Is Your Child’s Eczema Really a Microbiome Problem? Transcript

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Introduction and Guest Background

Friends, welcome back to the It's My Kids podcast. I'm your host, Andrea McHugh, and I am so excited for today's episode because this one has been a long time coming, friend.

My guest today is the Dr. Eliza Song. She's an integrative and functional medicine pediatrician, in case you haven't heard of her. If you haven't read that yet, stop what you're doing, keep listening to this, and then go get yourself a copy.

And Dr. Song has spent over 20 years digging into the root causes about why our kids get sick and homeopathy. She is just one of those humans that give you a lot of hope.

And in this episode, we're talking about the gut-skin connection, what is actually driving your child's eczema from the inside, the microbiome framework that changes everything, and how to navigate histamine, And what to do after antibiotics to protect your children's gut.

And before we dive in, if you haven't yet grabbed my free XML Fighting Foods by Season guide yet, the link is in the show notes. There are tons of microbiome magic foods in that guide.

It takes two minutes and it will completely change how you think about your next grocery run. And this conversation lit me up, friends. I know it's going to do the same for you.

Let's get into it. Is your child struggling with itchy nights and endless flare-ups? I'm Andrea McHugh, mom of four and host of Eczema Kids. Here, you'll find natural solutions that actually work so you can heal your childhood eczemat without steroids, without the overwhelm, and finally see calm, healthy skin again.

Lets get in to it! Dr. Eliza Song, welcome to the show. Thank you so much. Im excited to be here and talk about a really important topic. It is such an important topic and you are just the person I'm so excited to talk about it with because I just have to tell you, it's such a full circle moment for me.

You have been a hero of mine for a lot of years and I want to start out, for those who may not be familiar yet, maybe they've been living under a rock.

Can you share a little bit about who you and your background and what you do? Yeah. So I am a pediatrician and a mom. I'd say mom is my first role because that's my priority right now.

Now they're teenagers, so it goes fast. But what I hope to bring to the world is, my background as an integrative pediatricians, and I've been practicing as integrator functional medicine pediatrican for over 20 years now, really trying to dig into the root causes of why our kids are getting so sick nowadays.

And when I say so-sick, it may not necessarily be in the way we're thinking of. It's a simmering underlying, like our kid are just not. thriving and as well as they should be.

And so that's been my mission and passion to bring this knowledge to the world, to educate parents, educate practitioners. I have my brick and mortar practice, but my passion is really my Healthy Kids, Happy Kids online platform where I get to reach so many more parents and practitioners to really get this message out far and wide, especially for parents who don't necessarily have a holistic pediatrician near them.

and also for the many pediatric practitioners who are really interested in pursuing this route but don't know how. And I had to forge my path on my own.

It was at times a pretty lonely road, you know, 20 plus years ago. So I'm grateful that I can give back and train practitioners so that they can then go out and treat and care for their families and their communities.

Oh, it's so needed. It's needed and I just, you know, back in 2019, about seven years ago is when we were really struggling as a family is doing with all the things that you just mentioned.

And I always remember I was sitting in a pediatrician's office and. I had two babies, like a newborn and a two year old, and they were both just bleeding head to toe.

Like they just did not have skin. Yeah. The message that I. Was hearing there was just manage it. suppress it, hopefully they'll grow out of it. And I just remember thinking like this cannot, this can't be the ceiling of their health, right?

This just isn't going to work. That season is what led me to do what I do now. But when I read Healthy Kids and Happy Kids, what stood out to me was just how aligned your approach is with everything that I lived and everything I see in practice.

It's just when you shift from chasing symptoms to building resilience and supporting the microbiome, that's when things really change. So I'd really love to start there and just, when you're looking at somebody with eczema at your practice, what tells you that this is more of a deeper issue of resilience in regulation rather than a skin condition?

I will say, unless it is very clear that, you know, skin was super clear, buttery soft before, and then maybe you used a topical sunscreen and kids reacted, developed an eczema-ness rash.

I mean, that's a clear okay, topically reaction. That's it. Otherwise, eczema, it is a whole body issue, and it's a gut-skin issue. And when there's exema there is inflammation, there are histamine reactions, There's very often gut dysbiosis or abnormal balance of the beneficial and the pathogenic bacteria in the gut, which then also can translate into skin dysbiosis.

I mean, many people have heard of The Gut Microbiome but don't realize that we actually have unique microbiomes all over our bodies, you know, on our skin is probably, I mean, our gut microbiome is the most well-steady, but our skim microbiomes, if you think about it, it's our largest organ, right?

I means, we are covered with microbes, and you bet we want to make sure that those microbes are beneficial for us, just as we wanna make those gut microbes beneficial to us.

So when I see a child with eczema, I always think, first of all, where are the imbalances? Is there a gut imbalance? is there skin imbalance, inflammation, of course, is going on.

