Introduction to Eczema and Gut Health

This is not a skin issue. This is a gut issue. As a mom, trying to reverse this is like, okay, eczema is this very hot, fiery, mobile, dry sort of condition.

What would start to balance those qualities? Because opposites balance. And so then you think, okay, cooling, calming, easy to digest foods, mushy, and this is not by any means all you can eat.

But those type of things, Kichri is like one meal where a lot of us haven't heard of it, but it's like in India, it's baby's first food. It's like mung beans and rice and a few non-spicy spices like turmeric and fennel and ginger, stuff like that.

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Now, let's go to Vitality Made Simple. Welcome to Vitality Made Simple. This is the podcast that equips you to feel better, look better, and to enjoy better relationships.

Yes, life is all about relationships. And when we feel good, we have more to give. What such a joy to welcome Andrea McHugh. Welcome, Andrea. Thank you.

I'm so excited to be here. Well, Andrea and I know each other. I've been on her podcast. I feel like she's my neighbor, even though she's on Mountain Time and I'm on Central Time.

But Andrea is a citizen scientist. She is the creator and the host of eczema kids. And I would say she is one of the world experts in eczema. Even though her podcast is called Eczema Kids, I want all of my listeners to know that this interview is for anybody who wants to better understand eczema.

We all know people who are suffering and it has been my experience in the last few years that there are more and more and more people suffering. So, Andrea is going to help us in a myriad of ways.

She's going to give you a lot of practical strategies. She's going to tell you about your home. She's going to tell you about your skincare. She's going to tell you about just your attitude and how that impacts things.

So, Andra, tell our listeners how this journey started. You've told me you really didn't want to be an eczema expert. It was through the fire that caused this.

Yeah, I would definitely. choose differently if I could choose, but that's what was in the cards for us and that's okay. I mean, what really started me on this journey was a visit to the pediatrician and at the time I had two kids that had severe, severe eczema.

I had just had my third daughter and she basically was born with eczema. Like they said in her discharge papers, there was a needle-natal rash and then it just kept getting bigger and bigger and bigger and just started taking over her whole body.

And simultaneously, my two-year-old came down with eczema as he would a cold. It was the craziest thing. It started with just this little bite on the inside of her.

thigh, like I thought it was a ringworm and it just, same story God just started taking over her whole body and it was the craziest situation. So I went to the pediatrician as one does when you have sick kids and I had my month old in one arm and I was holding the hand of my two year old and the doctor was like, this is really bad.

And I was like, yeah. I know that's why I'm here. And he said, you know, all you can do is manage this. You're going to have to put both these steroid prescriptions on both of them.

Wear gloves yourself because these are admittedly very caustic substances. And, you know, just That's it. Throw some bleach in their bath. That will help, you know, suppress the bacteria.

And otherwise, you know, you're just going to have to manage and hope it goes away. And I just stopped my tracks there. I was like, no, this cannot be our story.

There's no way. My baby was just a month old. My daughter was just two. This can't be our story. And I just left there with a resolve to fix it naturally.

So, Andrea, let me clarify. This probably is standard of care.

Andrea's Eczema Journey Begins

The pediatrician tells you to put steroid cream on your baby, their pure little skin, but for you to wear gloves when you were putting that caustic substance on your baby and then to put bleach.

So that's like Clorox in their bath water. Is that what you've learned to be sort of standard appear for eczema? That's it. It's suppress and kill. It's like that's the prescription and wet wraps.

You know, sometimes some doctors will prescribe wet wraps. I even took them to a hospital here in Denver that had a special eczema program. And what I found it to be was just wet raps.

Like we didn't go through with it. It was like, oh no, this is already what we're doing at home. Okay. So this is going to help along with some, some drugs being applied to their, their skin.

So. Yeah, I know. That's it. I mean, you know, in the same breath, he pulled up his sleeve. He said, you know, and he was kind. Obviously, like everyone that goes into medicine is doing it for the right reason.

But they said, you know, I have psoriasis. I've been dealing with this my whole life. This just is what it is. And I just you know, as a mom, and I know you're a parent, like there's just, that doesn't, that mind frame doesn't exist with regards to our kids' health.

Like we can't accept it is what it is when it's anything subpar. No, I mean, we want options. We want something we can do. And if those remedies that you had been given had worked, That would be a different thing.

But for him to pull up his sleeve and say, well, you're going to have to live with it. I mean, in other words, do this. It might hurt you, but it's not going to work either.

So you took the bull by the horns and you started researching. So what'd you find? you know, I found first and foremost, this is not a skin issue, this is a gut issue.

And so then you get into the world of gut health, which is quite the world, right? Like everyone knows like, oh, I could do better by my gut health. And they know that, you know, everyone listening, I'm sure knows like, you know, everything that they're being exposed to via water and food and air and right, it's like enough to make you go crazy.

