they are processing all the ingredients down.

And when you look at the ingredient label, you're going to see a whole bunch of different chemical sounding names. Sugar, even sugar itself is just so highly processed by the time it actually gets there.

And so that's what we talk about with ultra processed foods. They don't resemble food, and are really high in toxins so that we really shouldn't even categorize them as food.

And so, so certain things can be processed, like you can make a good quality protein powder that's a processed food, but it could be beneficial. Extra virgin olive oil can be processed and that can be beneficial.

And I always tell people you want 80% Whole foods, right? At least 80% Whole Foods. And that's going to be your, your meat, your so like any sort of, you know, steak, chicken fish, right.

Things like that. It's going to be your, your vegetables, your fruits and vegetables. Right. So colorful fruits and vegetables, that's going to be things that are whole on denatured.

You want about 80% of your diet being that. And then you can get a little bit of the processed foods. You could use olive oil. You can use, you know, different types of healthy oils.

You can use, for example, let's say coconut flakes. Right. So coconut flakes would be somewhat processed, but, you know, it resembles, you know, it's coming from a coconut.

And so there's a, there's a room for some, some processing there. Stevia extract. Right. That's a processed food. But you know, using it in small amounts to sweeten something up can be beneficial.

It's totally fine. CBI actually has some good research for, helping support blood sugar stability and, actually actually great for the immune system as well.

And so you can have some of the processed foods, but try to stick with mostly whole real foods. And so the foods we definitely want to avoid are going to be, your processed seed oils.

That's going to be your corn, soybeans, safflower, cottonseed, canola oil, anything with those, we definitely want to avoid those oils. They become rancid in the body and they drive up oxidative stress.

And oxidative stress is the precursor to inflammation. Oxidative stress at high amounts. All of us have some level of oxidative stress is kind of like internal rusting.

So like when you leave an apple out at browns, or if metal gets gets, wet, it will rust that that happens in our bodies as well. It's normal natural process of metabolism.

But when we are consuming foods and taking part in activities like smoking, drinking, lots of alcohol, getting too much sun exposure, for example, getting sunburn, these are all processes where we get to oxidize, right?

Too much oxidation taking place. And so we want to keep oxidation under control. So when we consume these seed oils they just drive up. It's almost like pouring gasoline on a fire right.

They drive up oxidation within all the cells. And that's a precursor to inflammation. And so we talked about all these different mental health issues.

What we found now is that these mental health issues, they used to say it was a chemical imbalance. Like you have a serotonin imbalance, this and that.

Now we know the one key thing we find with all different types, whether it's autism, ADHD, depression, anxiety, they all have one major thing in common.

Avoiding seed oils, sugar, and toxins

It's inflammation, inflammation and oxidative stress. Within the mitochondria, oxidative stress will hit the mitochondria within the neurons and then that will drive up inflammation in the brain.

Right. Inflammation now is the immune system going out trying to break down, all the damaged, cells. Right. All the cells that are senescent and dying and damaged.

Now the inflammation is coming up, driving that up, and then that's going to cause, you know, instability in in neurotransmitter production and the receptor sites in the, in the neurons for receiving and signaling, you know, getting the proper, signaling processes from the different neurotransmitter interactions.

And so it's not the problem didn't start with neurotransmitters. And you weren't you weren't created with a serotonin deficiency. But when you have inflammation, chronic inflammation in the brain, it's going to disrupt, the different unique neurotransmitter messaging, signals.

And so that's what ends up happening. And so again this is this oxidation. So seed oils are a big problem. Processed sugar you know it's hard to keep kids off of sugar.

But the more that you can do that the better the more that you can use alternatives. So we talked about stevia or maybe like a raw honey or something like that.

If you're trying to make something sweet for them, that's going to be significantly better. Just pesticides and herbicides in general. I recommend trying to do as best as you can to go organic.

You know, in general, when it comes to diet, we want to maximize nutrients, minimize toxins. And so when we look at conventionally raised animal products or, conventionally raised produce where it's sprayed with pesticides and herbicides versus organic, you're getting about three times the amount of chemicals and toxins when you are somewhere between 3 to 6 times more, when you're consuming a conventionally conventional diet versus, let's say, 60% organic, right?