Where is that immune system getting dysregulated and why? What are those factors that are contributing to this inflammation that is a sign on the external skin that something's going on internally.

And that can take some digging and sometimes not. You know, sometimes when you start pinpointing the different triggers of inflammation, you'll start seeing improvements happening fairly quickly.

Other times, I mean, as you know working with kids with eczema, it can be along and a hard road watching your kids be so itchy and so uncomfortable. And, you know, I think that was one of my, one my very first patients who is now, he's a young adult now and he is doing great.

But I just remember as a two-year-old he was sitting on the floor in my waiting room. I had a really small, super cute two room office.

Eczema as a Gut-Skin Issue

It was as I was starting and he was on the floor and his skin didn't even necessarily look horrible because you see

some kids where they're just, I mean, they are basically a scab from head to toe, right?

He had red itchy patches. but it was the insane itch. And so he sat on my floor and his eyes just got glazed over and from his toes, he started scratching and digging and just working up every inch of his legs and scratching until he's bleeding and then working his torso.

I looked at the mom and I asked, what can we do? Should we something right now? Like hold his hands or something. And she said, no, there's nothing you can do right.

Now. He just has to scratch. Cause if you stop, it makes it worse. Stop him. So we just watched until he got that out of his system. Then we had to really get down and figure out, well, why was this happening?

Cause that's just heartbreaking, you know, to see a two year old who's you know, with this unbearable itch, right? It is. But good to know that right now he's thriving, you don't know signs of eczema, but that was, I will say it's the itching that for so many families is the worst.

Yeah, it really is just the rash that itches and that newborn that experienced exima. I mean, she came out with exema from the chute and she didn't start walking until 18 months old.

She was so uncomfortable throughout her time as a baby, she just didn't learn to use her legs and she was just so itchy. I just had to hold her all the time and basically bring down her arms and it was, I mean, oh my goodness, like in all school crushing.

There are certainly worse things, but that's just why I'm thankful for for your work and, you know, like why I do what I, do it's just so people know that you can reverse this.

This 100% is reversible. And it is like, no matter how dire it, is you really, really can. That's important to know. I mean, that's what keeps you going.

Yes, yeah. Everyone that is listening, They're so well-researched and I assume it's the same for anyone that makes it into your practice, right? They are doing everything they can and they're supernaturally minded and if they are having trouble with steroids, they just feel like there's no other option and exhausted everything else and eliminated everything and cleaned up the home and trying supplements and still the eczema is cycling.

I was just curious from your perspective, what do you think those families are missing? Why does it keep coming back? You know, and I do want to point out that as an integrated pediatrician, I mean, there are times where you will use steroid creams and it's not a failure, right?

I have families who come in and if their kids need steroidal creams or antibiotics even, for that staph super infection that's so common, they feel like a fail and its not.

This is the course of eczema and sometimes when there's inflammation of fire going on in the skin, we have to put out the fire and then you start rebuilding from the inside out.

And so I just want parents to know that because I did go through a time in everything that was, you know, conventional pharmaceutical. I'm like, no way that doesn't belong in my house or my practice.

And then you come to realize, okay, it's a balance. We're coming from the conventional world where pharmaceuticals are completely overused, right, and misused.

But now we can come a place where we say, all right. There is a time and a space. we need to do the root cause uncovering and then sometimes we I mean, recognizing that they're purely band-aids, treating the symptoms, but then we move on.

And when we think about what could be holding the inflammation in place, I will say that the gut microbiome is the

first thing I look at. Because a lot of families, as you said, families listening to this podcast, to families who have read my book or know about my work, you're already trying to eat as cleanly as possible, and you've already gotten rid of the toxic household cleaners and detergents and all of that, right?

Now, there may still be some tweaks that we can make. But when we look at the gut microbiome, and assess not just are there bad bacteria, but are they also enough of the beneficial?

And for babies with eczema, it's not necessarily that there's a lot of bad bacterium in the gut. Sometimes there just not enough bifidobacteria. And that is one of things, and just full disclosure, I'm chief medical officer for a microbiome testing company called Tiny Health, which is the only microbiomes testing that has relevant reference ranges for infants and children.

I mean, the tiny health is for all ages, but if you have a child or, you know, a young child, or even a teenager, tinyhealth is the test that you should use.

And one study that was released last year looked at microbiome interventions with the testing for babies who are born by C-section. Now, why babies were born my C section?

Because we know that babies born C sections tend to have different path in their microbiomes development. And their microbiome tends to develop and get colonized more with skin bacteria, like staph, right?

And not enough bifidobacteria, which is the most important beneficial microbe in a baby's gut. And so this intervention found that for these C-section babies, just doing the testing.

and diet and lifestyle counseling. And some parents chose to use supplements, but it was this knowledge of supporting the gut microbiome that led to an 83% reduction in the risk of eczema in those babies.