But There's just in all of those things, all of those inflammatory assaults impact your gut health and there's just so much you can do to turn the dial and change the trajectory of your or your child's future, your family's future for sure.

And so that's it. Yeah. I just started researching at night in between night wakings. I read a million books by a lot of very smart people on vague, very like singular topics and really deep dived into a lot of specific things.

And then that's where I started. I just started in the kitchen. It's just like, what can I do the next time I feed them their next meal? How can I get the most nutrient-dense foods into them and just start this, you know, jumpstart their cellular turnover?

Because kids especially like that process is so quick. And I just knew like, what can I do to make it so that next round of cells comes back healthier?

and just layer by layer by layer by layer get through this. Start in the kitchen. That is terrific. But how did you know what to start? Because what I've learned from you, Andrea, is that a lot of foods that we think are healthy foods are not healthy foods when it comes to eczema.

Yeah, right. Like, so kale's healthy, right? But if you were just to eat like a raw leaf of kale, you can't digest that. So everything in our plan, everything that we do is digestible first and foremost.

And this means it's warm and it's soothing and it's nutrient dense because anyone who's experiencing eczema hasn't been absorbing the nutrients from their food for a very long time or for as long as this situation has presented itself and actually longer, right?

Because there's this warning period before this gets going. They're not absorbing the nutrients, there's nutrient deficiencies, there's dysbiosis 100% going on, and there's lymph stagnation and liver stagnation, and there's just a host of things going wrong.

But especially with this pediatric population and really everybody is like the most bioavailable way is to start with food as medicine. And, you know, you can, you could do so much by way of food.

And so that's where, that's where you start because you're going, you're eating multiple times a day, every day. It's just like the quickest way to turn it around.

So you're going to eat digestible foods. You're going to eat anti-inflammatory foods. nothing raw, nothing spicy. Like if you were to think of eczema, the properties of eczema, and this really helped me wrap my head around it.

As a mom, trying to reverse this is like, okay, eczema is this very like hot, fiery, mobile, dry sort of condition. So what would start to balance those types of qualities?

Because opposites balance. And so then you think, okay, cooling, calming, easy to digest foods. This is like just warm, mushy, and this is not like by any means like all you can eat.

But those types of things like Kichri is like one meal where a lot of us haven't heard of it, but it's like in India, it's baby's first food. It's like mung beans and rice and a few non-spicy spices like turmeric and fennel and ginger.

stuff like that and then and steer clear of things that exacerbate those qualities. So anything spicy or too hot or like too much histamine or too much, you know, too aggravating to the system.

So like coffee, if you're a nursing mom or if you're experiencing eczema for sure is not the way and you can replace it with matcha and things like that.

And things like You know, the things that are touted as gut health holy grails, like bone broth and fermented foods, those don't work for eczema because they're just too high in histamine and they're too heating.

So if you can look at foods in that way, that really helps you steer around. It's tough to look at foods in that way, Andrea, because it reminds me of Dr.

Natasha Campbell-McBride. I heard her speak at a conference. She talks about the GAPS diet and she was on the podcast actually, probably a couple of years ago.

Similar to that, right? Is the GAPS diet something that you followed? I think her book, The GAPS Diet, should be required reading for every parent. Really, because it really, the front part of the book helped me understand, you know, she puts eczema on the same continuum as autism, you know, everything is connected, right?

And so this unchecked inflammation, basically, it can show up in a myriad of ways. It's just as serious. I mean, eczema is an autoimmune condition, very serious.

But like, the same, I guess, root cause could show up as severe autism, you know, in another kid. And that, like that kind of stuff scared the bejesus out of me.

It's like, that's what like made me really level up my game after reading her book. The diet that she proposes doesn't necessarily help for eczema. You know, there's like tomato soups, there's some almonds, there's eggs, there's things like that.

Like it's definitely nutrient dense and it can help. But for eczema specifically, it's not the way. But 100% everyone should read that book just as like a manual for the care and keeping of children or even yourself, just to help with prevention or reverse like whatever's going on with you.

Yeah, she's a really fascinating person. She's a Russian physician who lives in the UK. That was really a fun interview. But it's a healing diet. So that's why I thought it kind of reminded me.

Now, Andrea, I've heard you talk about bone broth. We always think bone broth is the most healthy thing, but tell us how that relates to anybody suffering from eczema.

Yeah. So anyone suffering from eczema is having a hard time breaking down histamine. They are lacking this diamine oxidase molecule that they need. And so bone broth, if you eat it within that day that you make it, That can serve as a healing, easy to digest, clear, warming sort of food.

But any time past that, it aggregates histamine so quickly that it's not worth it. And then if you were to buy any store bought stuff, it's got nutritional yeast.

