Introduction and Guest Background

Welcome back to the Restore Your Mitochondria discussion. I'm your host, Laura Frontera, and I'm bringing you experts to help you boost your energy and fix your health so you can build the life you love.

Today, my special guest is Elizabeth Yarnell. Hi, Elizabeth. Welcome to the summit. Hi, Laura. Thanks for having me. I'm so glad to have you here. I wanted to bring you on to have a really good discussion about inflammation today.

I want to really dig into that. I know people all the time tell me, I know I have inflammation in my body. I feel like I'm suffering from chronic inflammation and I can't get rid of it.

So we're going to go into a deep dive about that today. Your total authority on this topic. You have a personal story as well. You were diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1999, and you've been on a mission to redefine Ms.

and autoimmunity naturally. You're a traditional naturopath and a certified lead therapist. You've worked with hundreds of Ms. and other autoimmune sufferer.

Excuse me, autoimmune sufferers. And you're a TEDx speaker and award winning author, and you have a cookbook that sold more than 70,000 copies. You're a patented inventor.

You've been featured on CBS, NBC, ABC, PBS, Good Housekeeping, health, Martha Stewart Living Radio, pretty much everywhere. So glad to have you on here.

Tell us a little bit about your personal story, because I'm sure that your expertise in inflammation has something to do with your own journey. It is.

Inflammation is definitely my jam. But every time I hear that introduction, I'm reminded that it wasn't always like this. Like, all of those things have come out of my inflammation journey.

And in fact, it was a really cold winter's night in January of 1999 when I, went to sleep.

Elizabeth's MS Diagnosis and Personal Health Journey

As usual, I had been working on an article for a newspaper, and I, decided I was ready to print it out as a draft, and I printed it out and read it over as I was brushing my teeth and I noticed there were three spots in there I wanted to change, but I figured I was tired.

I'd go to sleep, do it in the morning. But when I woke up in the morning and I set my the pages of my draft down next to my coffee, I couldn't even read them.

It was like somebody had taken an eraser and erased words, phrases, entire paragraphs, lines, chunks of text. They were completely gone. And even worse, I couldn't even really understand what it was I was reading.

It was all kind of confusing, and I couldn't figure out those edits I had wanted to make at all. So I called up my father, who's a neurologist, and he sent me into an eye doctor because I said, there's something wrong with my eyes and my the eye doctor diagnosed me with optic neuritis, which is inflammation of the optic nerve, and sent me in to get an MRI, which came back with the diagnosis of multiple sclerosis.

At that time, I didn't even know what Ms. was. But what I learned very quickly was that 80% of Ms. patients experienced significant disability within ten years of diagnosis.

So here I was, literally two weeks before my 30th birthday, and I was learning that I might be in a wheelchair by my 40th birthday because Ms. is an inflammatory, autoimmune, degenerative disease that attacks the nervous system and inhibits nerve.

Nerve synapses or nervous system communication. Well, that is quite a story. And I know there's people listening right now who have experienced something similar or know a loved one who has.

I mean, Ms.. Is that crazy disease that manifests differently in every single person. Tell us more about this. So you realized you had Ms.. You realized you didn't want to be in a wheelchair by the time you're 40.

So what did you do about it? So my doctors, the only things they could offer me were, a selection of injectable, very, very toxic medications with, pharmaceuticals, I should say, with super serious side effects.

Some of them total system shut down. And, even with the medications, the efficacy rates were so, so low, like 20, 30%. And they weren't, there was no real proof that they would slow or stop the disease.

And in fact, all the doctors will tell you Ms. is incurable. And that was the most depressing thing I had ever thought I'd ever heard, because here they were, telling me there was nothing I could do to change the course of my future.

But meanwhile, my entire world was about reading and writing. And if I couldn't read and I couldn't write, I was going to have to find a whole new career.

I didn't know how I was going to support myself, how I was going to make it through. I even had to approach my new fiancé and offer him an out, because this wasn't a future he had signed up for.

But it was my fiancé at the time who who first suggested to me that maybe the state of my body might have something to do with what I was eating, and I had to admit, he had maybe had a point.

