# Hormones & Protein, How To Fix Your Brain Transcript

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## Opening and show introduction

Well, don't you go like, don't you test for MTHFR and don't you test for this genetic thing or this, you know, all these like, I just call them rabbit trails.

Not that they're not valid or good or whatever, but I just don't go down that path because you shouldn't really have to. We fix the foundations. Are you getting enough sleep?

Do you exercise? You know, do you have enough fatty acids? Let's just look at, you know, take the food pyramid and let's just put basic nutrition in there.

Do you have enough protein, minerals and fatty acids? If you have enough of those, you're going to feel pretty darn good. Do you feel like your hormones have turned against you?

Trust us, you're not alone. We're Dr. Serena and Dr. Heidi, and on Hormone Heroines, we explore all the root causes that are behind hormone imbalances, and we teach you how to thrive through them.

Join us for real talk, expert tips, and even a few laughs. Hello, and welcome back to Hormone Heroines. This week, we're going to be speaking with Lori Hammer about amino acid therapy.

She is a functional nutritional therapist and founder of the Calm Mom Method. She focuses on helping clients with depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and other neurological conditions.

She is driven by her own health journey and has a passion for helping clients from around the world, both virtually and in person, as well as training practitioners in using amino acid therapies.

Welcome. We're so excited to have you. Thank you guys for having me. I'm really excited to be here. We're very excited about this talk. As moms ourselves, we are super interested in what you're doing with amino acids to optimize brain health, especially with that mom brain fog and all the things that come with hormonal fluctuations in women and how you can tackle that through other avenues.

So let's dive right in. We really focus on the hormone aspect, but you know, so many women are focusing on balancing their hormones, but often overlook brain chemistry.

How are neurotransmitters like serotonin, dopamine, and GABA connected to hormone health? Right.

## How amino acids support hormone and brain health

So they're very interconnected because if your neurotransmitters aren't nourished and calm, so if your nervous system isn't regulated and calm, then it's really hard to have healthy hormones.

So my mantra is if we fix the brain first, if we balance the brain, then everything below the neck gets easier to deal with. And of course, we know there's lots of signaling that goes on in our brain for that whole hormone cascade.

Right, yes, definitely. You know, anxiety and mood swings are often blamed on just hormones. How can amino acid therapy help women calm the brain, like you said, and feel emotionally more steady throughout hormonal transitions?

Yeah, and that's the fun part because I have so many women that come to me and they're like, they're on an SSRI or they're like, oh, it's just your hormones every single month.

And we start using the amino acids just even in my office or on a Zoom call, you know, like, video like we're doing right now. And the first couple of months that people are on the amino acids are like, I didn't even know my period was coming because they were just so much calmer.

Or it can be like, oh, my cramps weren't as bad or the clotting wasn't as heavy because when that nervous system is calmer, it just spills over into that whole hormone dance that we're doing all the time as women for sure.

Can you elaborate a little bit more about what amino acids you're using, what are your favorite ones, and how you maybe pick depending on symptom picture?

Yeah, so it's a balance, right? So we're focusing on five different areas when we're balancing mood and help regulating that nervous system. So we have a lot of neurotransmitters in our body, but really just focus on four specific areas and then glucose regulation.

So the first area is going to be serotonin. And so if we're using amino acids to boost our serotonin, serotonin is like our inner sunshine. It just helps us to feel really good.

If you have a lot of PMS symptoms, you kind of get bitchy, grumpy around your period, you probably are low in serotonin because it's really interconnected a lot with estrogen, right?

And so we're going to use 5-HTP or L-tryptophan in therapeutic doses multiple times a day. If we're looking at endorphins, we're going to do like de-phenylalanine.

And endorphins are like our inner joy. You know, so we have the sunshine from serotonin. We've got the inner joy from the endorphins. It just make us feel yummy, comfy, really good in our skin.

You know, like when you have PMS issues or you have hormone issues, you're just like, you kind of feel like you're like out of your skin, right? And so I look at endorphins as more like grounding.

and just making us kind of like, you know, life isn't so bad. We can just like deal with life kind of thing. And then like putting on a big yummy sweater.

And then there's a catecholamines. Catecholamines are like our brain focus. Our brain energy does help our, you know, physical energy as well. A lot of times when we have hormone issues, that mental energy is kind of lacking or if you're pregnant, right?