Yeast is another one that we're going to want to steer clear of because we don't want to feed the dysbiosis that's going on. Yeah, so it's just that's why, that's the why behind why we steer clear of that just for the first initial healing period, which is 90 days from our standpoint.

Yeah, so anybody can do anything for 90 days. Yeah, it's really, you know, because you've seen such miraculous changes and now you coach people who are suffering like you've suffered.

Now tell us about other signs your child had, children had, like in terms of constipation. I see a lot of patients with constipation who have eczema. How are those related?

Yeah, right. So we talked about like there's a dysbiosis going on. They're not absorbing what they need to absorb. They're not creating enough HCl. They're not creating enough bile.

Like they're not breaking down the foods that are coming in. And another part of our program is pairing your foods correctly so that you're not introducing, you're not eating a strawberry with a steak because the strawberry is going to digest very quickly and the steak is then going to, because they're being introduced into the system at the same time, the steak is going to sit in the stomach and start to ferment.

and increase that systemic inflammation, right? So there's that fermentation going on, right? Things have just been in there and blocked for a long period of time.

Constipation was a big part of all of my kid's journey, not my fourth, by my fourth I figured it out. you got to open up

those proper detox channels, right?

Because when you're looking at eczema, you're looking at those toxins boiling up through the skin. So silver lining, good news, it's like coming out in some way, but bad news, not through the way that it's supposed to.

And so we just got to, we got to open those up. And so there's, you know, short term, we did, there's a bio ray pooper supplement. That's just a tincture, like really easy to take.

We did that every day for a little while. I gave my baby, especially just like cooked prunes for breakfast. for a long while, you know, soaked, like right, so they're absorbing all the moisture.

So then when you eat them, they're not like then absorbing the moisture from you because that's like a drying food, you know, so, you know, in the way that you prepare it.

So there's, there's things that you could do, but it was like just a, you know, a small part of our everyday routine for a little while before we got everything functioning properly.

Well, because we know our bodies are designed to heal, we're made to heal, it's so interesting to think about the eczema being toxin release. I mean, that is fascinating to me, Andrea, because You know, everything in conventional medicine would just be to squelch those symptoms of a bigger problem.

So then those toxins wouldn't get released if we turn that off with steroids. So you went through the food, the food piece of it. And then what did you look at next as part of the problem?

Well, and then simultaneously you have to address symptom management because we're in the here and now and their skin is falling off, right? In a lot of cases, or if even it's just like one little red rash, like that's not good.

So everything that is put on the skin has to be bioavailable. It has to be digestible as well, like anything that you come in contact with. So it doesn't mean you actually eat it and that it's going to taste good, but you could eat it, right?

And not hurt yourself because you are, you're absorbing it and you're digesting it and you're circulating it just the same. Then I started making herbal oils and that, by the way, of its lipophilic properties, when you infuse anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial types of herbs, skin-loving herbs into a carrier oil and you put that on your skin, especially in these lymph-concentrated areas like your neck and your clavicle and your groin and under your feet, things like that.

those like fat likes fat. So those nutrients are driven all the way into the tissues and it really helps. Like I talked about earlier with that cellular regeneration process, it just helps.

It's like taking supplements through the skin. So every piece of this symptom management piece is another layer of this like food is medicine concept.

It's just like you're infusing nutrients in every way possible. So we do herbal oil, we do Epsom salt baths just to help remineralize and to help detoxify.

And we have an anti-itch spray that helps reduce staph because anyone that has eczema has an increased staph count on their skin, like just is, but we can address that.

And then the spray helps with the itch, like the Chinese herbs that are in that concoction are prescribed a lot to Asian women with vaginal issues. So it just really helps with yeast, staph, itching, all that.

And then we follow that up with just with a super thick layer of tallow cream. And tallow is just so bioavailable. It's almost like sebum, like your natural skin.

Lots of vitamins, A, D, E, and K, and all of that is also just infusing into your skin. And I just found that to be the most effective way to just, we're repairing a broken skin barrier, right?

The skin barrier in this case, if you have eczema, it's just been thinned out. And especially if there's been any steroid use in the past, it's even thinner than like what the disease would create.

So we got to actively rebuild that from the outside in while we're working on the inside out as well. So tallow, yeah, I use tallow on my skin. I love it.

So you made these herbal oils. How did you do that? There's a couple of ways you can do it. But you can, the fast way is to put in a mason jar these herbs like neem, I have amalaki, a few other things that are all lymph moving.

anti-inflammatory and into a carrier oil, like the one that we sell is in jojoba oil because it's super mild and still moisturizing and just really beneficial for skin and well tolerated.

And you just, you know, like with a heat infusion, you can put those those things like the oil and the herbs in the mason jar and put it in heat like on a crock pot in a crock pot for you know 12 hours and then you strain it and you can use it from there.

