Harness Oxytocin For Stress Relief & Fertility Transcript

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Introduction to Oxytocin

So welcome, Dr. Diane. It's so great to have you here. I'm very excited to talk about a hormone that I feel like doesn't get enough attention. And you're kind of the specialist in sexual health, intimacy, the feelings of safety, all of the things that this hormone is about.

So what is oxytocin? Thank you so much, Dr. Aumatma. It's so great to be here with you. And yes, I love you're totally right. I love, love, love this topic.

And I love, love, love this hormone oxytocin. And oxytocin is a hormone that I think if people have heard of it, they most have heard about it is like that love hormone or the cuddle hormone.

When. All we hear right like, oh yeah, I'm in love and I have some oxytocin. Yeah, but there's so many more things as hormone actually does for us. It's like a master regulator in the body.

And one of the things that will regulate is cortisol, our stress hormone. And there's like a vicious cycle that happens oftentimes with cortisol and oxytocin, where cortisol, our stress hormone, oftentimes will cause a lowering of oxytocin, but then oxytocin will actually help to lower high cortisol.

So we have this like vicious cycle, right, where somebody has cortisol, they're not interested in the things that are against them, oxytocin. And then oxytocin is actually what we need to regulate that cortisol.

So a lot of the work we do is really in a lot of work I do. It's really in helping people, women and men really understand how to increase their oxytocin as a way of regulating that, you know, that cortisol.

But in addition to that, we have so many other things that happen with oxytocin. So oxytocin is that hormone that can make us feel safe. Oxytocin has been shown in research to help us sleep.

How to Increase Oxytocin Naturally

Oxytocin has even been shown to help with things like regulation of serotonin and dopamine, those hormones that are related to happiness and motivation and drive.

So I look at this as like this mass deregulator hormone that has the capacity to regulate so many things. And, you know, one of the things that I think will probably come up in our talk today, too, is it even has a capacity to regulate things like progesterone and our sex hormones.

So it's so interrelated as a master hormone. And I love it because there's so many times we're seeking out all of these things outside of ourselves to heal, right?

Yeah. There's a self this thing we can self generate. So it's. Cool. So this is the, it's so funny because as you were talking, I'm like, great, where can you just like free my veins?

You got to eat. Like, it sounds amazing. I need more of this. So the reality, though, is like oxytocin. A, we can't measure it yet. So it b I think it gets less bandwidth because like we just are not able to measure.

We're not able to know if someone is oxytocin deficient. Do you have a magical way to figure out if we need more oxytocin? I mean, the way I describe it to people is if you feel like you could sleep better, if you feel like you could feel more safe, if you feel like you could have a better stress response, if you could feel like more joy and happiness in your life would be beneficial for you, any of those things feel true.

You probably could benefit from more oxytocin. So that's generally how I approach that conversation. Yeah, great. So basically, like everyone all the time.

You're at. Okay. So the second question then is because I know like everyone's wondering how do I get more of these it so let's just dove right in. What are the things that are going to support oxytocin?

Because as much as we would love an injection of it, it's not like. We can. Actually get it prescribed from compounding pharmacies intranasal. Right. So you can actually get it prescribed.

But from a standpoint of like, you know, more regulatory standpoints as far as regulation in your body. Right. It's like it's like so many things like, yeah, we can take, you know, bioidentical hormones.

They're amazing. They do amazing things for women, I feel. And then and at the same time, as much as we can self-regulate, you know, and produce our own hormones, that's that's the kind of the gold standard to shoot for.

Yeah, right. We can do that with oxytocin. Like we don't need to get a prescription. So one of the things, if anybody's going to Google how to make more oxytocin online right now, we are probably going to get like all of these articles that are going to come up that are going to talk about the 22nd hug and 20 smell is important because that has been shown in studies to be what the length of hugs are in order to improve oxytocin levels in the body.

A lot of the studies have been done as you're kind of talking about, like the a lot of the studies have been done on animals. So we have to say that. But the thing that to understand is oftentimes that and I know you've seen this too, like when we look at research and we look at headlines that show up in the news, they pull this one little piece out.

And so that's why online you can be like, oh, 20 second hug. But the other thing to really like when you actually go back and look in the study where a lot of these articles have come from and read that, what we find is that in the study, what they did is it was like 10 minutes of actually exposure to the other person in a warm way or the other not a warm way.

Right. And so that 10 minutes of exposure, then there was this 20 second hug. So what that's telling us is there's more to it than just like that hug in the touch.

There's also this feeling that comes with that safety, that interaction. So we're still learning about it.

Safety, Connection, and Oxytocin in Relationships

But what we what I would say with what I've seen from a research perspective is we want to make sure that we do these longer hugs, that if you've never done a 20 second hug, like next time you're hugging somebody, I would encourage you to count to 20 because it.

