How to Feed Your Child for Eczema Healing Without Losing Your Mind Over Breakfast, Lunch, and Snacks with RD Ali Miller Transcript

(Transcripts are generated by AI and may contain errors)

Podcast Intro and Guest Introduction

Hey friends, welcome to the eczema kids podcast. If your child's skin is flaring and you've been wondering where to start, today's episode is going to clear the fog and get you back on solid ground.

But before we dive in, if you're not ready to overhaul everything quite yet, but you are ready to start healing your child's gut, start with my eczema kids prebiotic tea.

This stuff is magic in a mug. It is the simplest, most effective step to calm inflammation, rebuild the gut, and start healing your child's skin from the inside out.

You can grab yours at eczemakids.com. So today friends, I'm really excited. I'm joined by Allie Miller. She's a functional dietitian and author of Naturally Nourished Kids.

We're digging into how food as medicine can totally transform your child's health without complicated testing or expensive protocols. Just real food, real healing.

So let's jump in. Is your child struggling with itchy nights and endless flare ups? I'm Andra McHugh, mom of four and host of eczema kids. Here you'll find natural solutions that actually work so you can heal your child's eczema without steroids, without the overwhelm, and finally see calm, healthy skin again.

Let's get into it. Welcome back to the eczema kids podcast friends today I'm joined by Allie Miller and she's a registered dietitian and a functional medicine practitioner and author of naturally nourished kids and Allie has spent years helping families use food as medicine in a way that's both evidence-based and is actually doable in real life.

And honestly, that's exactly what we need here at Allie because so many of the parents I work with feel like they've already tried everything, every cream, every elimination diet, every supplement, and they're still stuck.

Their child is still experiencing severe, severe eczema in a lot of cases. So that's why I'm really excited to have you on today. I want to start there.

When a parent says, we've tried everything, where do you begin? What are the first three levers that you start to pull? Well, understanding what everything is that we've tried.

All too often, I say that sometimes we go all in and we invest in really sexy data, but we aren't ready to apply the information yet. And that's a crux that I like to share with parents.

You can do so much with food as medicine without the advanced investments in stool tests or inflammatory food panels, which both have their place and both I clinically use.

But I can't tell you how often a parent will come to me and they'll have run an inflammatory food panel. And yet their child isn't eating a whole food diet to begin with.

So the first lever, you know, I always say it in anything, whether we're talking metabolic health, autoimmune health, eczema and dermatological health, we have to know what we're doing if we're going to make a change.

And so at least starting with tracking, being mindful and intentional with what we are feeding our child, and starting to remove those classic pro-inflammatory foods and using whole real foods, versus relying on products that claim to

be free of these problematic foods.

Often we get kind of gridlocked into that exclusivity versus inclusivity of what am I actually eating or feeding my kiddo. And I think that we can really start simple there is first just setting the tone with whole real foods.

And then we start to watch for glycemic index, which can impact metabolic health, mental health. But for sure, if there's a microbiome or a dysbiosis issue, we want to be mindful of those blood sugar spikes that can really fuel dysbiosis.

And then I tend to look, of course, into gut integrity as we think of the skin as really the mirror reflection of what's going on in the intestines. I couldn't agree more.

I mean, if you're watching this, I was just nodding along. It's like, I don't let my kid or I don't let my, my patients, you know, test till at least we're three months in.

Yeah. Right. That's exactly what you said. Just dial in the eating, like making sure that we're only eating. food like real food whole real food that actually has some nourishment and you know unfortunately the parents that are listening now their kids are like have likely not been you know absorbing the nutrients from their food for a very long time correct we get into a lot of nutritional deficiencies and then before that right there's most definitely a dysbiosis going on.

But I always say test last save the thousands of dollars and save them right by first just yeah doing exactly what you said. Take out the inflammatory foods that we know aren't good and let's like start to soften the blow a little bit.

Heal up that intestinal lining a little bit before we go into testing just so everything on you know the IgG and the MRT like isn't isn't lit up like a Christmas tree, and then you can actually derive some actual data.

And 80%, I'm going to say even 85% of my clients don't even need to go into testing.

Starting with Whole Foods Before Testing

Like once you've been doing this for a certain amount of time, it clears up. So that's beautiful. And some need to take on that extra step. But yes, I just could not agree more.

With that, how do you think leaky gut shows up on a child's skin specifically? So when we're dealing with gut issues as far as the lining, so we're talking about issues with the junctions of the microvilli.

And what can happen is we can see pathogen crossing into that gut blood barrier. We can see larger food particles causing more of an autoimmune-like response or an inflammatory response.

So when we're looking at the skin, we can see rashing. We can see ulceration and breakdown of tissue. We can see issues with growth and development, of course, based on micronutrient absorption and then that can even impact, you know, beyond the skin into the world of brain fog, difficulty concentrating or focus and now we're looking at neurological health ADHD.

But skin really we can see rashing, we can see severity of itching, we can see issues with the derm as far as like I said tissue breakdown and unfavorable turnover of tissue like wounds that aren't repairing for instance and We can see in the skin even fungal issues based on the formation of the rash, and then especially if we're looking at like nail bed, scalp.

When babies have cradle cap before we introduce first foods, I always recommend prudent to first give them immunoglobulins, which you can add to breast milk.

So, you know, breast milk is nature's perfect food. We ideally want to provide breast milk because we are always decades behind. And, I mean, I think we will always be behind what God provides as the natural perfect antidote.

We're like grasping at the surface and scratching at such a small preliminary area where now with formula we're trying to add prebiotics. but it will never be the same as a human milk oligosaccharide, right?

