Introduction and thyroid background

– Hello and welcome to this episode of the Environmental Toxicants Autoimmunity and Chronic Diseases Summit. I'm your host, Dr. Wendie Trubow. And I'm delighted to be talking to Dr. Bindiya Gandhi.

Today, Dr. Gandhi is a double board certified integrative and functional medicine doctor who helps thousands transform their overall health. She is the medical director at Revive Atlanta MD, a comprehensive clinic focused on total body healing and she's expert in the thyroid, which is what we're gonna talk about today, Bindiya welcome.

Thank you so much for being here. – Well, thanks Wendie for having me today. – Our pleasure. So how did you get interested in the thyroid in particular? What was that pathway?

– You know, Wendie, honestly, I really think I got interested in the thyroid specifically after my mom ended up being diagnosed with thyroid issues. This was probably 2,015.

She had been going to her doctor for many years complaining of fatigue, being tired, little constipation, you know, gaining some weight. And at the time her doctor just brushed it off, put her on the flak scene saying, you know, your kids are out of the house we're having empty nest syndrome.

Here's an antidepressant. Have a good day. She didn't really get better, but it was around 2015. When she called me one day at work and she said India, I now have thyroid issues. And I was like, what, what do you mean you have thyroid issues?

You know. And so, of course, I asked my mom, I said, mom, you know, what is your TSH? And she was like, I don't know, like, I don't know, I just think the medicine the doctor gave me.

And so immediately I started asking questions and I reached out to her doctor and I was like, can you just share with me what her TSH was? And of course, it was 6.7, which was a little bit high.

And then I asked for the results for the last four years because my mom consistently had been getting her TSH checked every year at her physical. And so I started seeing trends and it had been abnormal Wendie for probably four or five years prior to the time that she was officially diagnosed.

So, and of course, um at the time I was, I was getting my integrated functional medicine training. You know, I realized that no other testing was done.

How thyroid dysfunction was discovered in Dr. Gandhi's mother

Her primary care didn't send her to an endocrinologist nor did she check for ferreting or selenium or iodine and some of the other things that we checked. Now, she didn't even check for Hashimoto's and she didn't even check reverse t three t three, you know, all these other labs that we initially check going on.

So that was probably the first time I realized, wow, like it hit home. It wasn't just a patient anymore that I was treating. It was my mom that was now, had a thyroid issue and we actually came to find out that she had Hashimoto's and I worked with her and now I work with thousands of patients just balancing their hormones and that word is one of them for sure.

– I think you bring up such an interesting point of India that, that there's a period of time before you officially have a diagnosis where all is not right in the world, but you might not have a diagnosis yet.

But things are off. You can see the signs, you can see, you can see the that your mom had dysfunction and wasn't feeling well. And when you look back when you used the stricter criteria of the TSH, between one and two, your

mom had been clearly out of balance for many years.

So I think that's really important for listeners to understand that, that it's not like flicking a switch like, oh, today you're sick, but yesterday you were completely fine because you weren't completely fine.

Yesterday, you just didn't have a diagnosis. You crossed the line. Now you have a diagnosis today. So it was personal, like you really got involved because it was your mom.

– Yeah. And, you know, one thing I will say is, you know, a lot of people don't know this, when you go to your primary care doctor, they're usually just checking your TSH. And that's great.

That's wonderful. And I'm glad they're at least doing that. But, you know, that doesn't give you the full picture. That's the first thing that I want everybody to know about.

TSH is just one little piece in the large puzzle. And then the other thing that I think is really important is we see trends, you know, when we, when they decided lab values many, many years ago, they took healthy people and they took unhealthy people, they put it all in one pot, took the average and that's what became the ranges.

That is what doctors unfortunately are looking at. Traditional, conventional doctors are looking at when they're reading your lab results. So for example, why would you want to be compared to someone that is unhealthy?

I don't know about you, Wendie, but I only want to be compared to people that are in optimal and excellent health. And this is why sometimes you're complaining of fatigue or dry skin or constipation or just not feeling your best, maybe abdominal bloating or discomfort and your go to your primary care doctor and they're like, you know what your TSH is normal, you're fine but your TSH, maybe 2.5, you know, and that's still out of range.

But based on your symptoms, it's indicating there's some dysfunction going on with you. Right? – Okay. So let's drill into when we look at, you know, this is the Environmental Toxicants Autoimmunity Chronic Diseases Summit.

So, Hashimoto's autoimmune and you have done some looking into that there are certain toxins that definitely increase the toxicity and the possibility of developing an autoimmune disease and thought dysfunction. Can you talk about those?

– Yeah. So guys, I'm sure people have already talked about this, but you know, let's go back to our diet, let's go back to the basics, right? One of the things that we really tend to see notice is gluten, gluten is a huge problem for people that have and just thyroid issues.