Your mental energy is lacking or your focus or whatever that might be. And so the catecholamines like L-tyrosine, D-L-phenylalanine, L-phenylalanine are the amino acids I use for that.

And then GABA. GABA is what lets us take that deep breath and then just let it out, right? So it lets us look at life and deal with life on life's terms and respond to stress appropriately.

Cause we can't get rid of stress, right? It's just always going to be there. There's always going to be something going on over life, especially if you guys are moms.

There's, you know, somebody needs something all the time. And so we can look at it and go, this is okay, life is fine. And that's what GABA helps us to do is that stress responder.

And it also is really good for like that physical stress where we're like just holding everything in and we're like in this tight little ball. GABA like helps us to kind of unwind all of that.

And then the fifth area is that glucose regulation. So if you're hangry, You can't skip meals. You're, you know, you get shaky, all those kinds of things.

Cause when our glucose is unstable, then you know, our brain chemistry goes up and down and up and down and

up and down. Right. And that makes our hormones go up and down and up and down and up and down.

So we want to use amino acids.

## Stress, adrenals, and neurotransmitter depletion

I like all glutamine for one to help with the stabilization of the, of the brain and the glucose. Um, it just makes us feel more grounded. Okay. Yeah.

And I mean, we deal with people with always wanting us to test their cortisol anyways. And so I know we hear a lot about adrenal fatigue and cortisol imbalances and, you know, stress because we live in a very stressful environment these days.

Yes. Yes. You know, so many stressors, chemical, physical, emotional, like it doesn't matter. They're there. Yeah, exactly. Can you kind of dive a little bit deeper into what's really happening biochemically when stress kind of takes over and like how you use those amino acids to help bring the body back into balance?

Yeah, so I love how you bring in the adrenals with that because, you know, adrenals are stress responders, whether, again, that's chemical, physical, or emotional, and they're trying really, really hard to respond to whatever that might be.

And when our brain is depleted, when our neurotransmitters are depleted, they have to work even harder, right? And so that's, you know, there's like firing your engine, but it never turns over.

It's not attached. The battery is really running low. Then there's not a communication that goes for the pituitary all the way down through that whole endocrine system.

When we are giving the amino acids to balance those neurotransmitters, all of a sudden things start firing better in the brain. Your brain is like, it just expands, it gets a little more nourished, and then your adrenals go, thank God.

Because I can't keep all of this going by myself, right? Because they're working really hard. And they'll steal from every place else in your body. So they're going to steal nutrients from your neurotransmitter.

So if we give your neurotransmitters what it needs, then your adrenals are like, oh, I can use nutrients from someplace else. And then you can start nourishing the adrenal glands.

And then there's this whole chemical cascade that just is beautiful. Yes. I really like your, uh, analogies right there because you really help everyone understand a little bit better.

But so you teach a lot about, or you teach women a lot about fixing their hormones and if their brain is running on empty, like we were just talking about, what are some of the key deficiencies you see that cause mood, sleep, and energy crashes?

You know how us women are always just pushing through it, and then when we go to find help, we're often not taken seriously or told, oh, that's just part of being a woman.

Yeah, we've lived through it, prioritizing everybody else and then our own health falls to the wayside. That's why we started blossoming longevity by women or women.

We created programs that meet women where they are, addressing the root causes and all of the struggles that come with every stage of life. Like our Vitality program.

It reconnects you with your youth and your life so that you can thrive through the years. And with Clarity, we go beyond the skin to restore your health, clear your complexion so you can feel radiant from the inside out.

With our Silhouette program, we help you reclaim your strength, optimize your metabolism and your body composition so that you can feel great in your body again.

## Foundations: protein, sleep, and whole foods

And with Harmony, we help you rebalance your hormones to heal from within so you can feel vibrant and ready to take on the world. That is why it's time to stop saddling and start flourishing.

Visit blossominglongevity.com today. Yeah, so protein, a lot of women, really, I don't know that I hardly ever have a woman that comes in and eating enough protein, right?

Are you just eating enough in general? We talk about it every day, every day. Yeah, you're just not eating enough in general because we're just busy. We're busy.

We're like running something and this week, I don't know why we do this, but we've decided it's a badge of honor to not eat breakfast and lunch and wait until supper and then we eat just a crappy supper because we can get so much more done.