We are trying to add probiotics, but it's not the same where baby with nipple to salivary production can actually communicate and we can produce milk different immunoglobulins.

based on baby's need, real time. And so, you know, breast milk even has CBD, cannabidiol, which actually interplays with the child's endocannabinoid receptors, which we're all wired with as humans, which impacts our nervous system and our growth and our satiety and our sleep and has anti-inflammatory benefits.

So the idea of first, ideally, if we need to consult with Leila Leche, if we need to support breastfeeding, that's always, I think, a preliminary priority.

And then even further, if we're starting to see skin issues when breastfeeding, mom can start to employ an elimination diet, but immediately, like I said, cradle cap, derm issues, bring immunoglobulins in, and you can supplement breast milk in the bottle by adding actually serum bovine immunoglobulins or quality colostrum.

And then I also look to vitamin D before bringing in first foods. You can actually do a blood spot of vitamin D to assess your child as early as six months of age.

So again, as we're kind of thinking of foods, because foods are not going through breast milk being filtered. And so we're getting a lot larger particles to the infant or baby at that time, not infant when they're starting to bring in foods at six to nine months.

But if that gut lining is not ideal, before we provide immunoglobulins, they're going to be more susceptible to more food sensitivity and an inflammatory food response.

So immunoglobulins help to support that immunosurveillance essentially. I kind of think of like literally like the airport scanners, you know, our immune system is supposed to survey and scan and determine what doesn't belong in the body.

And so if there is leaky gut and we are not sufficient in our immunoglobulins, we are not able to make antibody to antigen and we will see more food sensitivity, more inflammatory response.

and also underserved gut pathogen regulation because we don't have those compounds to actually battle when needed. So that's one thing that I think of right off the bat.

And then like I said, vitamin D status and then even probiotic early on, especially if seeing fungal activity. So like cradle cap, we tend to think connected to fungal.

Mom can actually take caprylic acid. We can work with coconut oil feeding on a spoon, which has monolaurin and also caprylic acid in there, which can be a nice natural antifungal to help to reset that microbiome.

Yeah, love it. And it's such a good way to tell if your child is experiencing cradle cap, certainly eczema or anything like that. hold off on starting the foods, because a lot of people, if they're noticing these patterns beforehand, they're just exacerbated when they start to eat whole foods, because as we said then, it's a big signifier that their gut isn't healed and sealed, and there's some things You know traveling through systemically that aren't supposed to be there and we need to get that under control before we Add on right?

Yes. Yeah, that's really really good advice and and we see cradle cap and we just think it's just normal right instead of like a fungal or Right that we actually need to contend with so and even you know modern mono eczema is in the elbow Areas that can often be overlooked.

Oh, just put a little salivonin It's like, you know, that's an indicator that your baby is telling you that that the gut lining is not Optimized and so before you would want to stress further.

You'd want to really focus on the integrity in that foundation Yeah, yeah, love it. So switching gears, but not entirely. I mean, we're talking about things like, you know, systemically going through histamine is something that the parents listening, they get confused about.

And, you know, there's a lot to be said about that. And you can start to cut out histamine foods, high histamine foods to handle eczema, but then you're like left with not that.

much, but if histamine is your problem, what are the signals that that might be the problem? And then what's some easy swaps that we could start to lower the load without meals feeling?

Well, you know, histamine is an indicator of dysbiosis, and when you resolve the microbiome, histamine intolerance should also resolve. The dance is, is that when histamine intolerance is going on, which is usually at a status of a gut infection or yeast overgrowth, probacteria, which we otherwise would want to support baby and toddler and child with, will actually further exacerbate more histamine response.

And so like fermented foods, of course, we want to watch. The other issue is a lot of our protein containing foods, which again, support that gut repair.

Leaky Gut, Skin Symptoms, and Infant Support

Protein containing foods. I mean naturally nourished kids is so focused on one of the preliminary questions of optimally nourishing your child is Where is the protein on their plate because we see prefrontal cortex, you know again kind of going back to mental health and behavior All of our advanced decision-making processes require ample protein in that prefrontal cortex, even social skills, less impulsivity, focus, recollection of information.

And so getting our kids those amino acids that help to make those neurotransmitters have a role in their body also systemically to help with repair from damaged tissue, which would extend into gut issues.

The immune system requires protein to actually manufacture a lot of the immunoglobulins and the antibodies in response to antigen. And so that's the dance with a high histamine or trying to eat a low histamine diet from someone that's histamine responsive, is that often the recommendation is, of course, pull out fermented foods, anything aged, fresh, fresh, fresh, no leftovers.

And then also watching some of those animal products, which could otherwise be very restorative and nourishing. So histamine intolerance can be seen with itching, can be seen with fluid retention, can be seen even with classic allergy responses.

So like itchy eyes or redness in the eyes. We can see redness in the body generally as well and like a flushing response. And then we can even see congestion in that area.

And so this is where I look at cleaning up the gut versus a low histamine diet for a period of time that could be extensive because my concern as a functional medicine practitioner is that we're missing out on a lot of necessary nutrients by following that low histamine diet.

And so it's not resolving just like a low FODMAP diet when we're talking about SIBO. is a mechanism to really manage the symptom but not resolve the symptom.

The resolution occurs from actually killing off that unfavorable overgrowth. So if I'm dealing with someone that is releasing histamine issues and like not tolerating bone broth, not tolerating meats, then I would invest in a stool panel at that juncture because that will guide me as a practitioner of, is it uva-irsi, berberine, if we're working with tinctures, if we're working, what types of herbs and natural compounds are going to kill off, what pathogen are we concerned about, and how can we be strategic versus throw darts ad lib and hope that that's gonna clean things up.

Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, I mean, and that's part of what is so confusing and I feel for everyone out there and it used

to confuse me too. It's like, oh, I mean, bone broth and things like that and sauerkraut, right?

They're acclaimed, you know, gut health foods. And, you know, I feel like parents know like, okay, my child is contending with a gut health issue. They're experiencing eczema and a lot of times, yeah, you're just adding fuel to the fire because the dysbiosis prevents them from actually Breaking down histamine, sorry.

Yeah, clearing histamine. Interesting is when the gut is in a dysbiotic state, so everything has a sweet spot. And when the body is imbalanced, it tends to produce more imbalance.

It's a cat and mouse or chicken and egg thing, right? And so when we look at gut infection, what's wild is the gut is supposed to be where a lot of our neurotransmitters are manufactured.

So we think of serotonin and GABA for sure in the gut. And these are like landing gears for our fight or flight stress response. Well, when we're dealing with dysbiosis, not only do we not manufacture as much serotonin and GABA, but we actually put out more epinephrine or adrenaline because the body is sending out fight or flight survival surges from that enteric nervous system or the brain and the gut to the central nervous system saying, Things aren't okay, and so a child can be dealing with OCD like tendencies or panic attacks or anxiety.

And, you know, we might not be able to tolerate the lacto and the bifidoflora until we have resolved that dysbiosis to provide them again that feel-good landing gear.

Same thing with histamine. Again, you know, probiotics can be also defense once established to prevent gut infection. But when we're dealing with that overgrowth, we see excessive fermentation, and we'll often see in lab values that histamine, which is that excessive fermentation, that bloat, that distension, and that byproduct then can create that imbalance, and we have to resolve before we can really get to that root cause.

Yeah, yeah. So you mentioned how important protein is for growing, developing little kids. especially for growing and developing kids that are contending with eczema or some other autoimmune condition.

I mean, eczema is an autoimmune condition and that's why it is so serious. Their protein levels are maybe even a bit higher, I'm not sure. But what are those protein targets that you try and get to?

Yeah, so our tenets of naturally nourished kids, you know, the first step is it has to be a whole, real food. And we can combine these whole, real foods into amazing, delicious recipes, and they don't have to have 17, 25 ingredients.

We can get to very simple sheet pan roasted veg with four ingredients and searing a steak or cooking salmon on a cast iron and finishing it in the oven and so I want listeners to not feel overwhelmed but I do really lay that before I even go into macros in the book because I think it's really important to first say how we got here is through ultra processed foods.

because ultra-processed foods can cause such damage to that epithelial tissue lining. And so that's important to acknowledge first. Once we're looking at whole-real foods, then we start to look at carbs, protein, and fat, and the relationship of these three macronutrients to support optimal minds and bodies.

And so when I look at the AAP guidelines, and this book is co-authored with Becky Yu, So she has a seven-week-old, as I'm speaking, a three-year-old and a five-year-old, and I have a nine-year-old.

And so we really take this from savory starts and baby-led weaning and toddlers all the way through teens and beyond. And so when we are determining carbs, protein and fat, In that macros section, I actually have a devoted page per macro.

I break down the AAP guidelines and then the naturally nourished kids guidelines. So maybe for your audience, it may not be a surprise that our carbohydrate recommendations are half that of the AAP.

And our protein recommendations are double that of the AAP, right? So it's that classic flipping that food pyramid kind of on its side or upside down.

We actually do recommend the same amount of fat as the AAP, give or take. but it is more about the quality of the sourcing of these fats, avoiding those industrialized inflammatory seed oils, because we know that fats play a role in every cell membrane in our body, and so we want those comprised of, again, whole real food sources, so olive oil, tallow, lard, grass-fed butter, ghee, etc.

In the protein recommendation, as I'm doubling the AAP guidelines, we generally look to at least, especially in developing growing bodies, at least a gram of protein per pound of body weight.

So if we're talking about a toddler at 35 pounds, we're talking about 35 grams of protein. And so ideally, if we're distributing that throughout the day, and this is not a child that is actually in a state of chronic illness, If chronic leo, we would even amplify that a little bit further to support that restoration and healing process.

This is kind of a base foundational goal. So if we're looking at a toddler looking for that 35 grams, we might look to hit, you know, 15 grams at that breakfast and then, you know, distributed 15 and 15 and we might hit closer to like 45, give or take, which shooting over is absolutely welcomed, especially when we're going from whole food sources, not, you know, concentrated isolates that would be otherwise stressing.

Absolutely. Parents, are you exhausted from battling your child's eczema? You've tried the prescriptions, the creams, the elimination diets, and the flares keep coming back.

I'm Andrea McHugh, mama for and host of the eczema kids podcast. Two of my children suffered with severe eczema and I know the sleepless nights and the nonstop itching and the frustration of feeling like nothing works.

That's why I created this podcast to share what actually does from natural solutions that calm the skin to practical everyday tips that make healing actually possible.

You'll find hope, clarity, and a path forward here. Follow eXimaKids wherever you get your podcasts and head to eXimaKids.com for free recipes and resources to start your child's healing journey today.

Yeah, that was part of the question. It's like, would a child with a chronic illness need more protein? And yeah, I mean, I believed so. I just wasn't entirely sure because when I look at my clients' diets, you know, we start out with like, what are you eating in a day?

Nine times out of 10, they're just not getting nearly enough protein. Like just not enough to recover. Like you need just the extra, the extra nourishment for your body to come from this diseased state to healthy.