See I told you folks that she was a citizen scientist she's a chemist too. I mean that is so that is so fantastic. I mean I can see um I can just see you in your kitchen like a mad scientist trying to pull this stuff out.

So you would like you. Yeah. Yeah. It sounds so fun. Now you put these oils on the lymph areas. Are there other things? I mean, little kids are jumping around and all that, but for adults, this is where maybe a rebounder would come in handy, right?

Or some things to move lymph. Spounding that. Yeah, anything that you can do to move your lymph would be incredible, right? You're getting your movement throughout the day.

You're hydrating. Yes, but this is just one extra layer. This is like based on an Ayurvedic practice. It's called Abhyanga. It's been practiced for thousands of years.

People do it preventatively. And I mean, honest, it makes a big difference.

Bone Broth, Constipation, and Detox Support

And then for eczema, folks, it's got, it just also gives your skin this extra layer of protection because water is just this other thing that your skin needs to be protected from.

Like if your skin barrier isn't 100% intact, right, it's just you need, you need a little extra, a little extra moisture, a little extra layer before you experience, you know, a shower or a bath of water.

Well, and I've heard you say that you put it on before you shower. I mean, that was surprising. I thought, did I hear that right? But you know, it does just feel so luxurious.

I put a whole coat of Talo on right before we started here and I keep a little jar in my car even. It just feels so good. Now I probably need to put it other places, you know, my hands and arms.

Thank you for that reminder. So you kind of detoxed your kitchen. You've turned your kitchen into a lab to make some food as medicine medicines. Now, what about your home cleaning products, Andrea?

What did you do? Those all went away and I just made, I just used vinegar. You can use vinegar and water for your floors, right? You can use it for your windows and your mirrors, just straight vinegar for your windows and your mirrors.

And you could even use it for your counters or you can do like water and tea tree oil for counters. Like I threw them all away. We do not buy cleaners.

So you can also, like there's also companies like Forrest in Nature, you can make like hypochloric acid, you know, they have like a electrifier thing and little like sodium, I don't know, water capsules or sodium vinegar capsules that you can make.

So there's, there's different ways to go about it, but you just have to make sure that it's non-toxic, right? Like the zero, and I didn't even have any bleach or anything like that in my house before, but still we, we bought like, you know, cleaners from sprouts or natural grocers, like my husband used to just call it dirty water.

He's like, this probably isn't doing anything anyway. But, you know, I just found that you don't even have to purchase those, just like those three ingredients.

I use baking soda for anything that I need to scrub. It's cheaper, way easier, way less toxic for everyone. So, Andrew, why did your extended family say about this?

You know, you can be honest with me. You know, because, I mean, all the people that think how, you know, weird we are. I mean, people kind of want you to do things the way they do them, right?

Yeah. So tell us about your experience. Yeah. Well, I was a dental assistant. So I came from that world and my stepmom was a hygienist. And, you know, I know, like, and this alone will make me sound crazy, but like, The reason my third daughter came out the way she did was because I was actively working in a very busy hospital here in Denver in the dental unit and exposed to a lot of chemicals and a lot of radiation and all those things.

Not ideal, right? It's a really deleterious field, okay? So then I knew that was a big cause of why we're in this situation. And my mom's a nurse, but they don't understand, right?

And they see your children suffering. And they think it's negligent to not lather them in steroids and, you know, infuse antibiotics into their body because it's like, how can, you know, clearly this needs attention and how can you ignore advice?

And so that piece, that piece was hard. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. You repeat that last statement, Andrea, you cut out. Oh, yeah. Eventually it all worked out, but they still think, you know, I'm bananas.

Like I still eat healthier than the rest of my family, the rest of my friends, but we did before all of this happened too. Like that's what's so crazy.

And that's the same story with everyone that I work with is like, they're the healthy people. They even could live on an organic farm. Like they don't eat gluten and dairy.

They filter their water and we're still having this conversation. And I mean, that's the sad part. It's just like these people are already like really, really trying just as I was, and they're just not getting the results that they want.

And they're still like actively working on this problem. And so, yeah, I mean, some friends even told me like, I think you're working too hard. Like, I think you should just give them McDonald's, you know, and call it a day and maybe that would help.

But, you know, like I knew that wasn't the way either. It's just you got to, it's a tough line to toe. You have to stand strong and if you know in your heart that you're doing everything you can and you sincerely believe that this is what's right because like you said and I firmly believe that the body is meant to heal.

I knew without a shadow of a doubt like my kids weren't here to suffer to live like this like that's not why they're here. They were destined to do much better things and we were all destined to sleep and, you know, enjoy life.

I just knew that this wasn't the way that we were supposed to conduct life. And so I think you can have that resolve, like they will heal. We just have to give the body the inputs that it needs to heal.