But more importantly, there's something called Hashimoto's, which is the autoimmune thyroid condition, right? So that is a toxin to the body. Now, what ends up happening one day is um the body can't tell the difference.

If you're eating gluten or that protein and when you eat gluten, what ends up happening is the thyroid, I should say the thyroid forms antibodies against that protein. And so that's how the antibodies for Hashimoto's goes up. So gluten is one toxin.

Now, I can get even more specific and we can say it's actually because of pesticides because the whole reason that gluten is different. Our gluten is different than our grandparents.

Gluten is because of the chemicals and pesticides in our organophosphates and stuff that we're using now. So that is probably the biggest direct link that we've seen that we can really impact the thyroid.

Why TSH alone misses early thyroid issues

And this is why some functional doctors will actually generalize and say it's not just gluten guys, it's actually more grains that can be a problem because it's the same grains that are being impacted by these pesticides. – Got it.

Talk to me about other environmental toxins that mess with the thyroid. Like, you know, the thyroids right next to the mouth, right? And a lot of people have mercury fillings this harmful for the thyroid.

– You know, there's a lot of things that are harmful for the thyroid. Things like fluoride can be harmful for the thyroid. You know, this is what we use our in our toothpaste and it can be in our kids toothpaste and it's mouthwash, you name it. You know, it's because it prevents cavities. Mercury's another one.

There's a lot of other chemicals and toxins, you know, that could be impacting the thyroid as well. Metals in general can be problematic for our thyroid, right. So it's really important to kind of understand what you're exposed to because honestly, all of us are exposed to some of the stuff they explored in our water. You know, and there's chemicals in our water these days. So getting back to the basics of we talk about and I know you talk about this too. It's like, what are we eating? What are we drinking?

What are we breathing? Right? These are the basics. What are we exposed to? Because these are the things that were exposed to that are also impacting our thyroid.

– Got it. Okay. What will does stress play on the thyroid? Because I, when you think about autoimmune disease and chronic diseases, I always think of of stress as a direct toxin for the body.

Is that how you think of it in the realm of thyroid? – Yeah. So there's a big direct correlation with stress. I actually see this so often with my patients, people who are difficult having difficulty losing weight that I have weight loss resistance but just people that are unwell, this is also one of the precursors unfortunately, to developing an autoimmune condition.

Wendie, you and I both have celiac but I bet what triggered your and mine if we can pinpoint it, it was stress like hands down, right? – Totally. It was, I mean, it was med school and residency. – It's exactly same here.

Yeah, it was back to back and for me, I developed it in residency. And so same concept whether it's Hashimoto's or not, your thyroid is impacted by stress. So let's talk a little bit here specifically of how this is happening. I think this is important and forgive me if this is overwhelming or too much information for our listeners.

But I want people to understand the reasoning behind this. We have these, we have T four and T four is part of the thyroid and it converts to T three.

Environmental toxins and thyroid autoimmunity

And when we are exposed to a lot of stress, chronic life stressors, whether it's med school residency, maybe it's a divorce, maybe it's getting married, maybe it's having a baby, postpartum parents passing away, whatever it is, whatever it is, whatever stress you're going through that conversion from T four to T three does not end up happening, right?

And it slows down and when that slows down, our thyroid becomes sluggish, right? This is usually one of the precursors or one of the early signs that something awry is going on with our thyroid even before a TSH gets to be problematic. – Let's drill into this video because when people, people might not be aware that the thyroid is converted from T four to T three in the organs and peripheral tissue and one of the largest organs is the adrenal glands that converts the T four to T three. And when you're stressed, your adrenals are like, dude, I'm busy, do not have the bandwidth for doing this right now.

And it's not going to do that just like when you're in menopause, if you're stressed, you won't make your hormones. So you're not going to make your thyroid hormone into its active form too.

So this is the direct correlation with stress because you're shutting down the systems that do it. – Yeah. And the reason why this is also important from a toxin or toxic level to Wendie is remember, our liver is one of the big organs that we have that really filters all the toxins that we have phase one and phase two detoxification. But when our thyroid is slow down, remember, a thyroid is also being converted in our liver.

So there's so many different things that are happening all at the same time that we need to pay attention to. – So when you're looking at hypothyroidism and autoimmune disease, which often tracks by the way with celiac. So – Yes. – Like one and two, go together. What are you?

So definitely avoidance of gluten. What are the other types of things for from food that you would say to people? Hey, if you are heading towards Hashimoto's or if you have a history of it in your family, these are, these are foods you want to avoid or these are foods you want to increase.