Knowing how foundational a baby's gut micro biome is, if you have a child who already has exima, we want to know what their gut microbium is like. We want make sure they have enough beneficial microbes, especially the bifidobacteria, And then as they get older, we want to make sure that they're not colonized with staph or strep or some of these bacteria that can make it out onto the skin and be a source of that, quote, super infection for a lot of babies.

And even we can't forget about fungus because there's a a fungal eczema as well. And oftentimes that colonization comes from the inside out. So if you have a baby who has had, you know, a rush and you've had nipple thrush and your nursing and, like, I can't get rid of this thrushing, they have yeasty diaper rashes that the pinpoint red raches that sometimes coalesce into big red blotches on the bottom.

That's a sign that there's yeast inside. Because the mouth, right, is the opening to your gut, and so then we want to clean up the gut. And for babies, their microbiomes can shift very rapidly, so it's not like you have to do intensive treatments.

For an older kiddo or for an adult, it might take a little bit more work, but babies they shift pretty quickly if we know what we're doing. If we have a testicitis or we suspect that there's some dysbiosis going on.

That's the first thing, because that dysbiosis in the gut, when 80% of your immune system is housed in your gut. Those microbes that are living in you gut communicate with your system to decide what am I gonna react to or what I am gonna stay calm with.

And with eczema, there's an overreaction to things, right? And then there is also an inappropriate reaction. So there sort of this combination And there can even be, there's an auto-inflammatory component where inflammation has just gone a little bit haywire.

And so I always look at the gut first. I also look to see, well, what nutrients are kids missing? And it may be that they didn't necessarily start off.

deficient in these nutrients, but for sure your skin, if it's broken and eczematous, your body is using a ton of nutrients to try to heal that skin. So most often, you know, kids with exima, they are pretty low in zinc and they need a lot of zinc support.

They may need B12 support, They for Sure will need Omega support and with Omega it is not just the omega-3 fish oils. There's also a beneficial omega 6 called gamma linoleic acid or GLA that's found in plants like blackcurrant oil or evening primrose oil, or borage oil that we know is also deficient in many, many kids and adults with eczema and vitamin D, of course.

Microbiome Testing and Nutrient Support

So I look to see. And I might start presumptively on some babies and kids on these supplements. But if we're not making headway, that is when I want to do blood work to really assess because sometimes it is surprising how much zinc a child needs to bring their levels up to normal, right?

So you might start off with the, you know, quote, typical dosages that we use, but, when your skin is, zinc is essential for healing any lining. So we're thinking skin, we are thinking gut lining, or thinking lung lining if you have kids with eczema, you know how easy it is for them to start wheezing when they get a cold, right?

And so their body's constantly soaking up all that zinc. And we also know that, zinc is one of the most common nutrient deficiencies in babies. It used to be, I mean, when I was training in medical school, We were all taught that the low point for babies' iron was about nine months of age.

So you check a baby's hemoglobin and you make sure they're getting enough iron. Well, now we know that zinc is right there, right? And that's why the recommendations, or one of the recommendation for food introduction from the American Academy of Pediatrics has been to have animal proteins as some of your first foods.

liver and chicken and even shellfish is so high in zinc, right? And a lot of our eczema kids do have food allergies too, so we wanna be mindful of that.

But on the flip side, we know that earlier food introduction reduces your risk of food allergy. So getting in all of the variety of animal protein, why animal proteins?

Because that is more highly correlated with zinc. I mean, there's a lotta zinc in animal proteine. You can get plant-based, Zinc sources, like I love beans and pumpkins and lentils, and those also do double duty with feeding your gut microbiome.

So, I mean, absolutely, we don't want to focus just on animal proteins, but we want make sure we're getting zinc into our kids. Yeah, I mean, that's where we start, right?

It's like, we know that there are these patterns that exist. If you're experiencing eczema, absolutely 100%, you are experiencing a dysbiosis. And because of that dysbiosis, it is depleting your body of so many different things and your, your bodies doing your best to keep up and not there's going to be those nutrient deficiencies, zinc and iron being, you know, across the board.

Once my baby started eating solid food, She had pate. I just made her chicken liver pade with ghee and onion. And because she didn't know any better. She transformed her levels of all those, all of those nutrients.

Like I couldn't, you know, iron is a really hard one to supplement. I was giving her zinc in addition, but there's only so much that you do. Using food as a real vehicle for healing is 100% necessary with these pediatric populations and also effective.

Well, there's not going to be any nutrient that's as bioavailable as it is when it comes from food, right? And I love that you made the pâté. I mean, I have a family who I remember the mom was so genius.

She would cook the liver and then just freeze chunks. And then in her soups or salads, she just would take a little microplane zester and little pieces of of frozen liver in salads and smoothies and soups and whatever she was baking.