And it's, To heal wounds, like that's the number one limiting factor. We think of, of course, zinc and vitamin C as micronutrients to support wound healing because eczema is wound healing.

You know, we're looking at both the interior of the gut as well as exterior, right? And so we think about, of course, things that support collagen synthesis, like I said, vitamin C.

We think of zinc, but we think of protein as that foundational nutrient of priority and absolutely could be more appropriate to hit like a 1.4. five while kids are in a recovery or repair state.

Histamine, Dysbiosis, and Gut Infections

And I think that once you start to wrap your mind around that, and I always start with when assuming it is whole real foods, the first thing we look at when building a plate is protein, because generally speaking, for most people, most parents out there, they're doubling or even further increasing what they had been doing.

And so it's a really focal area on the plate. And then I tend to say, you know, carbs are going to find your kids.

Eureka marketed to your child is a carb and so we're more again focused on the whole real food sources and we're looking at more of the produce coming from that source of where the carbs are going to be.

So we're looking for our antioxidant phyto compounds in our fruits like our berries and our apple slices and our broccoli and our leafy greens. So really fruits and vegetables are where we think of also where the carbs live.

And when dealing with leaky gut and or derm issues, I do recommend keeping grains out for a period of time. So naturally nourished kids is 100 low glycemic as well as anti-inflammatory real food recipes.

And I do talk in the book, and this is a whole big topic on the idea of gluten and gut lining and gut dysbiosis. And it really comes down to the quality, the source, the milling, et cetera.

And is it then made in a traditional way or an ultra-processed way? But even so, we start and actually nourish kids with a focus that most kids, most teens, most adults, have some form of leaky gut.

And so we really want to bathe the gut with that restoration before maybe three months of applying naturally nourished kids. And then maybe a fermented sourdough or something like that could be considered.

But within our Food is Medicine goals, we're recommending bone broth multiple times a week, and we're recommending probiotic rich foods multiple times a week.

So as you're eating antioxidants, getting that protein, getting a variety of whole, real foods, you're also healing and sealing that gut. So then you can move into that maybe more abundant level of food freedom without unfavorable impact.

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. What about breakfast for a lot of parents listening? Breakfast is a little stressful because one, it's chaotic. But two, you know, I recommend taking eggs out like eggs is just a textbook, you know, IgG at least, you know, if not IgE allergy for most kids experiencing eczema.

So I recommend taking it out for 90 days just to give that gut lining a break. Can you think of a couple of breakfasts that are Egg-free that actually will keep like their blood sugar stable and be high protein.

Yeah, so, you know opening up to savory I think is really essential as far as breakfast I think there's a lot of like conditioning of it having to have some form of sweet so when you open up the world world of savory, then we have like really amazing pork sausage, breakfast sausage, which have like some sage in it and you actually like baste with a little bit of maple to give that dance of like savory with sweet.

And those meatballs are very popular to do just with berries. We also have savory bison meatballs that could absolutely be served at breakfast as well.

Even as the kids get older, soups are really welcomed and in other cultures, a very standard breakfast option there. We have an entire chapter of bone broth based soups, which would be reasonable.

I do like smoothies as well as a great option, especially supplemental option when you're starting to get, like when you're looking at your protein goals and you're like, how is this even going to happen?

And maybe a child has a low appetite. doing uh like a souped up and so if holding dairy as well with eggs in that first 90 days you know that means that you could do a really clean nut milk or a nut butter with water in the blender to make a very you know no additive nut milk base But then using a protein powder, I'm a huge fan of non-denatured whey.

I have a product called Whey Protect where we add immunoglobulins in there. So assuming a child tolerates dairy, that'd be a really good double punch with those protective immunoglobulins as well as the grass-fed non-denatured whey.

But if we're holding dairy, we could do a beef protein isolate. Even collagen peptides could be very therapeutic. They are not a complete protein because they are short of tryptophan, one specific amino acid.

With that being said, as long as collagen peptides are making up less than 20 total percent of your kids' protein needs, that's totally reasonable and is helpful for their gut lining because it helps to support that connective tissue skin as well.

So adding collagen peptides in a protein shake could be really lovely with just like organic berries, splash of full fat coconut milk or that nut butter homemade nut milk.

And keeping it concentrated versus high volume is really key so that it's only four ounces for them to get in. And then maybe they have leftover from dinner.

We love salmon at breakfast time as well. So whether doing lox or doing like a hot smoked or just leftovers, that sliced with avocado can be really beautiful.

as well. Yeah, I see that all the time too. Like breakfast doesn't have to look like breakfast. It's okay. It's just like something that we do here, but they don't do it.

That's not in the rest of the world at all. And yeah, I mean, my oldest is 10 and my husband handles breakfast. And so here breakfast does look like breakfast and we have a little bit of a like a mutiny if it doesn't.

But we're working on that. Like, leftover is definitely the easiest way, you know, just from the Nipra 4, so it doesn't have too much histamine in it.

It's like, that's the easiest, fastest way to get a breakfast. No doubt. Love it. What about a really balanced school lunch, keeping in mind Yeah, so we have a whole section on lunches and one of my favorite things to recommend, we call them cool kebabs.

Anytime you can bring your child to the table at any age and get them hands-on involved, you're going to get a stronger win of them participating in the eating process.

So I love doing kebabs where now, you know, you can get all these different funky sticks with like unicorns on top or mermaids or whatever character of desire.

That's sometimes the only, you know, colorful non-phytocompound colorful thing in my daughter's lunch. And so she loves to do cool kebabs, which is basically like a protein item.