Because really, for the entire decade of my 20s, I lived alone. I either ate out or I eat fast food, or I simply skipped the meal. And the only staples I kept in my apartment were Diet Coke, Crystal light, and gummy bears.

Oh my. Saying you possibly ate yourself into this or malnourished? Yes. Into it. Yeah, I think I ate myself into it because the more research in, the more I learned about autoimmune and multiple sclerosis, the more I really feel that the entire word auto immune is an oxymoron, because if we break it apart, it means auto self immune allergic, allergic to self.

Understanding Hidden Inflammation

Well, evolution would say maybe that's not possible. You would have died out. Your whole line would have died out a long time ago. So really what I think autoimmunity is and multiple sclerosis is all about on unity or any chronic conditions are due to inflammation that is being triggered by things that doctors haven't been looking for.

And if we just look in the right places, we can identify those triggers because, unlike what conventional medicine thinks, that, that auto immunity has an unknown etiology, that we don't know why it happens and therefore we can't cure it.

I actually really think there's always a trigger, and we can always discover what's happening and and how to, live without those triggers, just like celiac patients, when they figure out that it's gluten is their problem. Right?

Which is an autoimmune disorder. So clearly you figured it out because you're here today on this a wheelchair thriving. I know you personally. I've hung out with you.

I happen to know that you are healthy and vibrant and acting like any normal person. So I think we've even danced together. Right. So I think so, yes. So let's.

So this is your story of what you experienced. But what you experienced in terms of inflammation, can really be can really be. It's a broader topic than this. So we're not talking just M. S.

and autoimmune inflammation at the cellular level causes all kinds of health problems, everything from cancer to heart disease, diabetes, I mean, you name it, inflammation is at the root of it.

So, let's shift from the EMS side of things and talk about inflammation in a broad way. How would you know if your body is inflamed? I love this, I actually just gave a talk on this last week in New York City.

So, I like to say this is we're talking about hidden inflammation, not the kind of inflammation you might see when your ankle swells up when you twist it, that's visible inflammation.

That's the good kind of inflammation. It's there to help the body heal. But the key to remember is that, that healing can only happen in the absence of inflammation.

So like with my ankle, when I twisted it, the swelling went down and that inflammation receded so that the body could heal itself. So in our body we have hidden inflammation.

So if we have hidden inflammation in our head it could look like migraines or headaches or brain fog or forgetfulness. If we have hidden inflammation in our sinuses, that could be chronic sinusitis.

So anything with an iris, as you know, as a doctor, means inflamed, right? Appendicitis. Anything with an iris means inflammation. If we have inflammation in our chest area, that could be blood pressure issues.

That could be asthma, that could be heart issues. If we have inflammation in our gut that could look like acid reflux, it could look like, bloating. It could like, look like stomach cramping when you eat, if we have inflammation and then our bowels, that could be anything from diarrhea to constipation shouldn't or both alternating with each other.

Inflammation in our joints could be arthritis or fibromyalgia. I mean really inflammation is also, if you remember that all symptoms pretty much more or less are based in inflammation.

And if you are experiencing anything negative in your body, that's that's probably not, healthy, normal, pain free existence that's probably due to inflammation.

Wow. It sounds like it is such a broad problem. And it's at the crux of mitochondria. The mental. Yes. So we're on the mitochondria summit. We're talking about cellular energy.

And that being the most foundational thing you can do is support your cellular health to heal. And inflammation just wipes out your mitochondria. Yeah. Right.

Right. So if you have if you're if you are inflamed, your body is working double time to maintain that state of inflammation.

How Inflammation Drains Energy and Mitochondria

And that takes a ton of energy, which which is why people get exhausted. And fatigue can be a hallmark of chronic inflammation. Because your body is working so hard to maintain that inflamed state, and that impacts even down to the cellular level, how those mitochondria are able to pick up what they need to do and do all of their functioning and send that out to the rest of our cells, because that inflammation gets in the way.

Yeah. So what you're saying is with inflammation, your body's working double time just to maintain normal functioning in the presence of inflammation.

It's double the work. Yes okay. So how is inflammation then affecting your energy levels. So we know that we have this mitochondrial ATP production at the cellular level.