That helps you stand out to the naysayers, even when it comes from love. Yeah, even when it comes from love, but it's, it's also, you know, from my perspective, I mean, being in dentistry for 40 years plus four years of dental school, um, I got diagnosed with chronic lymphocytic leukemia four years ago and I knew that was a, a toxin.

That's a toxin problem. And through a series of all the stuff I've done, there's no evidence of disease down. The doctor's just like, well, well, maybe we were wrong.

You know, I got tested several times to confirm that diagnosis. But also, Andrea, there's the piece that's so interesting with family or friends not understanding is that their understanding is so much rooted in conventional medicine and a handful of pharmaceuticals and not feeling good.

Skin Care, Herbal Oils, and Tallow

That that's where they're coming from. I mean, as a clinician, what I see is that people finally get tired of not feeling good. I mean, they're on that other side.

They just, you know, as humans, we move to lesser pain. and it hasn't become lesser pain yet to try food or to try detox or to try, you know, something else.

Right, or just the unknown. Yeah, it's exactly right. It's just that's, that's all they do. And yeah, it's just accepted. Like, sure, my knees hurt and I'm a little overweight and like, isn't everybody?

This is just like, how we go. So yeah, it's, it's okay. I would definitely sometimes you know in my stronger moments remember like just you know remember the source and and and and and really every time anybody said anything it was coming from love that they wanted what was best for my family and for my kids and so you know knowing that you can take pretty much anything.

Sure, but I would encourage any listeners to just be strong. Just be kind, speak the truth back in love, and think about how our design is. I mean, we're not designed to take a Clorox bath.

We're not. I mean, we're designed to maybe take an Epsom salts bath because that's just sulfate, magnesium sulfate, but we're not designed to be putting steroids on our babies.

So when you really think about that, it helps. And then when you see people get well, that's what's so great for what you're doing. You're seeing people get well, you're restoring hope to them, Andrea.

And that's what they're not getting other places. They're not getting that hope. Yeah. Yeah. And you got to stick with it. It's consistency, you know, it's these small actions over time.

And that's what really moves the dial. And a lot of times, things get worse before they get better. And that's where it's really hard to push through, right?

Because you're just like, maybe leaning off of steroids, right? Now you're rebounding. Or at the very least, you're breaking up these toxins, you're letting them loose and you're trying to flush them out and so that those can wreak a little extra havoc for a little while and maybe the redness goes up and maybe the itchiness goes up for a week or two, right?

But in that time, it's very, very scary. And then like that's generally the pattern I see is that, you know, you see progress the first two weeks, then you start to go into detox and you see a little bit of a regression.

And then once you get through those two weeks, if you can stay strong during those two weeks, then you just the progress goes up and up and up until it's completely 100% clear skin.

So everyone Everyone gets better because everything that we're talking about, and I know you did the same in your practice, everything that you're talking about is good for you, right?

It's bioavailable. Like it's like, there's nothing that's like, oh, the side effects could be undesirable. Like there's no, nothing that we're talking about is that way.

So yeah, everyone gets better. And then the ones that are just consistent get the full reversal. Talk about tapering off of steroids, steroid creams. So I think that's just really important for people to remember, you know, because on the skin goes in the body.

Like you said, it's the same as going in the mouth. It goes in the body, has to be metabolized by the body, has to be detoxed by the body. So if somebody's been on these steroid creams for a while, I got to be careful.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I suggest, you know, just tapering it off as slow as possible. And, you know, I've seen people that have been on it for years, years, decades, like my adult patients are decades.

And then, you know, these kids, some of them are five years old and been on steroids for four years. And you just have to, you know, every dose, you either Once you get everything in place, you get the diet locked in.

I don't think you should change anything until you get the diet locked in. You get the other symptom management piece, like everything else that you're putting on.

You're getting rid of the Vaseline, no petroleum products, no oatmeal stuff. Anything that's going on the skin is clean. And then you've done everything that you can for your environment, and then you can start to taper off the steroids.

So You know, you go with like one less application a day and then eventually to every other day and then to every two days. You know, it's a gradual, gradual process because steroids, one, thin the skin barrier.

So some kids… have a really hard time because if you were to go cold turkey, it puts them into TSW. It's this topical steroid withdrawal process and like any substance, your body gets addicted to it and it's been suppressed for as long as your immune system has been suppressed, for as long as you've been putting these on your body.

And that rebound process is rough. That means more rashes. That means more itching. It means more flares. It's not good. But if you can just go as slow as possible.

I don't even recommend changing the dose. First, just one less application a day. And you just keep going like that. Like I said, as soon as you get all of the…

take away as many inflammatory inputs as you can, then start to go down that road. Because yeah, that's a lot for your body to rebound from. That is great information for our listeners to taper so slowly off of steroids, topical steroids.

Yeah, wow. So, Andrew, what if any supplements do you recommend? I'm sure you want people to get tested for vitamin D. Yeah, if you can, great. Otherwise you can likely assume that you're low.