Actually one time. When I like because I am like a little bit obsessed with this particular research fact. So sometimes I like count, I'm hugging people and it's very, very common for like a hug to feel long when it's like five or six or 7 seconds, right?

So it it's very difficult sometimes in day to day to reach that 20nd hug. And we want to make sure that oftentimes, like, oh, if we are hugging somebody, it's like a hug when we see them.

Well, we haven't had that 10 minutes of exposure or we haven't had that 10 minutes of interaction. So yeah. Connectedness that comes from a conversation or like being present with someone and then the physical connection, it, it, this is very interesting because it's also like women always say, like, Oh, I need to feel connected before I want to be intimate, right?

So like women are maybe naturally tuned in to this idea that there's that emotional bond and intimacy that that's present before that physical connection is going to feel good.

I think that's likely true, and I think that's likely particularly true in women because what we see from male bonding, like male men do not have near the number of receptors of those loading docks on the cells for oxytocin to affect them.

So as, as, as women, we have way more capacity for oxytocin to actually impact our body on a cellular level. But men for men, they do have oxytocin receptors.

Oxytocin does stuff that even has been shown to improve things like sperm motility. Oh, yeah, it has really good benefits for sperm. Actually. But from a bonding perspective, you know, men also secrete a lot of vasopressin of a different hormone and that's part of their bonding.

And vasopressin is a lot more like this, like we did it mentality. It's like, you know, it's like war or sports or coming together for a common goal, right?

So my suspicion based upon your question is like that safety that is like maybe needed in some of that that initial stages of that warm greeting might be particularly extra important for women and oxytocin, you know, release as compared to men.

Yeah. What did this study compare? Men and women or was it only women? Did it differentiate? Okay. Not very interesting racing. Okay, cool. Yeah. Well, that's that's really fun.

I think we were following this thread of like, what are the other ways to support the release of oxytocin in our bodies. Yeah. So in addition to things like hugging, obviously a lot of people obviously and I say this obviously just because I think a lot of people know this, but I'm sure there are some people that don't orgasm is a huge way of releasing oxytocin.

And if you're somebody that's listening and you've never had orgasm, do not fret like this is very, very common. Very, very common. And especially women. There's nothing wrong.

It just means your body hasn't figured out how to do that yet. There's things we can do, but that is something. But even if you're not, you know, having orgasms or of you are either way soft touch.

So that type of touch, that is almost like that tickle type of touch that's very, very, very gentle. That is amazing for releasing oxytocin. And one of the things, too, when it comes to safety, which is, as you said, it's like oftentimes safety is connected to being in the mood, especially for women around like to I feel emotionally safe so I feel physically safe.

All of these things that soft touch can really relax. The body can really release that or that oxytocin. I can help women especially get into that safety feeling and able to engage, you know, whether it is just emotionally and intimately or even sexually in a much more deeper and profound way.

And then we start getting into that really yummy, juicy, vicious cycle. But this also also secretes like oxytocin, also secretes with love and that feeling of being in love.

So there's lots of different ways we can get this secreted. Amazing, amazing. Are there other are there nutrients or specific things that are essential to making sure that we have kind of the building blocks to make oxytocin?

One of the most important things I find from a nutrient perspective and oxytocin actually comes down to the receptor. So receptors are just to make sure everybody's on the same place before we go into this medical jargon, receptors are these carbon loading docks on the cells, right?

That's how I describe them as like in hormones, like oxytocin and other things need to be able to land on the loading dock in order to impact the cell positively.

So it's very, very common. And even some people genetically will have oxytocin receptors that are not working as

well. So one of the key things to help with oxytocin utilization actually is like making those receptors work really well.

And what I've seen is as a couple of studies on magnesium and the importance of magnesium for actually making those receptors healthy. And that's so interesting, right?

Because this naturopath, we talk so much about magnesium and stress and the use of magnesium supporting this response. And then here's another mechanism through which it's helping is we use the magnesium.

Those receptors work better, oxytocin works better, cortisol goes down. Mm Yeah. Sometimes it feels often like magnesium is the winner for all things hormones. So making sure we have enough magnesium is pretty essential.

Yeah. So pretty much just people across the board. Yeah. Yeah. Is there, are there. I'm just curious, are there any foods that support oxygen? Often. Not that I've ever specifically seen.

You know, a common thing people will ask me oftentimes is like, okay, well, what is the what are the aphrodisiac foods? What are the foods that are out there?

And in general, I tend to find like like like we can make a case, right, for like oysters are an aphrodisiac and they have zinc and zinc supports testosterone, right?