– I'm so glad we're talking about this. So one of the things I am a huge fan of and you know, there's like 50 billion diets out there these days, right? And a lot of people come to you, they've tried everything, they don't know what works. And you know, one of the things I really encourage people do is number one work with the integrative and functional medicine practitioner because you want to get the right protocol.

Anybody listening today, I can definitely make generalized statements, but I don't know if that it's gonna be the best protocol and diet approach for you.

So I just want to get that out there. That being said if you have an autoimmune thyroid issue like Hashimoto's, I highly would recommend just eliminating gluten.

Now, when you eliminate gluten, let's talk about dairy. Dairy is not problematic for everybody. But for some people, if they have celiac like you and I do, which often gets associated with Hashimoto's, they usually go hand in hand.

We tend to see that there's also a problem with Casey. Same thing. The body can't tell the difference between casein and gluten and the proteins look very like.

So it can just be problematic. So for some people, they actually get some better relief when they're eliminating gluten and dairy. Does that mean everybody has to eliminate gluten and dairy?

No, no, that's not the case. This is why it needs to be more of a personalized approach. But we tend to see.

Stress, adrenal function, and T4 to T3 conversion

And again, I was just sharing this information with my nurse yesterday because I was so excited my mom's antibody since I've been tracking her antibodies and I changed her diet up five years ago, her thyroid antibodies, Wendie went from 170. I think it was T P O antibodies and now it's 30 and all she did was change up her diet and I mean, it's a big deal.

Don't get me wrong. It's, you know, for my mom it's a big deal. But we literally just cut out gluten, we literally cut out gluten. And I'll be honest, my mom is not as strict as I am.

So she's gonna cheat occasionally and her antibodies have still come down. Do you know what I mean? So there's direct data statistics and correlation by just eliminating gluten and seeing the numbers in the antibody improve.

– Are you recommending? Because there's a lot of ways to do gluten free? You can do gluten free whole food. You can do gluten free with gluten free substitutes. Where do you land on that for people with Hashimoto's? – Oh, I'm so glad we're talking about.

So number one mistake that a lot of people make, even patients have celiac everybody. Everybody. I was guilty of this when I first got diagnosed is we go from gluten rich foods to gluten free junk food.

Okay. That is – Totally – The number 1 mistake. – Like, oh my God, there's gluten free pretzels. I'm going to eat it. I don't normally eat that, but now I don't want to be deprived.

– Yeah. Yeah. Somehow in your brain you justified that it's ok but you don't realize it's just as much carbs, sugar, processed chemicals and crap. And once you, I think maybe it's like a rite of passage you have to get through that

phase while you're in denial, maybe you just have to do it. But once you realize what you're doing doesn't make sense and it's not right, you have to eliminate it.

Now, that being said, you know, don't deprive yourself. That's not what I'm saying. If you enjoy a sandwich and that's your thing and you really like a grilled cheese sandwich, you can make it in a healthy way.

Use gluten free bread. That's okay. The problem we see though is when, um, a lot of patients and clients go from, you know, now they're doing different types of gluten free pasta, that has all these fillers and chemicals and now they're doing like gluten free cookies and pretzels and cakes and chips and it's just junk.

So don't do that stick to. And when you're making healthy decisions, one of the ones I always say is When you try experimenting with spaghetti squash, pasta, Zucchini, noodle pasta, right? Experiment in a better way.

You know what else that I did a lot initially when I first got diagnosed a lot, a lot too because I got diagnosed over 10 years ago and there wasn't as many food available back then. I learned to make my own breads and cakes and stuff like that and I knew the type of ingredients I was putting there.

Now I can just go to the store and buy gluten free cookies. And I just see that it says gluten free and I'll eat it right. But really I need to look at the back and say, okay, what really is in here?

Because, yeah, there's a lot of sugar. Oh, it's, now, it's a different name for sugar. Now it's high fructose corn syrup or date sugar or whatever. You know what I mean so? – Well, I think it's important to talk about two things in what you just talked about. One that the chemicals in all grains directly harm the gut are classified as a carcinogen by the World Health Organization.

And when you make them from there, when you take them from the grain form into the concentrated flower form, you're concentrating the chemicals. That's one. But the other thing you just mentioned in order to get from corn to high fructose corn syrup, there's mercury involved in the processing of that and the glyphosate from the corn that was an organic gets concentrated.

So when you take food or when you're eating food with high fructose corn syrup, you're getting a concentrated dose of not only glyphosate but also mercury, which is then not good for the thyroids. We start to come full circle but it all comes together. Okay. Now, I know you've done some more with mushrooms. What are functional mushrooms?

– Oh my gosh. I love functional mushrooms. So functional mushrooms. So let's, I'll remind, let's talk about adapted, adapted our herbs and plants and even what we call functional mushrooms that really keep the body in balance, right?

