Discover Hidden Histamine Triggers: Insights & Solutions Transcript

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Introduction and Guest Background

This is Dr. Talks, real talk from real doctors on the issues that matter to you most. Hello and welcome back to our reversing mast cell activation syndrome and histamine intolerance summit.

I'm your host, Dr. Meg Mill, and today I'm joined by my esteemed colleague, Dr. Becky Campbell. Dr. Campbell is a board certified doctor of natural medicine, who is also the author of the four phase histamine reset plan and low histamine cooking in your Instapot.

So we are gonna talk all things, histamine, MCAS, and really dive into even some of our personal journeys. So I am so excited to have this conversation.

Thank you for joining us today, Becky. I'm so happy to be here. Thanks for putting up with my schedule changes. No problem. Well, we will dive into why some of those things were happening because you and I were discussing beforehand that we both had some personal issues with mold and remediation and all of the things that we're talking a lot about.

But before we dive into all things histamine related and jump into some of that. Can you give us a little bit of your background? Because I know, I love to share, I know you have a personal story like so many of us do.

And sometimes it's just nice to hear, hey, we've been here, we've been through a lot of these things. Yeah, so I can say like as a kid, I've never felt what I would call normal.

You know, I always could compare myself to other kids and realize I was heat sensitive. I was getting headaches when other kids weren't getting headaches.

I remember my mom worked at my elementary school and I would go downstairs and I'd be like, I have a headache and I need an aspirin or whatever. And I was young, you know, and I would pass out in the heat or I would get hives randomly.

I didn't get the hives a lot, but it would happen. So it always felt like something was different. And then when I went into, you know, when I was in college and I was working really hard and very stressed and not sleeping enough and probably working out too hard.

it all kind of hit me. And I gained 30 pounds out of nowhere. I was always pretty thin, and I was always training and all that type of stuff. I ate well, as far as what we knew about diet back then.

And I was having terrible brain fog. My hair was falling out. And I was getting really bad anxiety. I was finding myself sitting in class and having to leave because I was so anxious.

and I didn't know what that was from. I didn't know why any of this was going on. So then you get symptoms and you get anxious about your symptoms. So I was having body anxiety.

I was so uncomfortable in my own body. So I went from doctor to doctor every part, you know, it was like a neurologist, you know, gastroenterologist, endocrinologist, everyone was like, you're fine, because every, you know, I looked fine, my blood work was fine, and they did barely any to begin with.

Personal Symptoms and Histamine Discovery

And so long story short, I found and it wasn't the term functional medicine wasn't really around back then, but it was like a holistic health care center I found, and they were great.

They did a really thorough blood panel, found out I had hypothyroidism, which I would later find out was Hashimoto's. And then they did some, at the time, the only thing that was available was saliva testing, past blood testing for cortisol.

So I had super high cortisol, which is your stress hormone, and had weight gain, brain fog, all that stuff. And then I had yeast overgrowth in my gut.

I had H. pylori. I had parasites. So I had a lot going on. And I actually didn't have a lot of gut symptoms. It was mostly, I get a lot of brain symptoms.

So that was kind of my diagnosis. You have Hashimoto's. And so I worked through a lot of the stuff that they found. I changed my diet, but I wasn't doing a low histamine diet because I didn't know anything about histamine or mass activation syndrome at the time.

So I felt a lot better, but I wasn't still great. I knew something was still off. And I noticed that I was with my, you know, so I have three kids. So with my pregnancies, my first trimester was awful.

I had hyperemesis with each one, but then in my second and third trimester I would feel really good. And what I would consider normal And, you know, we can get into this later, but it's because there in our placenta, there's a lot of the enzyme that breaks down histamine in the second and third trimester.

So, so anyway, I just started to kind of learn about histamine and I was realizing it was a lot of correlation with what I was eating. And then I would get crawling sensations on my scalp or I would get a migraine or I would feel really tired or dizzy after I ate I had some skin irritation.

I had a lot of like seborrheic dermatitis up here around my nose. So that's when I figured out what mast cell activation syndrome was and that I had mast cell activation syndrome and it was causing me to have histamine intolerance.

So then I went down the rabbit hole of what is this? What causes this? What can I do about it? And then once I learned all of that stuff, I decided I needed to help people who have this primarily.

I mean, I work with a lot of things, but and that's when I wrote my book on histamine intolerance. And mostly in our practice, we see a lot of the histamine mass cell type of people.