And we know inflammation is making your body work double time is that's what's causing a lowering in energy. You know, so I am not a medical doctor or a scientist in that way.

But I would expect that if you were to look at your cells under the microscope when they were inflamed, you would notice that they they're actually larger in size.

In fact, did you know that obesity is being considered excessive inflammation? So oftentimes it's the inflammation in the body that's even causing us to look bigger.

And when people go through an anti-inflammatory program, they literally deflate and they shrink down and they lose like girth around their shoulders everywhere.

Their entire body starts to just kind of deflate is the best word I know. Just kind of, stops being so puffy. And so if we think about our body when we're inflamed, being really puffy, and often you can even see it in people's faces or in their necks when you're looking or your rings don't fit little clues that your body's inflamed.

You might see it in your ankles, or your shoes are tight or your belt is tight. All those things are inflammation. And the same thing is happening at the cellular level.

If you can like think about a cell, an individual cell, maybe with a belt around it, and they have to loosen up those belt, notches when you're inflamed to let that cell, because the whole cell expands with the inflammation, because of the the whole immune response in the body.

And this just zaps our energy. Just oh yeah. So exhausting. And yeah, I mean, fatigue is a hallmark. As I said, I have multiple sclerosis, a really any chronic immune issue.

And even if you haven't been diagnosed with something but you are just exhausted all the time, there's a good chance that inflammation is playing a role and what's causing the inflammation.

Let's get into that. And this is going to be really helpful. So audience make sure you have your pen and paper going because we're going to probably go through a list of all the things that are causing.

It's not just one thing. So I have a feeling, Elizabeth, that you're about to hit us with a list. Well, so what I'm not going to do is I'm not going to hit you with a list of specific foods that you should superfoods or anything like that.

Because just like we were talking about with multiple sclerosis, inflammation is really a snowflake issue because every person's body has a different history of environment and foods that you've eaten and what you've been exposed to.

And and really, it all comes down to what I consider our immune system bucket.

Common Causes of Chronic Inflammation

So if you if we think of our immune system like a bucket where, everything that goes into our daily lives that has to be dealt with and processed by our body goes into the bucket.

All of the insults and assaults, whether that's lack of sleep or stress or maybe alcohol or over-the-counter painkillers or antibiotics or other pharmaceuticals or parasites or mold, any of those things, they all go into our immune system bucket and they have to be processed out.

But when the bucket gets too full, then it starts to spill out over the top, and that's when you tip over into chronic inflammation. So I think that the best ways to start your journey into reducing inflammation in your body is to avoid certain things that we can be fairly confident our our causes of inflammation in the general population.

And I'm going to be very specific to America and North America because of our highly processed diet. So the things

I like to suggest that people start to avoid in their diets to reduce inflammation are artificial sugars.

So that could be aspartame, high fructose corn sirup, saccharin, there's all kinds of dextrose, sucrose, maltodextrin. Those are all synthetic, artificially created, laboratory created sweeteners.

And they all can trigger inflammation in a body. In fact, there's, syndrome called aspartame poisoning if you eat a lot of aspartame, and if you drink a lot of sodas or chew a lot of gum, or really eat a lot of the foods in our daily world, you're going to be exposed to way more artificial sweeteners than you might be aware of.

And nobody is out there monitoring, how much reach taking. And so artificial sweeteners are one, a big one. Artificial colors are another one. So they might have names on the labels of, foods.

Or they might just say and seafood dye and color with a number. But when they were first brought before the FDA in the 1930s, they were sourced from coal.

Now artificial colors are sourced from petroleum, and they've really never been tested for, sensitivity. And the human body, especially in the amounts that we are taking in that category, that's scary.

That's scary color or food coloring. So you're saying artificial coloring or food from a food coloring is from initially from coal and now from petroleum?

Yes. Yeah. I mean, think about this, everyone. I mean, this is this is what we're feeding our kids. This is what we're feeding our, you know, elderly parents in an assisted living.

This is what, you know, we're putting in our own bodies mindlessly. This is terrifying. And it's not only in our foods, those artificial colors, if you think about like, even like a Sudafed is red or a Tylenol capsule has that red tea on it.