They really keep us at home homeostasis. So, functional mushrooms are mushrooms like cha gazelle, Lion mane, Lion's mane, Corgis Eps Ray.

Diet changes for Hashimoto's and gluten-free pitfalls

She, these are so powerful because they really help our bodies stay balance from different aspects. And so I love incorporating these things because we can incorporate, incorporate functional mushrooms in the foods that we eat in our daily routine. So it's not like sure you can take a supplement but why not add a little lion's mane to your coffee.

Do you know what I mean? It's like how can we make this functional and get the benefits every day? – Yeah, I think it's important. You sort of alluded to what adapted genes are, but these substances give your body what they need.

So if your body needs boosting, it'll boost. If your body needs quieting, it'll quiet. That's why it's called adaptive gin because it adapts to what your body needs. Okay. So how do they help with gut health and liver health? – So important.

So when we're too talking about gut health, we need to talk about these mushrooms that really help support our immune system essentially in our gut, right? So turkey tail is one of my favorites honestly for your liver as well as your gut. So that's another reason why I love functional mushrooms because they're doing so many different things, right? Turkey tail, you can use that and it's helping your immune system and it's also helping your gut health.

It's also helping your liver detoxify. So one little, one little mushroom is doing so many different processes. This is why I'm such a huge fan of that. – Got it.

Okay. And do they also have an impact on hormones? – Yes. So many. So like, let's talk about one of my other favorites. So I love Ray. She is one of my favorites.

Again, it helps with immune system, it helps with with mood and balance Ray. She is good for helping you stay calm and and more importantly, helps with your cortisol level. It's not, you're not gonna see blood sugar spikes. In fact, it regulates your blood sugar. So that's another example how they're helping like hormonally. – What should I ask you that?

I haven't asked you because I feel like you have this wealth of knowledge, scratch the surface of that. – I don't know. I mean, I think that, you know, everybody's on their own journey, right? And I think one of the things that I love everybody to, you know, there's, there's so many books out there, you know, you and I have read them. There's so many books and I think patients and people can get confused reading all this information because they don't know what applies to them because one practitioner is saying something, another practitioner is saying something, there's a lot of misinformation and a lot of miscommunication essentially. But what I think people need to realize is, you know, from a toxic point or a thyroid issue or hormonal imbalance, we need to find out what is wrong with you specifically so we can help you directly.

And I think that's the one message if anyone doesn't remember anything else I talked about, it's a personalized approach and that's when you see the best results in the benefits.

– So do you feel like people can do this on their own before they get to a functional practitioner? Like start to clean up the way they eat, start to alter an experiment with what's happening in their bodies.

– Yeah, I think, look, I think there's, I think you should definitely do as much as you can and if you can do stuff on your own, I think that's great.

You know, like we mentioned getting rid of gluten, that's an easy fix.

Functional mushrooms and personalized thyroid care

You can totally do that, you know, making sure you're drinking clean water, you know, filtered reverse hydrogenated water. You can do that. Awesome, do that. You know, some of these changes, getting enough sleep, managing your stress, all these basic things are definitely going to improve and enhance your life better than you did yesterday.

So that's already a plus. But I think when we're talking about these specific you know, reversing an autoimmune condition or something like that, I think you need some help there. You know what I mean?

There's some things even like a lot of times your patients come to me and they're reading books and they, they're on like 10 supplements and they're like, well, this book said to take it and I'm like, but do you need it?

Because why are you taking a supplement that you don't need? Sometimes the dosages are not right for your body. This is where blood work is important. Functional testing is important.

– The message that I'm hearing is one size fits you and nobody else. And there are things you can do on your own like alter the way you eat, make sure you get enough sleep, decreased your alcohol and a huge proponent of that.

And then there's things when you're looking at let's drill into the specifics of what I actually need and let's monitor your thyroid antibodies over time.

Those are things you would do with a functional provider. This is very cool. So where can people find you? – So you can find me on all major social media platforms.

I think we're on tiktok these days. So tiktok, Instagram, Twitter, all they don't really tweet much these days. Facebook. The hat, the handle is the same at Dr.

Bindiya MD. I have a podcast, it's called Reset Renew Revive. And actually Wendie was on last year. So check that out. It's wonderful and my practice is revive Atlanta MD indicator, Georgia. So check that out.

We do virtual consoles as well. – And are you taking new clients? – We are. Yeah. – Okay. Awesome. Bindiya, Thank you and to the listeners. Thank you for joining us for another episode of the Environmental Toxicants, Autoimmunity and Chronic Diseases Summit.

I'm Dr. Wendie Trubow. Your host and our guest today is Dr. Bindiya Gandhi Thank you for being here, Bindiya. – Thank you for having me. This is wonderful.

– My pleasure.