I mean, especially if you're going to work or school every day and, you know, it's just, it's just going to be. And if you live in the Northern hemisphere, you know, a regular life, um, I recommend taking it.

You know, September through May in most cases, but yes, if you can, do a lab for it, that would be ideal starting out. But yeah, there's a bunch, right?

So like we talked about before, there's 100% these nutritional deficiencies going on, right? So we want to fill those gaps. They're low in magnesium and they're low in zinc and they're low in iron.

iron, and they're low in a whole host of things. They're definitely low in these glutathione precursors and detoxification enzymes. So everything that we do, supplement-wise, we have to take supplements because if you are this far off from health, right, and cartilagin, you're going to need more than food to get you over that hump.

You're just going to need that extra surplus of of minerals and of, you know, nutrients that are going to really help your body do what it needs to do and detox and get over this.

So, IgG is another one that we talk about a lot as like a binder. There's, there's a few. And so I create, you know, depending on the age and what else they have going on, you know, we start with these supplements and, you know, they can be liquid and they can be capsules.

It can just be a bunch of different things.

Home Environment and Family Reactions

It's, it's, I don't just blanket prescribe the same thing for everyone. Everyone's got a lot of different things going on, but we, we do that first. We do these like foundational supplements.

before testing because then ideally they don't need testing at all. If you ride with the supplements and everything that you're doing by way of your home and environment and symptom management and food, most people are good, like they're free and clear in 90 days and they don't even have to go the testing route.

And then there's like that 15% of the people that I work with and I was included in this 15% of my kids, like we had to go all the way. And so we had to get a few tests done, a few functional tests done to really help us.

you know, shore it up and navigate it. But I don't recommend going that route until you have done everything else you can because if you do need testing, the work that you've done before that testing will pay in spades, you know, like then you'll see those results.

and it'll be actual like implementable data versus everything being lit up you know like a Christmas tree because otherwise like if you just test right away when your body is in that super inflamed flared state it's going to be reacting to everything if you do any sort of IGG or whatever you are doing and your GI map is going to be just a mess and micronutrients a mess.

So, you know, I just really, really recommend just bringing down that inflammation by all the other avenues first and for most cases, that's enough and then testing.

So that's where supplements come in. That makes so much sense, Sandra, because no, you need to do these basics. Do those basics first and see how your body reacts.

You know, get, get to pooping, get to doing, you know, rebounding, whatever it is, get the limp moving. Um, that's very logical. I like that approach because people can just spend so much money on testing and then it can be overwhelming because you need to do all that anyway.

Right, right. And it's thousands of dollars and especially pediatric patients. It's like sad. And you can't even test, you know, you can't even do like GI maps on kids under 12 months old.

Right. So then, you know, that's where we were, like my baby, like testing wasn't really an option. And so we had to just do what we, we could there. So what, um, what, if any, uh, strategies do you have to decrease stress?

I mean, these are little kids and they're in pain or even adults, you know, that are having this severe eczema. They don't feel good. So. You know, it's so great that kids can almost be a test case.

I thought it was so wonderful for you to be on Vitality Made Simple because a lot of our listeners, you know, don't have kids, but this pertains to everybody.

There's so much you could do. I mean, it's, you can certainly go down the rabbit hole of like, oh no, I'm so stressed and it's making my kids stressed or it's like this condition is making me more stressed and now there's more flares.

And of course that's really stressful. So the only thing that you can do, and I say this all the time, even though like eczema isn't a part of our lives anymore, is just like, you can only control your actions and reactions in life, right?

And so the only thing you can do is breathe, like set up your routine so that you can actually do these things. I help people, you know, everyone that I work with, create routine sex so that they can actually do the things, like implement the things that we're talking about.

That gives you peace of mind. It's like when you lay your head down on the pillow, if you know, I did everything I could today to, you know, reverse this condition or be the best parent that I could or do, you know, best by myself.

Like that helps your nervous system a ton. And then I don't know if you've ever heard of Hal Elrod and the Miracle Morning. No, I love it. It's so great.

He just, he says he researched these, like, what are the practices the most, like, successful people implement every day, and he came up with six. And then he just put them all into one morning routine, and it's like the best way to start your day.

So, you know, for adult patients, like, that goes a really long way. He recommends, he calls it the savers. It's like silence. affirmations, visualizations, exercise, reading, and scribing.

So it's like all the things, the whole gamut, but it really, really does help you put yourself into a different state of mind. And especially if you do it first thing in the morning, you know, and it can take, you can do, you can dedicate a minute to each of those practices.

You know, so it's like seven minutes long in total, or you can do much, you know, 10 minutes for each practice or longer, whatever you have bandwidth for.