Yeah, that's really that so many of the things you're saying sound like my life. My mother actually even just recently said, you've always just been so sensitive to this world.

Yeah. She said that to me as an adult, like three months ago, because it's like looking back at all the things that you're saying. Why are all of these things happening to me, but no one else?

And yeah. it builds up over the years. And I also had such bad anxiety and didn't realize all of these things were connected. I think it's tricky for people because when you think of histamine, you're thinking of allergies.

I mean, we just think of that, but there's so many more symptoms because we have leptos everywhere. Yeah, and I never really had allergies, you know, so you exactly you think histamine, you think Zyrtec, and that's as far as your brain goes with histamine.

And going back to the point of being sensitive, that's probably been my biggest issue with all of this is being so sensitive and learning that I'm a poor detoxer from, you know, doing testing and stuff.

and that I hold on to every single toxin I come into contact with, which makes me so sensitive. I used to be extremely food sensitive, extremely chemical sensitive.

And then you start getting self-conscious because you feel like the person that everyone thinks is weird, no one

can relate to you around you. And you're embarrassed to say that the sun is making you feel weird, the smell is making you feel weird, the food is making you feel weird.

And it's really hard and it's really hard to connect with people. It's hard to be in a relationship. It can really affect so many areas of your life that people really don't understand.

Yeah, it's invisible. And so I think that exactly. And especially when you're going to your doctor and they're saying, you're fine. You look good. Everything's OK.

And like everything is not fine now. Exactly. So when you work with people that are having a lot of these sensitivities, I know that's one of the problems that we see Okay, we're trying to do some of these things to detox for treatments, but we're reacting to everything.

Where do you start? Yeah. So I've had to learn this the hard way. And I had to really learn it by learning myself. I was someone who can never take supplements.

If you gave me a supplement, I would feel terrible. And it's because your brain starts to see everything. When you become sensitive, your brain sees everything as a threat.

so you take a supplement even magnesium i couldn't tolerate you know you see it as a threat your body your body doesn't like it it reacts it's because my sympathetic nervous system which is our fight or flight was so like alert you know high alert all the time that everything made me feel bad.

So I know how these sensitive patients are I know how they feel and they want to do the work and they want to jump in and they want to take the supplement so we have to back off for a minute with that.

The first thing I have people do If they're sensitive, if we know that they can't tolerate supplements, we work first on brain retraining. So this is not what I do.

I don't teach people how to do this, but you're basically teaching your body not to see something and remember it as being a threat over and over and over.

So you're trying to break that cycle, create new neuropathways.

Calming the Nervous System and Gentle Detox

So we use different brain retraining systems that there's, there's people I love, like the Gupta program is really good. My friend Lindsay has a program.

She has a company called the vital side. So I usually refer people to order one of those like online program. They can do it at home. Start with that.

And even if they can just start being aware of their breath, you know, like we're like this all the time. And we're, you know, especially if you're in sympathetic overdrive.

So I'm always like, let's check yourself for a second. Check in with your body, relax your shoulders. Are you breathing? You know, are you taking a good breath in and a nice slow breath out?

And if you're not start doing that, like even starting there is really can be really helpful. And then once people get that, you know, whether they're doing meditation and breath work, or they're doing a program, once they get their nervous system to calm down a little bit, all start doing gentle detox.

So It depends on the person, what I'll do with them, but something as simple as dry brushing, you know, we'll have them start doing dry brushing a little bit, just get that lymphatic system kind of moving because we have these different pathways that we're pushing toxins out of.

And with so many people with histamine intolerance and mass activation syndrome, they're not doing that well. We have a lot of different SNPs in our genes.

So they're not working the way that they're supposed to, and that's part of the problem. So we want to get you to be able to move stuff out, and you can't think of taking a supplement to kill a gut infection or to pull mold if you can't push it out.

So I want to make sure you're pooping, make sure you're drinking enough water, make sure you're sweating, all the ways. Make sure you're getting that lymphatic drainage.

You can start with dry brushing. You can even do like a little bit of rebounding, which is jumping on the trampoline. Just it helps move that lamp. I am obsessed with infrared sauna.

That's my has been a game changer. It's been the biggest game changer in my health journey overall because I don't really sweat. I mean, even though I work out, I don't work out to that degree where I'm like pouring in sweat and sweat is such a great way of getting toxins out of the body.

So infrared sauna. Castor oil packs over the liver. People really do well with that. And sometimes you get a little dizzy when you put it on the first time, but that's just showing you how much you have going on circulation, you know, circulating in there that's not coming out.