They are in our our makeup. They are in our personal care products and our sunscreen. They're in our hair products. They're in our laundry detergent. They're dishwashing liquid.

How about that red toothpaste? Oh yes. That one has saccharin. Two. That one is full of, lots of chemicals. Well, you're. Exactly. Why would we want to brush our teeth?

Put red food dye when we're trying to clean our teeth? None of it makes much sense. So. And then the third one and then, and I'm going to give our listeners today three, because it can get overwhelming.

But this one is a big one. And it's in so many things and it's called quote, natural flavors. And you might think they're natural. And you're, you look at that can of, sparkling water and you're like, wow, this stuff is great.

It has no calories, it has no sweeteners. It just has natural flavors. But what you don't know is that natural flavors can encompass a whole universe of chemicals, including MSG, all sorts of chemicals that they don't have to disclose and just get wrapped up into this one.

This one, FDA loophole that they can call natural flavors and natural flavors is one of the nastiest lies out there. In fact, I've had, you know, discussions with loved ones and clients about the dangers of this.

And people get really frustrated because they think they're doing something really healthy. And and then I'm coming in and saying, well, it's actually not as healthy as you think it is.

Better for you to just make your own carbonated water or just get unflavored and squeeze some fresh lemon or lime, or muddle some strawberries or mint or something and put that in there if you want the flavor.

Exactly. And, and really, these natural flavors can come in so many different chemical stews. For me, my body is so sensitive to natural flavors that when I accidentally have any, usually I can taste them when when I'm starting.

So I stop. But if I drink them or I eat them, then literally my eyebrows start to peel and first it feels like there's stand in my eyebrows because it's peeling, and then it stretches down to my eyelids and they peel and then they start to bleed.

Oh my gosh, that's that is a huge response. And what's coming to mind too, is some of the things people don't realize, bones and flavorings to put in soups and when you said a stew of chemicals, my mind went to flavoring food.

Reducing Inflammation with Whole Foods and Detox Support

And using a lot of those things are just artificial or natural flavoring, which is really code for artificial flavoring. And, and even in we think, oh, we're going to go nondairy get some almond milk or something or coconut milk.

Well, if you look at the labels on those packages and they're getting worse and worse every day, they have all sorts of flavors and sweeteners added to it.

And and chemicals, chemical preservatives like Ben's awaits and phosphates. And a lot of people are very sensitive to those too. Yes. And I will say just a quick tip for all of our listeners who are thinking, oh, oh my gosh. And this goes with oat milk too.

So if you're a nut milk or an oat milk lover, I have the most amazing contraption for you. It's called an almond cow. Are you familiar with this, Elizabeth?

I am not telling me this is the most amazing thing. I want you to go look it up after almond cow. You make your own nut milks. It takes about 30s for it to make your milk.

It's a contraption that completely pulverizes and grinds and whizzes the nuts up as the water is, you know, purified water is swishing around it and it keeps all the pulp contained so you don't have to strain it.

You don't have to do anything exciting. What I do with it, the only extra step I take, and you don't have to, but I do, is I soak my nuts overnight so that they're more digestible.

So I will plan, like, okay, I'm going to make almond milk tomorrow. I'll put my almonds out on the counter, soak them in purified water, rinse them, and then make the almond milk.

And I'll throw in a date for sweetness. So if you want a little bit of sweetness in your milk, I'll put a pitted date and I put in a pinch of sea salt because it just balances.

And that's it. Now there's no preservatives, there's nothing weird in it. So you have to drink it. It will go bad because it's not shelf stable even in your refrigerator.

You got to drink it within a couple of days, but it's delicious. I love that, I love contraptions like that. It's amazing. I'm going to definitely check that one out.

I'm going to find it on Amazon. You'll love it. Go to Almond Cow website. Don't support Amazon. They're part of the problem okay. So don't go to the almond house source and get it from them okay I will do for you know we love Amazon but this is a company you want to support.

They're doing a good thing. Yeah okay. So so we talked a lot about the things that are causing inflammation here. And and it goes hand in hand with how to reduce inflammation.