So it could be steak, could be chicken breast. could be a quality deli meat that we get from a local butcher and basically then there's usually like cucumber and an olive or something like that or it might have a strawberry and a piece of mozzarella cheese let's say with chicken.

It might be like a BLT version where we're doing like a slab of thick bacon with a little piece of lettuce and a cherry tomato and then we do a fun dipping sauce But cool kebabs are great because they're savory based, they have a protein of focus, and then you kind of work those other add-on combos of what goes well with that flavor profile.

We also have a lot of great make-ahead items like superfood chicken nuggets where we use an ancestral blend. And so getting organs into children is a great nature multivitamin to enhance nutrient density in the B vitamins, minerals, CoQ10, which is a powerful antioxidant in the body.

So our ancestral chicken nuggets use riced cauliflower, a little bit of an almond flour breading, and then are formed with some seasonings and spices and baked in the oven with a little spray of olive oil.

Lovely. They can freeze in batch as well, which is really nice. And even like our paleo chicken tenders are another really great make-ahead. We serve that with a turmeric honey mustard dipping sauce.

So just a little bit of elevation, a kiss of food is medicine, if you will, on an otherwise classic combination.

Protein Targets and Building Balanced Meals

love it you sent me a copy and i cannot wait for it to come in yes i cannot wait for all this and i'm always looking for ways to put oregon meats in i mean even i don't like them but i know their nature is multivitamin yeah and that really it played a pivotal role like my my baby suffered from eczema Really hardcore.

And I just fed her. I mean, luckily, she didn't know any better. And I just made her pate. Pate? Yes, we have a good one. Like that was like her food, you know, when she eats solids to just, you know, remedy her severe.

Well, vitamin A is so good for skin health, you know, and that's very rich in liver, of course. And so, yes, absolutely. We have a lovely pate in here.

And then I like to recommend Force of Nature for listeners. They're a national company. And they make an ancestral blend of bison, an ancestral blend of grass-fed regenerative beef, and an ancestral blend of chicken.

And all of those, if it's an ancestral blend, that's incorporating heart, liver, and kidney. And so they do that at a 20 to 80 percent or even lower ratio.

So it really does not have that gamey profile. And if you're new to it, you could even add then a pound of grass that ground beef into that. So then you're diluting it further to, you know, 10% or less as you're getting family members on board.

That's a good suggestion. Yeah, love it. And then snacks. Snacks is another one that just, if parents are, you know, racking their brains because they're busy and school and daycare is all day and you have to send them with 50 snacks and it's easy to just, you know, grab a bag or a bar and throw it in there.

But what do you recommend that just doesn't take them on this, like, systemic rollercoaster? Yes, I think first off that we snack way too frequently. I mean, we are here because we're doing things wrong.

And when we're frequently stimulating an insulin response, that is unfavorable for the body's inflammatory processes. And unfortunately, with many of the kind of governmental school standards, they are providing snacks very frequently because they are providing imbalanced macronutrients at meal time.

So when you set the stage with a government-funded or even a classic American breakfast, and it's cereal, milk, and often sugar-sweetened cereals, with milk, with fruit, and or another carb choice like toast, croissant, muffin, pastry, we are putting children on a blood sugar roller coaster, which what goes up must go down.

And I actually even have that as a section of the book. So there's two chapters, why real food matters and then making it happen. And so we have a good visual of a blood sugar roller coaster that I think is a really great guided conversation for parents with kids.

that you can have as early as age three. I mean, my daughter was early on, maybe even age two was saying, no naked carbs. I have a protein and the fat, you know, and it was like, and we would do bin colors of snacks.

So she knew if she was pulling a that's it fruit, which was, you know, just that's it fruits that she had to then reach for, was it the macadamia nuts we had in the snack bags or was it the meat stick or was it, so she was very early on able to understand that, We put a lid on a jar.

We don't want our blood sugar to spike too rapidly because if we have that high, we're also going to have a low. And we've all as adults been there of a hypoglycemic hit where we're hangry.

We're irritable. We are feeling woozy. We're having body temperature changes. We're having brain fog. We're restless. Stella, my daughter at nine, will talk about how the kids talk about a sugar rush, is what they call it in her

school.

And she's like, oh yeah, where you basically feel like you're going crazy, then you start sweating, and then you sit down and you're tired and your belly hurts.

And she's like, so I asked her, I was like, do they think it's cool? Is that a good thing? And she's like, no, it feels terrible. But there's some kids that do it all the time.

And I'm like, yeah. Well, so the reason we need snacking getting back to that is because that blood sugar spike creates that hypoglycemic crash. And in order to keep the kids able to at all focus or sit still, we've got to keep kind of pushing that slot machine or that stimulus.

I also think snacking is problematic because it can disrupt eating at meal times. All too often, parents invest so much time and energy into making dinner as often the most nourishing meal available.

Even with chaos of sports and such, it's often the sit-down meal, I at least pray it continues to be so, where we take the time to download our day, we gather at the hearth of the household, and we eat the most nourishing protein-rich, savory meal.

But if we're feeding our kiddos snacks at four or five, then we're setting up for failure and frustration at the dinner table because we just fed them likely less nutrient-dense calories.

And now we're frustrated that they're not going for those meatballs or those more savory protein-dense foods. So our kids are wired to survive. And if you're dealing with a picky eater that is not eating dinner, the first thing you need to do is pull back snacks.

And if they're hungry for a snack, they get offered parts of the dinner if you're prepping and you have bell pepper slices. Okay, here's some bell pepper slices as we're waiting for dinner.