So I always have people start really slow with that and then work their way up. So those are Epsom salt baths are really good too, or even a foot bath in Epsom salt if you don't have a bathtub.

So just kind of those things. So once we get the brain stuff and then the gentle detox into place, then I'll start putting in something like a milk thistle or depending if they, you know, can tolerate, there's different various reasons people can't tolerate different supplements.

But, you know, milk thistle and acetylcysteine, even phosphatidylcholine, different things you can do to just kind of support gently. They support the liver glutathione is really great.

Some people can't tolerate it. So you just have to kind of see it's like glutathione is the master antioxidant. So it's really good to try to be able to do that.

And I'll just do like little tiny bits of it. and start them like that. So kind of getting their body pushing stuff out. Once they can do all that, then I know they're ready to start working on what else is going on in the body.

Drainage pathways, right? It's like opening up all, because I know, I agree, if you're pushing anything without the drainage pathways being open, then you're going to hold on to it more.

Yeah, and you're going to feel bad. You're going to have a Herxheimer reaction and then you're going to quit. And that's why people have boxes and cabinets full of supplements because they take one.

They go, I can't tolerate this. They quit it. Then they go, oh, that one's okay. This is going to be the one like this is going to be the supplement. I'm going to be able to tolerate.

Nope. I can't tolerate that because they haven't done any of those foundational things beforehand to so that they can tolerate different supplements. And I think that it's great points because it is a long game.

It's something that you, when you're working with this, especially the, you know, sometimes with the histamine intolerance, we can find different things.

Like if we optimize the diamine oxidase, or if we do some gut healing, but with mast cell, there's often, it is a more of a longer game that you have to be patient.

And sometimes it's hard to be patient because we live in this fast paced world. We live in the world where you get Amazon and now it's not even two days.

I mean, it's within the day sometimes. So people are trained to expect fast results and that's a very good point that you made. There's a very big difference with someone with histamine intolerance without mast cell activation syndrome.

and someone with histamine intolerance with mastoactivation syndrome or just mastoactivation syndrome without histamine intolerance, you're dealing with two totally different types of people.

They're very, very, very sensitive. They're gonna be your mastoactivation syndrome patients for that usually. histamine intolerance that just like came on later because you had a gut infection or, you know, gut infection with estrogen dominance, whatever it is, that's easy.

That's a lot easier. You put them on a low histamine diet and then you can get right to work because they're not so sensitive. And those are, you know, that's always fun because we feel like, okay, this is going really well.

They're feeling so well. Quickly, you know, so it it depends on what you have going on, how fast you're going to get there. But I can say almost everybody that I've worked with does get there.

They at least get much better, you know. With mast cell activation syndrome, you have to be very conscious of your triggers. And I have mast cell activation syndrome.

Low Histamine Diet and Reintroducing Foods

So I'm never going to wear perfume. I'm never going to eat food that's going to cause inflammation in my body. But I can eat high histamine food now, where I couldn't before.

So I'm always going to be conscious of things that I should just stay away from. I'm not going to go stay in a moldy house. So it just depends. Those are great points.

I'm with you because I have teenage daughters and I had to actually say to one of my daughters like, you cannot wear perfume until she wants to wear perfume and all our friends are starting to do social spray and I'm like, oh my gosh, it makes me so sick.

So it's one of those things. And I think again, you're saying like, okay, you feel different that I'm the one that can't tolerate the smell. But as long as I'm Know that and can express it then we're we're good and you're in an environment that that isn't showing that but this the food I love how you also said Expanding your diet because once you get a lot of these things under control, you know The low histamine diet can feel limiting because there's so many healthy foods, but you can often tolerate Many of the foods that you couldn't once you get some of the underlying issues under control.

Oh, yeah I always say that the low histamine diet is not the cure to histamine intolerance. It is a tool to use while you're working on what's causing it.

So my goal with my patients and just the message I want to send everybody is start with a low histamine diet. It's going to help you. It's going to help you fast, feel better.

You know, as much as you can without getting to the root of the issue, but start there, then work on the other things. And then because people go, well, how long do I have to do this diet for?

I'm like, well, if it's the only thing you're doing, you're going to always do it, right? You have to get to the root of it. So start with the diet. then work on the other things, gut health mold, whatever it is that's causing the histamine intolerance in the first place.

And then you can start adding back some of the higher, higher histamine foods and see how you do. But I don't ever recommend people eat just trashy foods.