And we've forgotten how to nourish ourselves. We've forgotten that whole rhythm. So I think that's the biggest thing that depletes is we just don't nourish ourselves.

Right. Well, and I think people also forget that protein is made up of amino acids. Right. So you need to eat protein in order to have the amino acids.

Right. If you don't want to take supplementation, you know, then we really need to fix, you know, how you're nourishing your body. And that's what people ask me all the time.

do I have to take these forever? No, you just learn how to use them as a boost because, you know, do them for three to six months and see how you're doing on them.

And then you just kind of naturally forget to take them and it's your body's way of saying, hey, you feel really good today. And then I just use them personally and I teach my clients, we just use them when, you know, like somebody dies or you're in a car accident or you have pregnancy or whatever it might be when your body just needs that natural boost, that little extra.

But yeah, we need amino acids from our protein. We have to be able to digest that. And so I just think going back to those foundations, let's eat enough protein, let's making sure that you're digesting it and then let's get you some better sleep.

You know, set your alarm to go to bed, set your alarm to go to bed. I'll say that 72 times. Make sure you're going to bed at the same time every night and try to do that by 10 or 10.30 PM because then you're gonna get a better rhythm of sleep and then your body has better time to repair, you know, to repair your lymphatic system.

You know, your lymph system in your brain is actually gonna drain and detox. and you're going to feel like a whole new woman after time. Yeah. Right. We just want that.

We want to feel like we're not nuts. Yeah. I like to tell a lot of our patients that you can't out supplement or out Medicaid good sleep or just a bad diet.

Yeah. Or just a bad diet. Yeah. You can't out supplement these basic foundations of health at night. I feel like I'm saying that all the time and it seems like you're in the same boat.

I am, I am. We just have to keep saying it because we need these constant reminders because our society tells us something different. Well, and also I think people think that it's too simple, right?

So like, no, no, no, no. In our society, you need a pill or you need some kind of supplement or you need some kind of quick fix, but really those are the quick fixes.

Yeah. But they think they're too simple to actually make a difference, but they are huge. I know some people get upset with me or they're not upset, but they'll be like, well, don't you go like, don't you test for MTHFR and don't you test for this genetic thing or this, you know, all these like, I just call them rabbit trails.

Not that they're not valid or good or whatever, but I just don't go down that path because you shouldn't really. have to, maybe just in some extreme cases.

If we fix the foundations, do you have enough protein? Are you getting enough sleep? Do you exercise? Do you have enough fatty acids? Let's just look at it.

Take the food pyramid and let's just put basic nutrition in there. Do you have enough protein, minerals, and fatty acids? If you have enough of those, you're going to feel pretty darn good.

And then if you get enough sleep, that's going to take care of probably 80% of the things you're challenged with. Well, and also good quality. Good quality, yes.

That's the thing that we're, you know, they're, oh yeah, we eat great, we eat great. And then I'll go through like a diet diary and I'm like, no, everything, every single thing you said, yeah, you're, you're getting the right amount of protein, but it's crappy protein.

Or you're getting all these ultra processed things that you're having. And I, it's like, no, no, no, no, no. You need whole foods because those are what your body's actually going to absorb and it's not going to crash your body.

Yeah. We can't live on protein powder and protein bars. I mean, sometimes, you know, there are times where I will have a protein shake when I'm going to work out right afterwards.

You know, there are times where those things are fine and they are needed. But I also eat a lot of, I eat at least a hundred grams of real protein, healthy protein throughout the day too.

So that's just my extra while I'm working out. You can't just rely on that. Because it is still processed, and you need the good healthy whole foods to really absorb in your body.

And I don't think people understand that the ultra-processed foods really don't absorb in your body like whole foods do. No, they don't. Your body just doesn't recognize them.

Actually, I have two questions for you. One is, do you have a general protein goal for your clients? Yeah, I try to get them to anywhere to 80, 100 grams of protein a day.

It's our starter. Some people need more. I wouldn't say anybody needs less. Yeah. We're kind of like- In the same boat. Yeah. Basically the same boat.

It's perimenopause and menopause though. I do have my women eat anywhere from like 120 to 140 because we just don't absorb it as well as we get older.