It can be almost impossible to go 100% organic, but I think 50 to 60% is is reasonable for most people. And, you know, the Environmental working group has a list of dirty dozen and clean 15.

And so the clean 15 are ones that are less sprayed. And that's usually the general rule I tell people is if you're going to eat the outer layer of your produce, for example, for say something like, like a strawberry or a blueberry, you the pest.

It's very easy for pests to consume those. And if you've ever tried to grow, berries or if you tried to grow tomatoes or something like that, you'll see that, you know, it's very easy for pests.

They love those those types of fruits. Very easy for. Them. Yeah, absolutely. They get them the squirrels and the squirrels. Yeah. Absolutely. Yeah. Squirrels, birds. Right. Things like that.

And so those ones tend to be highly sprayed. And so you do want to be careful with those making sure you're going as organic as possible, as opposed to something like a banana or an avocado where you're going to peel the outer layer.

And so that outer layer is a thick rind. It's very hard for pests to penetrate that. In fact, pests typically don't unless it's like fully ripened, and softer.

And so usually you're fine. It's going to have much lower amounts of pesticides and herbicides, usually fine getting that conventionally, conventionally grown.

And so that should be fine. But trying to go as organic as possible is one of the best things you can do for your health and your children's health. And particularly with animal products trying to go organic, grass fed, pasture raised with seafood, wild caught.

The reason being is that with seafood, when it's farm raised, they usually are giving them synthetic, foods. Same thing with conventional. They're giving them pesticide laden grains.

With seafood again, they're giving, you know, basically chemical based foods. And so that's going to bio accumulate in the tissue of the animals or in the dairy of the cow, for example.

And you're going to get a lot of antibiotics. You're going to get a lot of pesticides, herbicides, growth hormones, different things like that that are all toxic and inflammatory.

So the more that you go organic, the better off you are staying off of seed oils, really prioritizing healthy fats. And so what I always recommend, like, you know, I have four young kids.

And so in my family, we we, you know, whenever we're setting up our meal, we always think about our protein. We

want to make sure we've got a lot of good protein on board.

Right. And so that's going to be your wild caught seafood, your, grass fed animal products, pasture raised fish. And then we think about healthy fats.

What are their healthy fats. Are we going to add in there. Is it going to be maybe our are we what are we going to cook with. So we might cook with butter.

That's typically what we cook with. Or beef tallow or maybe some in some occasions will cook with coconut oil. Right. Those are very stable fats that don't denature and oxidize under higher heat.

And so therefore they create more stability. And they and they actually tastes really good, in the food that we're consuming. And then, you know, we want to make sure we got a lot of, like I mentioned, protein, healthy fats.

We might use high polyphenol extra virgin olive oil, which is really powerful.

Choosing organic foods and healthy fats

Great for reducing inflammation, great for brain health. So if we make a salad we might use the olive oil on that. Or in some cases we use avocados. Right.

Which is a healthy fat. Those are all good healthy fats that we want to be consuming. And then we want lots of colorful fruits and vegetables in our meals.

So like for my kids, their main dessert, like after they finish their protein and their fats and things like that is fruit. We give them whole fruit, and we get a wide variety of fruit.

So they love peaches, they like pineapple, they like mangoes. We get apple. We always have apples and oranges around, grapes. They love the berries, of course.

And so this is what we use as fruit or as a dessert for the most part. And then one day a week, you know, my wife will give them, like, an ice cream night or it's a, you know, like an organic, sometimes they'll get that the organic, ideally grass fed, yogurt.

I'm sorry. Yeah. Ice cream. Or we'll get, like, a coconut milk base. There's a lot of coconut milk based ice creams, and that's kind of like special occasion for them.

But for the most part, we're giving them real fruit as kind of a dessert after they consume their proteins or healthy fats and get, you know, their major nutrients in and the fruit's got polyphenols and antioxidants, helps reduce oxidative stress, get good fiber to help support their microbiome.

And of course, it's got, you know, some some natural, healthy sugar. That's fine. When, when you've got the other good nutrients on board for your kids.