Like high histamine foods are very nutrient dense. So I want them to put those back in, but I don't want them to put in like gluten because there's no, no point.

It doesn't serve anybody. Yeah, so we're looking for but it is it's nice to I think it's one of those things because you can give someone that the low histamine diet and it can feel overwhelming.

And that's why you and I both have systems that are in place for people to support throughout the process. But then it is adding them back in and seeing okay, what do I tolerate and then the threshold of what you can I think threshold can be an issue too.

Yeah, exactly. And I like to use the histamine bucket analogy. Okay, well, what's filling up your histamine bucket? Is it stress, mold, vitamin deficiencies, hormone imbalance, and gut infections?

Don't bother trying that avocado. But get rid of some of that stuff, right? And then you can start, then there's room in that bucket to add some back in.

But some days your bucket might be fuller because you're very stressed. Or you may be in an environmental situation, you may have gone to someone's house, they've got plugins going, they've got maybe some mold or whatever it is, and or they're wearing perfume or whatever the situation and you're not going to be able to tolerate that day or you may have some alcohol and then you really can't tolerate, you know, you have to just balance everything out.

You always have to be thinking about that bucket and you have to understand that if you started adding back high histamine foods and you were doing great and then one day you can't you didn't fail like you're not done for you're not like starting over you just had your bucket was full that day maybe it was full that week and you certainly need to start looking and go okay what's going on this week am i very stressed did i not sleep you know did i do too much exercise something what is triggering me and then figure that out and then you can go back to adding back more of those foods so it's gonna it's gonna vary Yeah, that's a great point, even with hormones through the month.

Oh, yeah. Yeah. With ovulation, around ovulation, people. I have some people who only have histamine intolerance right around ovulation and the week before their period when estrogen's doing this, right?

And then otherwise they're fine. So I'm like, then just be conscious of that. You know, also we're like, well, why, you know, maybe your estrogen's going too high and we work on that kind of stuff too.

But you know, there's a lot of different variations of why this is happening. Yeah, those are all great points. And I know one of the things that you and I talked about before we got on is the fact that we both had some remediations in our house with mold.

And that's another thing that can be at the root of a lot of these issues. So let's, can we dive into that a little bit? Yeah, yeah. So I have found, you know, so I wasn't doing mycotoxin testing on everybody.

I was testing pretty much everyone for gut and hormone stuff first. And then I'm like, really realizing how everyone, these people have mold, you know?

And I was like, so I started testing my patients for mycotoxins and so many of them are coming up high. And so what happens is, is mycotoxins, so mold, right, it spits out these toxic chemicals called mycotoxins.

And those are you microscopic, they're just in the air, you can walk through them and have no idea you did. And they get into the lungs, but they go past the lungs into circulation.

And they start affecting us everywhere, right? They they're lipophilics, they love fatty areas, they love the brain,

they love the liver, they love our vessels.

So you know, when you have mycotoxins in your body, they're activating your mast cells.

Mold Exposure and Mast Cell Triggers

Your mast cells are going to come in to go, well, what is that threat? Let me, you know, send out histamine and all these other inflammatory chemicals to get rid of that threat, which is the mold.

And until that, if that molds in your body, your mast cells are constantly being activated. So mold alone, I think, can cause mast cell activation syndrome.

So if you're living in mold or being exposed to mold, you have to get out of that environment. So this is why we were talking about everything that we're going through right now.

It's hard. Mold is hard. It's one of the least favorite things I have to tell a patient is you have mold. And sometimes it's a past exposure, which is easier.

But if it's a current exposure, you have to figure out, OK, where's the source? It's not always easy to find. I was telling you out there that my house is five years old.

I bought it three years ago. The first night I slept here, I felt weird. I was shaking, internal shaking. That's like my mold sign. I didn't know exactly at the time.

I thought I had too many EMFs here. I was unplugging all the Wi-Fi, everything I could do. I smelled mold in a closet a little, little bit. No one else could smell it.

Everyone's like, that's not mold. That's the, I had like wood, you know, organizers or whatever. And they're like, that's just that. And I'm like, no, it's not inspectors.

I mean, multiple people know you don't have mold in there. So I finally hired someone to just knock the other side of the wall down and behind the wall was mold.

So. And it's been hard because it's a lot of work. And that wasn't the last place we had it. We started finding it more places. And no one wants to think that their home is the problem.