So if natural flavoring causes inflammation, then eat real food is the polar opposite. Right. So any other tips you want to give on reducing inflammation in the body.

Yes. So whole foods are better than processed foods. That's one of my main models. You'll see that all over all of

my my properties. Whole foods are better than processed foods.

And that's actually what led me to invent and patent my cooking method that I introduced in my cookbook, Glorious One. Pot meals didn't mean to make this a little promo of this, but this is it.

I created this cooking method to make it so super easy to prepare dinner out of whole Foods in less than an hour and have them ready on the table so Whole Foods are better than processed foods.

Eat a rainbow of foods so that you can get a variety of nutrients is a really good way. A lot of people are deficient in a lot of nutrients, especially minerals and minerals are the foundation of life.

So, you want to be sure that you are getting a lot of, phytonutrients and other nutrients in your foods or supplementing them if you need to. And then, I think that's the biggest thing.

Don't fall for any of the fad diets. Don't don't think you need to go keto or paleo or, vegan or whatever it is that's calling to you, unless that makes you feel better.

Some people you I use very sophisticated food sensitivity testing to tell me exactly what's causing the inflammation and people. And it never comes out that matches any one of those fad diets.

That's so true. So, so it's like, what do you mean? I'm a sensitive to avocados? How am I going to be keto now? Right. So yeah. And you know, keto in my opinion is is good to jumpstart the body to shift things.

I don't believe people should be on a hard keto diet for long periods of time. It causes some problems. So yeah, I totally, totally with you there. So I mean, I'm going to I'm going to ask, what is this cooking contraption you have? We're talking about almond cow. We need to talk about your thing.

What is this? I don't know about this, so it's not a contraption. I use a cast iron Dutch oven to, layer foods in to in a specific order. That's what I have the patent on.

And you to all Whole Foods. So you start with, you make an entire complete meal. There's you but you make it the way you want to make it. So you put in carbs and then protein and, and flavorings and, safe oil for you.

Everything is safe for you because you are making it yourself. And then literally, you flash cook it at super high heat 450 degrees for 45 minutes. Oh, wow.

I mean, you do it in the oven or stovetop. How is this in the oven? And this is your method. You patented the method. Yes. So cool. I foresee in your future there should be a line of cookware that goes with this method.

And just let me tell you, that's been a long journey. We'll talk more later. I didn't know this about you. This is super fun. Okay, so we talked about reducing inflammation with food.

What else you got? So yeah, inflammation. You can also reduce inflammation by detoxing your body.

Final Tips and Inflammation Quiz Resource

So easy ways to do that might be an infrared sauna or even an Epsom salt bath. I love ionic foot baths. They kind of get a bad rap, but I think they're amazing detox system, so that can really help reduce that load in your immune system bucket.

And all of that will help you become less reactive to foods that you're eating and other things that are coming into contact with your body. Amazing. And we're lots of experts on this, summit talking about all the healthy things you can do.

I would throw into that healthy lifestyle. I would throw get your sleep, you know, reduce stress. We have lots of

people talking about that here, people talking about moving your body, drinking purified water.

All the good things. It all goes together. But at the end of the day, food is so huge. I mean, we have to eat every, every day unless you're doing a long, fast.

But you know what I mean. Pretty much all of us have to eat every day. That's a non-negotiable. We have to drink water every day. That's a non-negotiable. We have to breathe every day.

That's a non-negotiable. And so those are the things we really want to clean up. Toxins coming in. Don't eat. Breathe. Exactly right, Elizabeth. Exactly.

Yeah, exactly. Feel. Filter your water, all of that stuff. So, any final words you'd like to share with our audience before we wrap up today? This has been great.

Yes. So if people are interested, they can find their inflammation score. I have an inflammation quiz. Amazing inflammation investigator.com. And they can see how inflamed are they, and is their body inflamed enough that they're ready to take some steps to move forward and reduce that inflammation?

Because it is not as easy as just snapping your fingers, you actually have to put in some effort. But if you know what it is you're doing, it's much easier.

Oh, so good, so good. Thank you for sharing your wisdom today, Elizabeth. Thank you Laura. They take good care now. You too. By.