Obviously we fix a lot of things to help absorb it better, but it's harder for us to build muscle and we need more protein and more amino acids than younger women.

Exactly. Yeah. Moving on to my next question for you is like speaking of like running on empty and the fact that you do a lot of work around eating disorders and Combating with the whole fact that most of the time when women walk into our offices, as we just agreed, they're not eating enough or they're not eating enough protein.

## Eating disorders and rebuilding nourishment

What are some of the strategies you use to combat that thought process, even if it's not full on eating disorders or just disordered eating and what we've all grown up with of, if you eat less, you'll be skinnier or all these things that we're taught.

How do you combat some of that stuff when trying to heal their bodies through these foundations of health? Yeah, that's such a good question. Honestly, I don't have to combat a whole lot because once the brain is nourished, that's not a stress point for most women.

I mean, there's still a few people here and there that it's a stress point, but most of the time when your GABA is sufficient, your serotonin is sufficient, your endorphins, you know, all of those feel really good.

You're like, oh, I do need to nourish my body. And then you're able to process that, you know, eating 2000 calories a day isn't going to turn you into a blimp, you know?

I grew up in the 80s and 90s, so it was calories in, calories out, only do cardio, never eat fat, it's bad for you, you're going to get fat if you eat fat, all the things.

So I feel like when I give them the food plan, here's your food guide, most of them are like, I think I can do it. And then we just work on it as they go.

It doesn't end up being a huge stressor because their brain is balanced. Yeah. Do you work with a lot of women that do have, you know, full on eating disorders where you have to kind of take things slower maybe or go a different route?

How do you go about helping them? Because I know there is a lot of women with eating disorders. Oh, absolutely. You really just focus on… Yeah, definitely focus on like one meal at a time.

So, you know, we work on the amino acids first so that they actually can process things better and it doesn't feel as overwhelming. And then we're like, okay, let's change your breakfast, right?

And then once breakfast is good, then we're like, okay, what else can we add to lunch? You know, so I try to take it meal by meal and we meet on a weekly basis.

So we're always checking it. And you feel like once their brain really is like starting to feel the nurse, it's easier to do those like baby steps along the way.

It is, it is. Yeah. Yeah. And there's always going to be like anorexics are the most challenging for sure, but you know, it's doable. It's doable. It's just baby steps.

And I just keep trying to focus on protein. I use a lot more of the severe eating disorders. I use total amino solutions along with the targeted aminos because it's a full spectrum amino acid and it doesn't have any calories to it.

So we can get that extra amino acid, that extra protein into them without fear. Can they take that without food? Yeah. Because I know some of the amino acids you have to take with food or they could upset your stomach.

Yeah. Yeah. Or if they do get upset stomach, most of the time I can get them with a little applesauce or some blueberries or something like that, right?

And then it doesn't take too long for them, as long as we can get the supplements in them for their brain to go, oh, we can maybe have something else today.

How long do you usually, let's say somebody has a severe eating disorder and they don't want to do anything with food right now and you've got them starting on the amino acids.

How long does it usually take before you can really dive into that one breakfast or the protein or however you start

baby stepping with that person? Yeah, I would say two to four weeks, depending on the person.

Okay. On that note, do you feel like you see, because like with eating disorders, we see a lot of hormonal issues and do you feel like those kind of like fix themselves when you get them eating this protein and on the amino acid therapy and then like not really having to address that as much?

I would say probably 70 to 80% is good. Most of the time I have to target the pituitary or the adrenals or those kinds of things to kind of really support that system.

But a lot of it is fixed just with calming the nervous system and eating food. Okay, so with that being said, if a woman feels anxious or exhausted or hormonal layout of things like we were just talking about, what are the first few practical steps that she can take to start rebuilding her health and kind of peace of mind so that you can work further as you go along?

Yeah, so I mean, outside of doing the amino acid therapy, again, everything we've been talking about, you know, working on your protein intake, going to bed, getting enough sleep, movement, movement, movement, movement, because that boosts all of your neurotransmitters, that boosts your serotonin, your dopamine, your endorphins, all of that.

So how do we get this movement in? You know, if you can and it's not too cold, go put your feet in the grass, you know, get that morning sunlight, like all of these daily rhythms.