This is where we spend most of our time. No one wants to think that this is the reason we're sick. And it doesn't have to be an older home. Your home can be beautiful.

It has nothing to do with that. it just has to do sometimes building material gets wet when they're building your house they install it and mold starts to grow and then there's the you know the problem gets worse and worse so anyway if you know if you are trying different things and you know you're you're working on the gut you're working on stress you're working on all these things and you're just not feeling well you it's time to start looking for mold because I have found it is the culprit and probably 70% of the people I work with have had either a past exposure that's still bothering them or they were living in it now.

When you see people that are have that that's something I know a lot of people will be asking now how how do you turn term in if it's a past exposure or if you're currently living in it?

Yeah, so it's hard to know, I would love to say the testing tells me, but the testing is hard because if you're a poor detoxer, so the way the testing works, so what I do different types of testing, I'm just gonna talk about the urine test today.

So with the urine test, you're putting urine, they're finding mycotoxins in the urine because that's how we eliminate them, right? But if you're a very poor detoxer and you don't have good kidney function, you're not going to that's not

going to show up.

Or it might show up like the bars this big. And I'm like, and they're like, oh, no, I don't have it. I'm like, yes, you do. You have it. Your disability talks are so we can provoke it.

You know, sometimes I go do the sauna before your next test. And then it's like coming up, you know, it's higher. So so it's hard to know based on the test.

But if I see someone who's it's really high, I'm like, you're living in it. You know, I think you're living in it. Now your next step is maybe do an army test.

You know, if you don't want to hire an inspector, maybe start with an army test where you're collecting dust or sending it in a labs telling you if they found different types of mold and in your house.

or you can find a good inspector, which I don't know if you've interviewed any, but there are some very good mold inspectors that can help you either globally or they can help you find someone in your area.

So, but it's important, you know, to find someone who's going to be thorough because I know a lot of people and I still had the wrong inspectors here, but I had to listen to my gut.

I knew something was off because I could smell it. I was lucky that I could smell it. Many times mold is there's no smell. You know, the smell is not the mycotoxins.

Mycotoxins don't smell. It's the other like the VOCs and aldehydes and alcohols that mold emits that has a smell once it hits oxygen. So if it's hidden behind a wall, you're not going to smell anything a lot of the time.

But if you're just feeling bad and let's say you notice you leave your house and you feel better or you go on vacation and you feel better and then you come home and you start feeling bad again, you probably have it in your home.

So I would say test your body, see if you show up anything, then test maybe with an army test. And then if that comes up, you want to then probably get a proper inspection.

We can link all of those in the summit. I have a summit resource page and we'll link all of those so people can have resources depending on where they live and all of those things.

It is a process and it is hard to… I had someone call me one time and she said, I want to work with you, but you have to promise me that you won't test me for mold.

because she worked with, she had a friend who was just like, she spent thousands of dollars and I don't want to go there. And I'm like, well, you know, we have to look at a broad picture, but I think, you know, I feel like it was one of those things.

Finding Mold and Where to Learn More

It was just an interesting perspective as the clinician to hear, okay, I don't, I want to look at everything, but I'm afraid to go there because like you're saying, you feel very overwhelming.

It is overwhelming, and I've been through it before. This is my second round with mold. I was bedridden the first time, and this is different because I'm a good detoxer by nature, but I support my detox pathways a lot, and that's really helped me.

Plus, it's further away from me than it was in the other house. You know, nobody wants to deal with it. Nobody does. But nobody wants to be sick either.

I have no kitchen right now and I have three kids and I'm trying to cook in off of a table with like a, you know, air fryer every night. I am not having a good time, but I know that it's worth it.

And I know that that in the end, it's what's best for me and it's what's best for my family. and my kids, I have to think about them too, because they were feeling it.

I could tell. I could tell they weren't feeling right, and I could tell it was mold. So sometimes we have to do stuff like this, but it is worth it to get through it.

Yes, absolutely. Well, you've given us such great information. Thank you so much. Can you tell everyone where they can find you? So my website is drbeckycambell.com.

I have, we take patients virtually. I have online courses, books, all that stuff. And then my, I'm most active on Instagram at Dr. Becky Campbell. I also am active on Facebook and that's just Dr.

Becky Campbell. Well, thank you so much for joining us today. Yeah. Thanks for having me. Have a great day, everyone. You too. Thank you for tuning in to Doctor Talks.

We hope today's episode has enlightened and inspired you on your path to optimal health. Each day is a new opportunity to make choices that empower your well-being.

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