Yeah. No, I mean, that's such a great answer. And it's it's so, I guess frustrating that it got so complicated, I think for everybody in terms of eating, I mean, it is really very, very simple.

It's not simple in terms of like the way society is built, but it's very simple in terms of what to eat. You just eat real food, things that we've always eaten.

I mean, it's been so over complicated by companies who tried to market to us and trick us and try to make these products to be, hyper palatable and throw in a bunch of cheaper ingredients.

But at the end of the day, you just eat real food fruits, vegetables, proteins, fats. I mean, that's what you want. And if you're doing that for the most part, you're going to be okay.

It's not complicated. We don't need food pyramids. We don't need this stuff. We just need to eat actual things that we know what they are. And, you know, just really diving into to what you mentioned, like that's that's really it.

It's not it's not overly complicated. We want to decrease our inflammation. And we do that through eating healthy food. That's it. It's it's not not to complicated.

But I think what is tough for a lot of parents is we've now grown up in the society in the way that it is with two parent working homes and, you know, prioritizing work and the financials.

And obviously these things are important. But but it's not what it kind of used to be. And so the biggest concern for a lot of parents is like, I'm very busy, I'm very tired.

And for sure, without question, making your own food can take longer. A lot of times I mean, preparing food as a, as opposed to buying something that's packaged already pre-made or doing something on on DoorDash or whatever it takes longer.

So do you have some suggestions around but busy schedule? And I would just say for me, before you get into it, you know, I do talk about this a lot. And I always say like, yes, that is true, right?

That is a fact. And I think it's just something that we have to prioritize. I don't know if there's any specific easy way other than maybe preparing things a little bit more food to have multiple meals per week, things like that.

But I just think it's something we have to reprioritize. So what what are your thoughts? Yeah, 100%. And you know, one of the big challenges also the social pressures that you get, like my kids are in church, they're in, we play, we homeschool them, but they're what we play sports.

And after, you know, we just finish our baseball season. We play sports year round. My coach, my son's. And, you know, there's there's the team snack list, right, for after the games.

And most of the time it's processed foods. And so fortunately like we've trained just trained our kids. So my kids will look at the bag that they get and they'll be like, well, I guess I can eat the orange, right?

And I'll be happy and I'll be grateful for that. But there is the social pressure a lot of moms feel like, well, you know, their their friends are doing this.

You're right. They're giving snacks out at at church or, or at school, right? They don't want to feel left out and things like that. And so a big part of it is certainly creating an identity.

Right? So with our kids, we really try to emphasize why, the reason why, you know, we we stick with natural health principles, right. And, and good nutrition.

And so I will tell, you know, our kids know that most kids are just eating really bad and they're poisoning their body. Right. And it's really unfortunate, but they're going to but our kids are going to have better brains.

Better bodies aren't going to get sick as often, and they're going to be significantly healthier. And that's what we want to be. And we want to be a light to the people around us.

So we want to be joyful, full of life, right? And be a good influence on the people around us and help encourage them to make better health choices. And so that's kind of the identity that I've imprinted in my kids.

And so they don't give me, unfortunately, they don't give me problems. You know, with, the social pressures around it. But that's really important to continually speaking to your kids like that and help them. They can be a part of the solution.

Making healthy eating work for busy families

And that all those snacks, that they may look good, they may have lots of colors in them and, you know, you know, fancy advertising on the front may look really, really appealing, but that's actually causing major problems that they're that their friends are going to get sick, or be overweight and not really be able to succeed in life the way that they are because they're doing those things.

And we want to make sure that, you know, with my kids, I want to make sure my kids have the best chance to thrive in life, and that's why we feed them the way that we do.

And fortunately, you know, with eating healthy, it's from a from a taste perspective, it's better than it's ever been. You have so many great options now.

It does take some time and we'll get back to that. But you know, utilizing things like stevia and different herbs and all these healthy fats, grass fed butter like I mean it's amazing, right?

So like, you know, if you take a kid that hates broccoli, for example, if you steam up the broccoli and then you put a bunch of, you melt enough of that grass fed butter on there and put some good herbs on it.

They'll have a different opinion of it, right? Because now it actually tastes much more pleasurable and enjoyable. And so, you know, when I was growing up in the 90s, my mom actually was studying to become a naturopath.