But that is like game changed, you know, as somebody taking care of, of people with those things. I shattered my leg like 10 weeks ago is this has helped me like keep my.

my, you know, mind frame positive through that ordeal, because it's, you know, it's nothing compared to a chronic condition, but it's been pretty frustrating.

So that helps a lot. And then with kids, right, there's just like, just breathing, eye contact, that Abhayanga, the herbal oil massage, that helps your nervous system a ton.

You know, if you're doing it on on a kid like that helps their nervous system just that like touch helps calm down their nervous system but if you're doing it on yourself same thing it helps all of that calm down so there's a bunch you can do that is still realistic you know like you don't have to go out and buy all these you know, biohacking machines or any, you know, none of that is required.

And, and then light, right? Like a lot of us are just under-illuminated. And so you go out. Un-illuminated. Boy, that's the truth. Yeah. It's the same as being malnourished.

It's the exact same thing or dehydrated. I'm better about doing it for my kids and myself. I tell them all the time, like, go outside, go outside, go outside.

that it matters. It matters a lot. If you can just be outside, especially in the sunrise. And candidly, like I do not do this. I want to. This is an aspirational thing.

And even though it's free and available for everybody, but that would be optimally what you would do is be outside barefoot when the sun is like coming up and when it's going down.

Yeah. No. And that's a good thing to hope for. It doesn't have to be perfection either, Andrea. You can do it once a week. That's just better than zero times a week.

Yeah, absolutely. Really good. Well, what have you seen to be predisposing factors for eczema? So one thing I've seen is C-section births because babies, you know, don't get the vaginal flora, they get their gut seeded with the surgical suite.

Steroid Tapering, Supplements, and Stress Reduction

So expand on that and anything else you've seen, and we can even venture into vaccines if we want to. Yeah. I mean, I've had four cesareans, so not ideal.

And my first three were as three for three for autoimmune conditions. You know, my first has celiacs and it's just really sad. And there's things you can do, even if you're in that vote, like there's vaginal swabbing and, you know, just giving my fourth baby probiotics, like starting immediately, starting in the hospital.

I think helped him out a lot. So yeah, you know, and then formula feeding is another one and most people that are in that boat are doing it because they don't have another option and that's okay.

There's things that we can do, but you know, certainly putting a prioritization on breastfeeding would be one. You know, like dentistry, you know, like your line of work matters.

Like if you're really thinking about the toxins that you're near around and the inflammatory assaults that you're around, you know. do what you can to try and change that, because it's going to impact your health 100% and your kids' health.

I'm a child of the 80s, and I think part of my 100% process in plastic diet and those pink antibiotics every other week, I think that definitely played a big part in my kids' issues, you know?

Like when you make a copy of a copy and then it's just not as sharp, like that I think was a big part of it. And I think that's how you explain, like, you know, still in my adulthood, like I was eating vegetables and I wasn't eating Cheetos and I worked out every day and filtered water, but I was still, I had been, you know, exposed to a lot of a lot of things throughout my life, and the body keeps the score.

And then when you birth out babies, and especially the asisterian, like, I mean, it's through God and the resiliency of people that they even came out with just eczema, you know?

So, yeah. And, you know, we, we erroneously thought we raised our children in the nineties, um, that if it had a nutrition label, it was healthy. And now I realized that a nutrition label is a warning label.

I don't see it the same at all. If it has to have a nutrition label, something's wrong. And, uh, so, you know, we did tons of Kraft macaroni and cheese, lots of SpaghettiOs.

I thought Lunchables were a neat thing to do for my kids. And, um, you know, we, we know. differently now. It's just so different. And those things started coming out when I was a little kid.

You know, a lot of, you know, like a hamburger helper and those things that just seemed to be, you know, Wonder Bread. It was like a sign of kind of a fluence to have Wonder Bread and not have brown bread.

So, you know, it's super interesting. Now, can we go down the vaccine route at all? Yeah, if you want to, don't send me. I don't want anything to ever be scary for people.

I don't want anybody to have regrets. Our children were fully vaccinated. We didn't know we would do it differently. Nobody can undo what they do. that we do know more now, and we do know that there are these other assaults to our immune systems that maybe we didn't have, and we know that there are lots more childhood vaccines than

there used to be.

Yeah. Yeah. It's, you know, my first two are fully vaccinated. My first one at her 12-month appointment you know, I thought I ruined her. I just did on schedule like what was supposed to be and, you know, they gave her like six different vaccines at her 12-month appointment and she was just like this like lifeless, like she used to be this vibrant, smiley, bubbly baby and for two weeks it was like the spirit was taken out of her.

And thank God she you know, shook out of that, but that was extremely scary. And I even questioned it before, I was like, ah, I don't know, but like, you know, like we talked about before, like all of my parents were like, of course you will vaccinate, like this is insane, you know, you must do this.

And so I was like, okay, you know, it's a shameful type of thing. And so my second one, I just spaced them out because I was like, well, I'll never go through that again.