What did you not eat from your lunch? Let's revisit that. And yes, it looks like you still have a cheese stick and, you know, some leftover pickles or something.

Go ahead. Go ahead and have that. But all too often, again, the snacking foods, even the cleaner options, are not as nutrient dense as what we're going to serve at the meals of the table.

And so I recommend, again, snacking unless your child's clearing their plate at their lunch and their dinner, and then they're metabolically fit, and they're also, you know, satiety, appetite-regulated, where they can handle that.

Maybe they're an athlete, and that's totally reasonable. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Agreed. I know the snacking is the bane of my existence. It's so hard because we're we homeschool, right?

So they just have access to things and you know, I'm sure everyone has one kid that's just like Would much prefer to snack because yeah, it's the distraction and the you know, also association I'm sitting here.

This is where I eat this and Right, right, right, exactly, like we're doing this after dad, they've pulled out a snack, like we're literally having lunch like in 20 minutes, just hold your roll, like write this paragraph and you're fine.

Yes, I know everyone can do better in that department. And I say with the picky eating, just because I think it's important as well, you know, clarity and consistency, clarity in a sense of, I think it's good to be both soft and compassionate as a parent, but also direct and empowering.

And often it feels like a balance of good cop, bad cop, right? And I think this is really important for parents to hear because when you're trying to empower your child and heal their body, it takes discipline and consistency.

And it is really important, you know, all ages, all people from toddler through teens and beyond, again, have the

desire to be heard, understood, and seen.

And so if you read about a specific anti-inflammatory diet and you start employing it and you don't pause to connect with your child to describe the whys and the whats, you are doing a huge disservice to create expectations that aren't clear.

They have to know the why and the what, and we have to speak to them on a level that is having them rise up to understanding versus downplaying, because our kids are stinkin' smart.

and if you let them use food as a power play they will as early as age three if they see that you get flustered because they're not eating something you want them to they just gained strength on you and so if we become short order cooks because we're worried about them melting away and not eating because they're asserting themselves and saying no about certain things.

First off, we have to get down on their level and explain why it's important for them to have. So yes, I know that these meatballs taste a little bit different.

Can you tell me what it is about them that you dislike? We don't use words like yuck. We don't use words like disgusting. We use descriptive words on appearance.

texture and taste profile. We literally have a table in Naturally Nourished Kids called Being a Taste Adventurer and we literally like score through foods because it can take 15 times of introducing a new flavor, a new food for acceptance.

And so you work with your child on understanding, you know, was it the smell? Was it the texture? Was it the taste? And then you troubleshoot with your child.

First you describe why it's important for them to have. Then you troubleshoot with them, hey buddy, what do you think if I made it with the flavor like that crunchy cauliflower that you like?

Maybe the flavor is turmeric, maybe the flavor is dill, onion powder, and garlic, and it's like a ranch take, you know, I don't know.

Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack Strategies

But connecting the dots and knowing something that they do like and trying to get there. And then they may say, oh, well, yeah, or the texture was too soggy.

What if instead I do it as like a taco and I grind it up instead of in meatballs? Would you be open to trying it again? What if I put it in a quesadilla?

So it's always this partnership, this joined effort, and when they lean into that partnership, the acceptance is phenomenal and the empowerment. They no longer feel victimized by this weird, gross food that mom's making them eat.

They're not going to assert that oppositional power. because they know that they're being seen and heard. They understand the why. They also want to heal.

But if you don't explain the mechanisms and the importance, you're really doing a disservice. And the frustration often then leads to failure. screw it, falling off.

And so it's really important, I would say, to just pause and connect with your child. Educate them on the principles you learn in this book and the why.

And then problem solve with them on the what and the willingness. And extra, extra credit if on that week you can

say, hey, you know, John, we're making your version of the meatballs.

I'd love you to help. And then, you know, you come up with three tasks. We also have a section in the making it happen. from toddler through teens of different kitchen aspects that your kid can get involved in, all the way starting from setting the table to rinsing produce to doing baking soda soaks on organic berries and so much in between to separating an egg yolk.

to, you know, actually my daughter now at nine is turning on a gas burner and sauteing and she loves the privilege of that, like that she's worked up to that skill of responsibility.

And I think again, when we go at it with a sense of why strong empowerment and partnership, the acceptability is just fantastic. And so that's just my big advice is Don't get frustrated before you've given the opportunity to connect and to apply compassion as well as clear expectations and consistency.

Because the hard part is, that was my soft part, the hard part is… Hey, you didn't like dinner, guess what's for lunch? Dinner. Guess what's for breakfast?

Dinner. Because this is what your body needs and this is what we made. And you know, that's how that goes. And we're gonna take some no thank you bites.

And the backup meal, you can have a single backup meal that is a single, non-exciting meal. backup as an option, but I really recommend not even doing backup in the beginning of expanding their palate because you're just pulling the rug out from them expanding.

You're making that easy backup home base. And I think allowing them to really grow into savory, gamey flavors, bitter, alkaloid flavors, acidity is fantastic because that's where the food as medicine is.

You're doing everything right. You've cleaned up the diet. You've swapped out the soaps. You've put air filters in every room. Maybe you even live on an organic farm and still your child is scratching, bleeding, awake all night.

The flares won't stop and no one can tell you why. No parent should have to watch their child suffer, especially when you're already doing everything in your power to fix it.

That's why I created the eczema kids podcast. I'm Andrea McHugh, mama for health coach and the founder of eczema kids. Two of my own children battled with relentless eczema and I know firsthand how heartbreaking and exhausting it is.