So, you know, so it's like people asking that like aphrodisiac foods and foods that support, you know, melatonin and oxytocin, hormones in general. My general feeling on it is like when it comes to foods that are supporting these sort of things, anti-inflammatory, getting all the things that we talk about out, you know, your bad oils, your sugars, you're on organic food, your all that, those like standard types of things and then beyond that, just generally making sure you're eating a wide variety of diet and you're not eating food you're reacting to.

And in my my profession, I feel a feeling I feel like the bulk of what's really important food wise really comes down to more getting the trash out, making sure you're not inflaming your body and then making sure you're eating a wide variety of diet.

So in this context, what is what are these foods doing or like inflammation, how is that impacting the function of this hormone? So from that standpoint, I mean, I, I have to I haven't seen, you know, from a standpoint of research around like, okay, you eat this food, it inflames you that specifically, you know, drives down oxytocin.

But I think so from a research perspective, I haven't seen that. Maybe it exists. I certainly haven't seen it if it does. But from a theoretical perspective, you know, I think what we can theorize is, you know, certain things like, okay, well, we have more inflammation and inflammatory foods in our body that can do things like drive up cortisol, that can do things like create that extra stress were then more oxytocin is needed in order to produce that same results.

So I would look at it, at least from a theoretical standpoint, a little bit more in that light. Mm hmm. Awesome. Awesome. Well, thank you so much. Um, Amy, I think we talked a little bit about oxytocin in the context of safety.

I think this this thread is really important because I think I talk about safety so much. I just assume that people are like, Yeah, yeah, yeah, I get.

I get what that is. But can you search shed some light on what that emotion or experience is and why it might be so important and helpful in on the fertility journey?

Yeah, we are so in alignment on that one. I feel like I could talk about the importance of safety all day long. So it's it's really, you know, I think a substantial thing.

And there's several things that are happening, right? It's like and I like to break down safety because oftentimes safety, we hear the word safety. We can think around like, okay, well, is my partner abusive?

Right. And safety is so much more than that. Safety can be as simple as we say something to our partner in the morning. They say something back to us with a certain tone because they're in a rash in a hurry.

We interpret in a way as feeling like invalidated or and love. Yeah. Or whatever. Right. And then we don't feel safe. So I think that's one of the first foundational things to talk about with safety is like this can be just due to a simple comment that that makes us not feel unsafe.

And you know, the little things by just men and women not understanding each other like women leaves trash by the door on the way out. You know, for her husband to pick our partner to pick out on the way out, man does not take the trash. He's hurried.

He's focused on work. It's not that he doesn't see the traffic. It's that he's so focused on getting to work. It's not actionable because of how the brain works.

I learned those terms from Allison Armstrong, who's just wonderful at men and women. So good. I love her. There's this okay side conversation.

Oxytocin, Progesterone, and Fertility

We're going to we're going to continue talking about that. All day long. But, you know. The point that she'll make in these scenarios that I just see so much in my life, in my clients life is it's so easy to misinterpret these signals because of where blood flow to the brain as men, because of testosterone and how that impacts the way that certain parts of the brain light up and they see the world versus women.

And some of those things where we just like messy each other that can create safety issues, that can create a sense of not feeling safe. And we don't realize that because our partner said that thing that we took a certain way or because the trash is taken out, it actually is translating all the way back into oxytocin, all the way back to being able to be present in the bedroom all the way into our our guard being let down enough to deeply connect, intimately, to have orgasms, to experience pleasure.

But all of that can be wrapped up into these tiny little moments that if we don't resolve them and we don't understand how to resolve them, they can actually be pretty impactful.

I think. I like how you differentiated like physical safety, like the most obvious, which I think most women that are trying to have a child proactively are probably in loving relationships, right.

And yes, so I like that differentiation because this is like more subtle than the oh, I have an abusive partner and I don't feel safe or I live in an environment where there are gunshots every night and I don't feel safe.

Right. So it's it's not so much that like that extreme, but those subtle things that could be happening that really lead to this feeling of unsafe. Is there I know this is probably different for every woman and women need to like we just need to observe more and feel like, oh, I'm aware of what's happening in my body.

When I feel for that specific emotion. But I'm curious if you have any like tangible ways that you experience that feeling or you have experienced in the past.

It's ever so in alignment again, like where I was planning on going next in a line that feeling right where it's like, okay, so you're hugging your partner and there's almost this like retraction feeling or it's like, I don't really feel like even being in the embrace like that can be a sign of is something that just like hits your gut a little bit or hits your throat.

It's oftentimes I've experienced this and like this, like tightening way or sometimes it's even like being pissed off, right? Sometimes it's like, gosh, they do this thing, and all of a sudden I'm like, pissed.

And especially a good sign I think to pay attention to as well is if we're feeling an emotion and logically, logically it's

like, wow, trash shouldn't get taken out.