And that makes sense. Like that was just like an overload for a little tiny 12-month-old baby. And my third one at that same appointment, and I didn't mention it, but the one that we talked about at the beginning, that same doctor also said, oh, and PS, you're behind on all these vaccines for your baby.

And I was like, Clearly, she is immunocompromised. Look at her. You can feel the fire coming from four feet away. And this is not the time to then now be injecting more viruses into her.

Clearly, this conversation is over. So that's when I had the gumption to actually stand up and say no more. So my second two aren't vaccinated. And that's where we are.

And like you said, we do what we can do. But yeah, if there's anything going on with your kid, that's not the time to be introducing more on their sweet little systems.

They can't handle it. And the same with yourself. If you're even experiencing a cold, that wouldn't be the time then to take the flu shot, right? Well, and I think it's so key, Andrea, to trust your own gut, your own insight.

I think it's a God-given gift that we have as mothers and fathers to know what our children need and to not let anybody talk us into something we don't want to be talked into.

I really talk a lot lately about not being shamed into anything. When I was in my post education, you know, after dental school, I went back and got all this education, a re-education in functional medicine.

And one of the things I did was a master's program in a medical school and I was their only dentist. And so, but I had to take medical school, ethics and it was so shocking because it was a lot about patient autonomy and it was about doctors needing to respect patients own desires and own autonomy in what they wanted without shaming.

So I see it so differently now. I mean, Like that's something that's supposed to happen chair-siding clinically is that any doctor is supposed to like say, Hey, I'm a teacher.

I'm going to tell you what I've learned and then you get to, you get to make the decision. So, um, you know, I just want all listeners to know that. they can exercise their patient autonomy.

And I think you've done that so well, Andrea. Well, I mean, death by a thousand cuts. I mean, eventually, you know, but it's hard to do. Like, I wish, you know, right, hindsight is 20-20.

And I wish, for my first, when they said, oh, she's breech and you're going to have to have a cesarean, I wish I pushed back more. They said you could seek out this one quack doctor that's like, two states away that does vaginal breach births, but otherwise, like, I won't take you.

And this is just how it's going to have to be. We know so many people are quacks until they're not. We could go down a really long trail of Galileo's and, you know, Dr.

Simmelweis. I mean, I could just, you know, because there's just so many that are just considered to be a nut. And then later it's like, well, of course, like with Simmelweis, of course you're supposed to wash your hands before you deliver a baby.

Of course, you know, the earth rotates around the sun like with Galileo's. You know, I mean, it's like things, everybody believes it once the person is dead and no longer a quack.

I know. So it's hard in the moment. And I just, I really feel for parents that have, you know, like maybe they're on biologics or, you know, like they've been doing steroids for years because it's like, you see your doctor as a teacher, like you said, like that's when we see a person in white coats, like, of course, like, you know better than I.

And yeah, it's really, really hard to know like even what your ground is to stand on if they're suggesting something.

Predisposing Factors, Vaccines, and Closing Advice

And even if it doesn't feel right, it's like, well, but you went to school for this and I did not and you know you have to know what's what's best so I'll just go with your recommendation and I what I learned is you can always take a beat because in those in those rooms like it feels very emergent and And they're not going to want you to, but you can.

You don't have to have the answer. It's kind of like disciplining your kids, right? Like sometimes you don't have to know the consequences. Like I'm going to get back to you in five minutes, try not to worry about it.

And you can, or you know, or with the doctor, it'd probably be, you know, like longer. Like I'm just going to take a couple days to think about this and then I'll give your office a call.

you're allowed to do that. And I just think that is the best case scenario. Anytime that you're just coming up against somebody that you don't feel like you have the answer, but you don't feel like the answer that they're presenting is the answer either.

Well, thank you so much for sharing all of this. You've dedicated your life to helping people prevent these kinds of problems or at least minimize, not go through all the trauma you did.

And that's what's so great about you sharing your time on Vitality Made Simple. I know our listeners have learned so much about eczema. I've learned so much about eczema.

And just thank you, Andrea. Thank you so much. And how can people find you and access your info? Well, thank you so much for having me. I really appreciate it.

I love talking to you. I have a podcast called EximaKids. Dr. Debbie will be on there soon. My website is EximaKids.com. You can get the skincare that we talked about earlier.

It's called the Skin Comfort Trio. You can find that there. We have a program called the eczema elimination method. If you're just really ready to reverse this for good, it works for kids and adults.

And I'm on Instagram at eczema.kins. Great. Well, thank you. And thank you, listeners. We're now at 145 countries. Like almost 7,000 studies because you're sharing this.

Thank you so much and just may God bless you. Thanks for joining us on Vitality Made Simple podcast. Be sure to visit drdebbyoslin.com for our courses and resources designed to help you feel better, look better and enjoy better relationships.

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