Here we go beyond surface level fixes. You'll learn how to uncover hidden triggers, prepare your child's gut and calm their skin from the inside out. You'll hear the real stories of families who found freedom and insights from practitioners who are rewriting what's possible.

Because eczema isn't just a skin condition, it's a message from the body. And when you listen, you can heal. So follow eczema kits wherever you get your podcasts and start your child's healing journey today.

Yeah, there's like six tastes, right? And we definitely overdo on the sweet and we'll go over what are the six tastes. Bitter, salty, savory, sweet, spicy.

Yeah. Sour. And pungent. And then umami is another, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah. So, you know, you're like in an ideal world, you're incorporating all those things.

It's just like one more thing to, I guess, help you balance a plate if you want to think about it that way. And you could also use colors. There's so many different ways.

Right. Like we're just like really depriving our kids of some of these tastes in a lot of cases. And I love those strategies. Those are really good picky eating strategies.

And it is such a good reminder. I mean, my toddler struggled with eczema and she was too. And I was like, this is what we're eating, you know, to help with your spots.

And she was on board. Like they're game because they don't want to feel that way. And if they're younger than two, great. They'll just eat. Yeah. So I just think it's actually an advantage if your child isn't feeling well in their body and they are motivated to change.

It's a different thing to get. Yes. And I mean, again, anything in the body, when we're going from mediocre to sick, it is hard to make change. But once we start to see the skin clearing, once we start to see evidence of healing, then it is a lot easier to stay on track because you are serving as witness to the reality of healing, you know?

And so when you're in the pocket, it's a lot harder to let yourself slide to sick once you've tasted optimal. And so, again, consistency and really creating clear expectations and starting to see results, you'll likely then get that extra rev of buy-in of, hey, this makes sense.

Especially we see, for sure, skin can be a pretty rapid shift, honestly, and as can mental health. That's one of the bigger ones that I see very quickly.

I mean, just shifting blood sugar within three days, Kids can be completely different, less impulsivity, less outrage. We see that dopamine and that prefrontal cortex come online.

And I mean, it's phenomenal. And kids don't want the outrage because then they deal with the shame of being corrected. I mean, it's a whole perpetual cycle.

And so when we feel that speed bump of glucose regularity and we're not on that blood sugar roller coaster, that experience is like freedom. And so helping to connect that back into your child as an anchor can be really helpful.

Yeah, agreed. I just love it. Working with kids is so especially rewarding because they can turn it around so quickly. And when you're in it and you're the parent and you're, you know, you're lotioning every day and you're feeding them every day and you're in the behaviors every day, you can, within days, literally see progress.

And certainly within a week or two, it's rewarding. It's just so amazing. What's one cooking habit that you think has a pretty big impact on gut health and skin health?

A cooking habit? Hmm. Like soaking or pressure. Oh, yeah. Well, reducing anti-nutrients where we can and provoking life to food. So, you know, the word probiotic means for life.

Anytime we ferment something, we are reducing those anti-nutrients or those gut disrupting compounds. I think that that's really key. Yes, soaking and sprouting would reduce some of the lectin content in grains as well as some of the anti-nutrients and provoke more nutrition in that process.

I think of also in the world of increasing acceptability or having less inflammatory response of getting your child balanced parasympathetically because, you know, we've learned in school there's the rest and digest, which is the parasympathetic regulatory mode.

And then there's the sympathetic fight or flight response. And so if our children are eating at a time of high stress and they haven't gotten into that parasympathetic balance or they're eating in the car or a distracted high stimulus environment and it's not readiness at the table, we won't see as many digestive enzymes produced by that child.

And that's why I love bringing kids into the kitchen, even if they're just playing with blocks on a leaning tower while you're cooking their meal. because they're starting to sensorily prepare their digestive process and especially those with compromised gut integrity and needing an abundance of more digestive enzymes.

I have a great Digest Aid enzyme product that we will do half capsules with bites of raw honey to supplement for kiddos in need and we often do see that that's very supportive and necessary.

but starting to even set the tone of getting them parasympathetic, we see about a quarter of the amount of digestive enzymes produced when we're in that fight-or-flight sympathetic mode.

We see significantly more buffered stomach acid versus that pH of 1 to 2, the highly acidic hydrochloric acid that we want as the chamber of the cauldron of the belly to fight against pathogen, but also activate enzymes and break down food particles into smaller particles so they're less irritating for the absorption process.

And so honestly, I would argue even more than like soaking, sprouting, fermenting, that it's getting the mind and the nervous system into a digestive readiness.

And we can use scent very favorably actually as well. So like even letting your child play with citrus or letting your child engage with food prior to meal time.

Again, it might be like a toddler on a high chair and they're playing with raw carrots and they're just kind of gumming it and like making drumsticks with it.

Again, that's actually starting to create that digestive readiness, which is much more favorable for when the food hits the belly, the system's ready and it's going to break down the foods much more favorably.

Yeah. Love it. Sound advice for everyone, right? Like I just, I know as adults, we forget to actually sit down and what a huge impact that makes on the digestion of our meal.

Picky Eating, Cooking Habits, and Practical Tips

And that's what we're focused on here is just everything needs to be as digestible as possible. And then we can mechanically do things, right? So like using food processor, meatballs, things that are like pre-ground.

I do hesitate to say I'm a big fan of like snout to tail, eat the whole animal because there are good amino acid balances when we get more of the collagenous tissue.

So I do love doing like roasts and getting the tougher meat that also works the mandible or the jaw. But when digestive system is compromised, doing more grinds and pre blended items actually can help because you're kind of pre breaking down some of those things.