And I'm like, I rape like I'm a valid writer. I really believe in the statement. Like, emotions are valid. And if we're feeling like, wow, I am like really mad over this tiny little thing that's oftentimes like cue, like where the emotion and the action aren't like in alignment.

That's usually that there's something deeper there. And I find for women so many times it is that underlying feeling of not feeling safe or appreciated or something like that.

And one of the things I work with a lot with my clients is how to communicate in this way. So I've cited a lot of Alison's work in nonviolent communication and the Gottman work.

And and one of the things I've really found is that when we communicate on this, like using feeling words like NVC, like nonviolent communication teaches, and instead of being like, you know, the trash didn't get taken out or whatever that is, you know, just really tuning into like, okay, well, why is this so important to me?

What is innately why is this like innately a big deal? And then realizing that whatever is coming up oftentimes is our own experience. And so rather than saying, like, you know, you didn't take the trash out, so this means you don't love me.

You know, it's like more around like I'm a nonviolent. Like I'm feeling unloved and I'm connecting that somehow to you not taking out the trash, you know?

Can you tell me about why this did not get taken out? Right. And it kind of takes that edge off of like, oh, this is my feeling. You're not causing me to have this feeling.

I'm feeling this. And I want to explore this with you to gather so that we can figure out what's going on here. And when we do that, it's like that going away, come back.

Coming back together is another great way of, you know, of bonding. Right. And that bonding is oxytocin, but it's also from a masculine standpoint that's that like going to battle together.

Like now we're on the same team. Now we're trying to figure out how to navigate this in a way that's going to make you feel love and make you feel like understood for like why I didn't do this in this moment and we're working together.

So that's that vasopressin two And then we're both getting these surges of these yummy hormones that are also so supportive, not only of stress, but, you know, things we mentioned like progesterone and sperm motility, which you got into fertility.

Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. So let's wrap it up with this last piece that I want you to speak to, which is the connection between oxytocin and progesterone, which, like, everyone's like progesterone, the fertility hormone fertility.

Yeah. So how do how do these things interrelate? Actually, we see that when we increase oxytocin, we increase more of LH Luteinizing hormone, that brain hormone and that brain hormone.

When luteinizing hormone increases, it triggers the release of progesterone. So it's because oxytocin actually will impact the brain and signal the brain to secrete more that luteinizing hormone that we can get that downstream impact on progesterone.

So it's very exciting. Right. And that's what I think is so cool about this hormone is like there's direct mechanisms, we know of progesterone of sperm, not only sperm maturity or not only a sperm motility.

What we mentioned, but also of maturity. So it helps the sperm to mature, then it helps them to move. So we're really getting a great, you know, female male benefit all the way around with this.

Yeah, yeah. It's like super impactful for both sides. I did not know about the LH connection. That's really cool. I'm oh yeah.

Where to Learn More and Closing

This is so I'm, I'm starting to make a connection possibly of we see a lot when women are delayed in ovulation and we can see like they're not getting that push of.

LH This might be the magic, so I'm very excited. I like to learn like, what do you think that's going to be so exciting? So let's say. That it's like, you know, it's so wonderful because from all the things that we're talking about as far as treatment, essentially what we're saying is like embrace in a longer hug, spend more time hugging multiple times throughout the day, touch each other softly.

Like these are very these are things that are just they're going to bring you closer together anyways most of the time. So it's like these are the things that these are the things that are also going to make for a better sex life, which is I'm going to help your fertility.

So yeah. Oh. Right. Yeah. This is the second where you a lot of it go. Well, thank you so much, Dr. Diane, for being with us today. This was amazing. I love chatting with you.

Where can people connect with you? Find you and and like dove deeper into the work that you do. Thanks so much. It's been such a pleasure. Dr. Aumatma. And the easiest thing I would tell people is just go to libidoquiz.com.

That's going to go through. It's a really cool quiz. The first part is like actually a research base quiz. Then the second part follows a bunch of questions that I have come up with after years of being in this.

I've been in practice for almost 15 years now, and in this quiz, what you're going to get is it's going to tell you at the end like, oh, is it more likely?

Is it is a libido? Is is sexual, like, you know, not having that full balance in your sexuality? Is that really coming from things like more like stress hormones?

Is it more like, you know, sex hormones? Is it more neurological? Is it more circulatory? It's going to give you a ton of information, then relate it to the specifics of your quiz results.

So that's usually the best way to get started because you can tailor then the information that's probably most related to you and that's super easy. It's just libidoquiz.com.

Thank you so much again for being with us today and for all of you with the in, I hope you found this to be an amazing interview. We'll see you very soon on the next Beyond Infertility Summit interview.