And so I remember, back then, the popular diet was the macrobiotic diet. And so macrobiotic diet was like so bland. You didn't use you didn't use salt, and it was like Lima beans, steamed kale with no salt on it and like, like a tofu, like a piece of tofu.

Right. And it was just so like, I would rebel again. Lot kids do that. Yeah. It was horrible. Right. And so most kids are going to, like, completely rebel against something like that.

But when you start, when you, when you make sweet potato fries, for example, cooked in beef tallow or coconut oil, you know, when you're, when they're able to consume, like a really good grass fed burger or, like my kids like salmon.

So wild caught salmon or my, my wife will make salmon burgers. Or you can get grass fed hot dogs, right, that are that are actually really good, good ingredients in them.

And so they really enjoy these types of things. And so that makes it really helpful. You know, going back to the time perspective, some, some things that can help are making, an abundance when you do have time.

Right. So making enough for three days, for example, you know, on a Sunday or something like that, cooking up a whole bunch of chicken breasts or a whole bunch of grass fed burgers, or a whole bunch of grass fed hot dogs or salmon, or some sort of healthy protein and kind of making things in advance.

Right? So setting up their lunches, things like that, and, you know, sticking them in your cooler, and just pulling them out. So having some organized action like that where you're able to make in advance, I think is super helpful.

And that's, that's, that's something that we do in our home. And then also you can get things for example, like, like with my kids or playing sports or traveling a lot on the weekends for tournaments and stuff like that.

And so, Paleo Valley grass fed meat sticks are like our best friend. So we have a bunch of those on board. We'll get, like, some, fortunately, my kids do well with dairy, so we'll get some organic, cheddar cheese.

Right? Or you can get, like, cheese sticks. We'll get, you know, cucumbers and celery and things like that. Carrots that, pickles, things like that, that, you know, we can make just, you know, basically quick, easy, easy to grab kind of snacks and meals.

So when we're traveling or if we're on the go, those are all things that, that, that become very, very helpful. You

know, you can get more snack bars or certainly one of those processed foods that, you can overdo.

And but they do have healthier snack bars now, which is, which is good with healthier ingredients. And, you know, that taste good that kids like. And so, again, trying to go as organic as possible with the snack bars, minimal amount of, chemical sounding names, usually you're going to do better.

And, and so that's what you want to look for there. Yeah I again I couldn't agree more. And it's always nice to hear well we're all the same the same stuff, which is fantastic because it's the kind of things that I always talk about.

But yeah, I mean, the goal is not to punish our kids or make them eat food they don't want. It's to teach them to eat healthier food, healthy ingredients, and by giving them food they actually do want.

That is a healthier version. And it is great that there are a lot of companies now that are making healthier versions. And so you don't have to go from chips to broccoli, but there are better versions of chips, better versions of snack bars, better versions of pouches.

Whatever you're doing, there are ways forward. I mean, sure, it'd be great if everybody had their own farm and made their all their own food, but that's not realistic, right?

So I think that we have to meet everybody where they are. And if we start to slowly move in a more positive direction and decrease some of the chemicals, and then that's great. And we're lucky.

Our bodies are amazing and they can detoxify and we can handle some chemicals, but it's just way too much right now. And we have to find every place that we can to decrease those chemicals a little bit.

Because at least to me, you know, most of what we're seeing with chronic disease, I think a lot of it is really just these toxins and chemicals. And I do think if we decrease it, then we'll we'll see the trends change a little bit and some of these things will start to come, come down.

So I agree, you know. Absolutely 100%. And you know, Doctor Joel, I don't know if you're you're a case study. I know I am so like back when I was on a high processed food diet, it was really hard to pay attention in school.

It was really hard to, you know, I would sleep in my high school English class. And I struggled in school. I struggled to pay attention. And as I made nutrition changes and really kind of found purpose in what I was trying to study, I went to the top of my class, and I know so many other people that that has been the case, and I've seen it with lots of parents.

I'm sure you have tons of case studies, parents that brought in. They're struggling student to you, and they're like, I can't get, you know, and maybe they're on medications even, and they're still struggling to pay attention.