And people are like, oh, that's just so much to do. So pick one, pick one, like put your feet in the grass, go out in the morning sunlight. But these are just things like, it just should be part of our natural rhythm in the first place.

We just have to be more intentional about them.

## Practical tips, quick protein options, and closing resources

I like to tell my patients that you decide on a non-negotiable, just like you said, like pick one. Me too. I use that exact terminology, non-negotiables.

Yeah. And I think that's always a good place to start. And then you can keep adding more of those non-negotiables in to your routine. Do you have any favorite?

So I know, so we live in a very, very busy society and you deal with moms who are even more busy than regular society, right? Because we are always doing everything for everybody else.

We're always having to get everything done in a short amount of time, it seems like. It feels like our days are shorter and shorter. Do you have healthy protein bars or healthy protein shakes that you would recommend when they are so busy?

Like they're driving in the car, they're taking their kid to the dance class, and then they got to take their other kid to soccer, you know, whatever is happening where it's like, yeah, they can't literally eat the meal while they're driving.

They're having to go back and forth. Do you have anything for any suggestions that you like for those? Yeah. I mean, we always keep a stash of grass-fed beef sticks in our car.

Perfect Aminos bars. There's lots of different flavors for those. Those are yummy. We've used like Epic in the past. So, and then we tend to do like Paleo Pro protein powder.

If you need to make a quit smoothie, some collagen. I use systemic formulas, but there's some other good ones out there. So those would be some of my quick go-tos.

But, you know, just keeping a can of, you know, salmon in your car, that won't go bad either. So that's always, I

know people like, seriously, Lori, but yeah, there's- Unless you're in Arizona or someplace hot, don't keep it in your car.

Right. You don't want to do that. But I mean, I live in Iowa, so- Keep it in your purse. Keep it in your purse. It's fine. It's fine. Just throw it in there.

But I travel with, you know, cans of fish and stuff. So I'm the weird person that makes the, you know, the seat next to you stink. So. I'm vegetarian, so I don't carry those, but I do carry other things.

Yes. I won't open it on the plane, but. That's nice. Thank you. I do like the whole food approach though. Just like get your, have meat around basically.

Yeah. Yeah. Except for when you're vegetarian. Yeah. Well, you have yours. I have my own stuff. It's fine. I do. I really like Vita Hustle. So the one that I use is Vita Hustle and it's made with organic.

I don't know that one. So it's actually, it's like Kevin Hart. Kevin Hart and his wife, I think. It's their brand, but it's made with all organic fruits and vegetables, and it's got a bunch of adaptogens in it.

It's got a bunch of amino acids in it. It doesn't have sugar in it. It's got probiotics, postbiotics, prebiotics. It's got just a whole bunch of good stuff, and it tastes like chocolate milk.

I only like the chocolate one. The chocolate one's my favorite. But it tastes like you just mix it with water and it really just tastes like chocolate milk.

So that's my workout protein when I'm at the gym, because obviously I'm not going to be just shoving my mouth full of food while I'm working. That way I'm still getting protein and minerals while that's happening.

Yeah, I do like that one and it's vegetarian for any of the vegetarians or vegans. Nice. Do you have any like last minute plugs like if people wanted to work with you or any resources for them that you've available for like people to take their next steps?

Yeah. So next up, follow me on Instagram at Take Back My Brain on Instagram, YouTube, all the socials at Take Back My Brain. If you go to my website, Laurie Hammer, you can schedule a free 15-minute call with me.

So I would be happy to chat with you about what's going on. If you have any anxiety, depression, OCD, PMDD, PMS, whatever it might be, the amino acids can help with so many different things.

So I would love to chat with you in either of those places. Perfect. Well, it was great talking today. I think it was lots of fun and some really good information.

And maybe in the future, we can have another chat and talk even more in depth about it. Yeah, that sounds perfect. Thank you, ladies. I love what you're doing.

Your mission is amazing. Thank you. We love what you're doing, too. It really aligns. It's nice. It does. All right. Well, that has been another episode of Hormone Heroines.

If this episode has resonated with you, please share it with someone who you think needs to hear it. Bye. Thank you. Bye, guys. Bye. Thanks for watching Hormone Heroines.

If this episode spoke to you, follow the show and share it with someone who also needs to hear it. And write a review. That helps more people find their way back to balance.

See you next week.