So it's a little bit less stressful, especially when we're talking about like abrasive fibers. So I do for instance, like a super greens cube in naturally nourish kids in the therapeutic food section.

And that incorporates five different types of greens. And we see that, for instance, like kale has sulfoquinovos in it. And sulfoquinovos has been shown literature to support against Candida infection.

And so, you know, there's rhyme and reason to bring that super greens cube into bone broth and all of a sudden you have a cream of green soup. Or throwing that super greens cube into grass-fed ground meat with some tomato puree and all of a sudden you have a bolognese that's really elevated or incorporating that into a smoothie.

So a lot of these, you know, kind of pre-blend, pre-digested can be a tool. We also want them to work the mandible, but during time of more acute area of need, that can be very favorable as well.

Yeah, love it. So if parents could do only three things this week to support their child's health, what would you recommend? So I would recommend focusing on whole-real foods, first and starting to question, you know, is this a processed product or is this a whole real food?

And so I'm asking questions like, can you imagine it growing? Are all of its edible parts still intact? What's been stripped, removed? What's happened during that growing process?

Did it have a mother in the sense of an animal product as opposed to a lab petri dish grown protein that we now

can see in some states? So is it a whole real food first and foremost?

The second is looking at am I meeting my child's protein needs is starting to think of what protein source am I putting on the plate and that's a really great place also for these guided conversations and supporting autonomy and choice in your child but giving them a guided choice so it's not What do you want for dinner opening in question?

It's, hey, we have redfish that we got at the farmer's market. Do you want that pan seared or should I do that dredged in almond flour and make fish cutups, you know, kind of thing like fish sticks type of scenario?

Or for the ground meat, would you prefer it in meatballs, meatloaf or taco? And so you can give them, this is what is thawing from the deep freezer. This is what we've provayed or purchased.

How would you like it prepared? And here's the options of things that we have available to work with. That's really helpful, I find. And when we're packing their lunches, they can be even more hands-on of, OK, we want to have two colors on your plate is another rule.

And so it's like, OK, I see you have the red bell peppers or the red strawberries. Go in the fridge and find another color that you want in your lunch.

And I can help you prepare it or come up here with your kid's knife and slice up whatever you find. So that autonomy of choice, but protein. And then are the carbs balanced with protein and fat?

So are the carbs within range? They aren't excessive because often we have to shave them down to stay in an ideal range for blood sugar balance. and then assuming that it's not a naked carb at any time.

And so just starting to think about that combining of nut butters, healthy fats and proteins with carb choices so that we're not just having them grab that banana as they're running out the door or the just fruit bar without that protein or fat to sit like a lid on the jar and balance out that glycemic index.

Those are kind of the main answers in four because the last one is, are there two colors on the plate? And that's going to give them those phyto compounds and antioxidants.

And we just see in the literature time and time again that kids, anyone again, any age, oxidative stress creates cellular damage and inflammation. And so amplifying antioxidants through phyto compounds, talking about eating the rainbow, getting that two colors per meal, is a great philosophy of an insurance policy to offset the insults of microplastics, glyphosate in our food system, EMF.

I mean, we're all being bombarded with industrialized toxins, even if the diet's clean. So we really want to have that insurance policy of the two colors per plate to get that phyto compound diversity.

Yeah. Ali, this has been so incredibly helpful. And I know everyone listening is just breathing this sigh of relief right now, because they're finally getting some clear direction instead of more overwhelm.

So I sincerely appreciate your time. Those were great strategies. So thank you so much. If they want to dive deeper in your work, where can they get your book, Naturally Nourished Kids, and where can they connect with you further?

Yeah. So Naturally Nourished Kids is everywhere books are sold. You can buy it on my website at lamrrd.com. You can buy it from your local bookstore, which is also very cool and I recommend doing.

And of course you can buy it on Amazon where you can get it within like 12 hours of listening to today's episode. So I'm totally fine. If you want to prime it and get it quickly, that's fine too.

Do take the time to leave us a five star review. We always appreciate that. Everything else is found at AllieMillerRD.

So AllieMillerRD.com is my website, which has my functional medicine clinic, my naturally nourished supplement line, and even protocols.

And then my handle on Instagram and Facebook is at AllieMillerRD. And I'm constantly sharing what we're eating, pretty much most meals. So that's a great way to just kind of stay inspired and seem up to.

Perfect.

Where to Find Allie Miller and Closing Remarks

Well, thanks again, Allie. We'll talk soon. Thank you. What an incredible conversation, right? I hope you feel encouraged and a little more grounded knowing that there is a way to calm your child's skin without all the overwhelm.

And if you're ready to start supporting your child's gut the easy way, don't wait. Grab the eczema kids prebiotic tea at eczemakids.com. It's the daily ritual that helps your child's body heal from the inside out, calming inflammation, supporting the microbiome, and making those itchy nights a thing of the past.

And if you're ready for the full roadmap and one-on-one support, the eczema elimination method will walk you through step-by-step through how to rebuild your child's gut, restore their skin barrier, and finally create the calm, healthy home that you've been working for.

And be sure to check out Ali Miller's book, Naturally Nourished Kids, for even more real food inspiration. And if this episode brought you any hope, friends, please share it with another parent who needs to hear it.

Every review and every share helps another family find their way out of this flair cycle. So take care friends. I will talk to you next week. Thank you for helping with my eczema.

Love you. Thank you for listening today, friend. I know healing your child's skin isn't easy, but you're doing it one smart step at a time. If this episode gave you a little hope or a better night's sleep, leave a quick review so more exhausted parents can find eczema kids and finally rest easy too.

Follow, share and let's help more kids heal. Take care.