And then you make these diet and lifestyle changes. And three, six months later, it's like, almost like a new, new child that you're dealing with. So there's a lot of hope.

I know that there for sure is. And for me, you know, I when I met my wife was really the big one.

Building a healthy family identity

And now wife is really one of the big changes because she's very health conscious. She always was. And just changing up my diet, you know, you feel so much better.

I was never overly ill, which was great. I mean, I'm lucky in that sense, but, you know, thankfully I never got to that point. Maybe I would have, you know, over time.

So I think it's the simple things. But you, you realize very quickly how much better you feel and the, the most obvious way that to me, that you see it is when you when you eat better, when you eat healthier and then you eat

something else that you used to eat and you're like, oh my gosh, like this.

I feel so bad. And you didn't even realize how bad you feel because your body is just so used to it. Or for me, I would say like one of the biggest moments was when my, he's now five, but he was maybe three and a half or so.

I was at a party and he it's very healthy, just like your kids do. And you know, we gave him a little bit of the cake that was there. Not very much. And it wasn't even that bad a cake, but, like, you know, a few bites of it.

And he was a completely different child the rest of that day. And that's just a few bites of not that bad a cake. And it's like, well, Carl, what is the food doing to everybody else if that's just like three bites?

For him. So I think it is it is really something that is such a huge deal. Right now. And most people just just don't, don't recognize it. So I really appreciate you kind of talking about this and talking through it with me.

And maybe just to finish up, you know, we want to hone in on like one specific point, something that somebody could do today or maybe a first step. What what would be your your advice for somebody who wants to make a change for their family today?

Like one thing that they could do, that's pretty actionable. Yeah. I think it's just establishing an identity. Right. And so ultimately, like, for example, you know, if you want to exercise regularly, if you want to get in great shape, you establish an identity as I'm somebody who exercises like, this is just who I am.

This is what I do. And so, when it comes to a healthy family established identity, that you are a health conscious family, that you're a family that, will sacrifice in order to make sure that you're healthy because that's your highest priority is a healthy family.

You know, I just celebrated my birthday, and the number one thing I wanted for my birthday was a healthy and happy family. Right? Part of that was obviously nobody getting sick.

But also, you know, I didn't want my kids fighting, right. And and things like that. And so I, I try to establish that identity, which isn't always perfect.

Right. Especially happy family. Right. But but, you know, trying to establish identity, I think, in your family and kind of setting the tone for it, the kids will start to follow through, like, my mom was a natural path.

She's a natural path now. Growing up, it took her a while. So she she was a nurse to start and my dad very into processed foods, didn't want anything to do with, you know, good nutrition.

And so she really had to kind of try to pull him along. And then all of us, you know, I'm one of the older, older kids in my family. And so I rebelled against the things that she wanted to do.

And now I look back and every I'm one of one of six kids, all of us are health conscious, like we all make healthy choices. We don't eat a bunch of junk food.

You know, we all make healthier choices. I'm obviously natural health doctor, right? And so my mom had an uphill battle because she started later. I was older when when she started trying to make these changes.

And she had a husband that was very resistant, but ultimately she stayed persistent with it. Established the identity for the family. And, you know, it's it's worked out right.

In the Bible, it says, train a child up, right. And and, you know, and they will not depart right. And so ultimately, my mom established that identity for our family.

Where to find Dr. Jokers

And even though my dad tried to establish a different identity, he wasn't for the identity she wanted. She was persistent enough. And he couldn't deny the fact that she was right at the end of the day.

And so, and so it made a big difference in all of, you know, me and my other five brothers and sisters. And now, you know, we follow her lead from that perspective.

I love that. Well, I mean, thank you so much for for sharing your perspective. And thank you for all that you do and all the families that you've helped.

And just to finish up, maybe you can tell people, where, where the best places are to find you. Yeah. Doctor jokers.com is a place to find me and tons of great content on the website.

And of course, I'm on social media, YouTube. I have a great podcast as well. Doctor joggers, functional nutrition podcast now. Awesome. Well, thank you so much for being a part of the summit.

And thank you for everyone for being here. Have a wonderful rest of the day and we'll see you in the next episode.