So not necessarily enough to overpower the flavor, but enough get it in. And then another mom, this kid's zinc levels, I couldn't believe how quickly they went up.

Because most of the kids, when I check and we're doing zinc supplements, we were like, Oh, it's just such a slow, It's not going up. What's going on? And so this mom, all she had done, she actually didn't even do any zinc supplements.

She took pumpkin seeds and took her coffee grinder and ground them into fine powder. And again, like the liver, She put them in to everything like soup, salads, baked goods, you know, what oatmeal, whatever her kiddo was eating in And that was enough.

And so I love that you talk about the power of food as healing because our kids need the nutrients from food and there's such a synergy in the foods too that we can't get necessarily from individual supplements.

Some kids will need supplements in addition, right? But the lasting healing is going to be when we could really impact a family's diet and then have that child understand what diet is the most healing for them.

So I would love to talk about your microbiome magic framework in your book and just go a little bit more into how to make food, you know, get the most bang out of your buck for for your diet.

So in my book, I talk. About the five things for microbiom magic and these five. Things are five, things that we do every single day. My goal as a mom is to make sure that whatever I recommend is doable and practical and fun for families.

And so if we put it in that framework, the five things that we're doing every single day, we are eating, drinking, breathing, sleeping, moving our bodies.

But if you really think about how to do those in a microbiome-centric way, if learn to live like a gut hero that I talk about in my book, then so many other things will fall into place.

You just start with those foundations. And in the book, there's a diagram of a wheel. It's called the Wheel of Whole Gut Resilience. There are these five things in The Wheel because you don't have to start all of them at once.

As a parent, you choose, well, if your child is extremely picky right now, which actually goes along with zinc deficiency, right? And it's so stressful to think about changing diet, then don' t start there.

You know, maybe work on hydration or work, on sleep or workout movement, because all of that is going to help support a healthier microbiome, which then actually shifts your child's taste preferences and then makes that part easier.

So it all moves forward. But the one that I talk about the most, and I had this one mom who reached out to me and her child. I guess I think was around five, hadn't quite started kindergarten yet, but was in preschool.

And she just followed the five things for Microbiomagic because she had tried all these other things and they were eating healthily. But when she really put the pieces together to live a microbiome-centric lifestyle, diet and lifestyle.

She said her son's eczema cleared within about three, four months, which was amazing, right? And it can be sometimes a little hard to believe that some of the simplest things can move the needle, but the simple things are the foundational things.

And you can't pour on supplements on a shaky foundation. I mean, you need that foundation, so let's talk about

that. What I would say are the two things that I usually focus on the most.

The first thing for Microbiome Magic is how we nourish our gut microbiome. And when we think about the immune gut connection, just so parents recognize how important it is to live in a microbiocentric way and teach your kids about your microbiomes, teach them about the trillions of friendly buddies in our gut that are helping to keep them healthy.

A lot of kids love taking that ownership, right? And saying, oh, I'm helping my friends, and they're helping me. With the microbiome, we know there's one study.

It was actually a study from about 10 years ago now. I was published in 2016. And I don't know why this was not shouted across the pediatric and the world, right?

But it was nearly 800,000 children. it Was a military study because they have databases. So they looked at babies who received antibiotics or antacid medications in the first six months of life.

and followed them out and found that those babies, by the time they were four, had a significantly increased risk of virtually every single allergic disorder, including eczema, asthma, hay fever, hives, and anaphylactic food allergies, which have been alarmingly on the rise since I was in medical school.

And so, you know, so really then when we can take back control, no, let's back up again, why antibiotics are anti-acid medications. And, and, many people are familiar, but some may not recognize that, antibiotics and anti acid medications will pretty immediately disrupt your gut microbiome.

And so if we're not aware of that, it's not to say don't take those medicines if they're necessary, but it is to, say, let's make sure they are necessary in the first place, and then let us understand to support the microbiome afterwards.

Now, if you're listening and, you know, My babies had antibiotics when they were under two months of age. I mean, Kenzie had a urinary tract infection and Bodie had strep, you know, that actually a perforated eardrum.

When you're that little, I would never say don't take the antibiotics. But I did fortunately understand some of the consequences. And I understand so much more now.

and I wish I'd gotten done things a little differently, right? We all do that as a parent. Can't go back in time, but now you now, all right, now let's focus on the microbiome.

When we're thinking about how to nourish your microbiome, that's one of the first things for microbiomagic. I break it up into two parts, what we get in and also what keep out.

Food as Medicine for Healing

Now, while we keep our, maybe more important for your pickier eaters, right? I mean, if they're really focused on chicken nuggets and hash browns and quesadillas, okay, and that all they want to eat, Just making sure that when you're buying those packaged foods, you learn how to read those food labels in a really savvy way, like a gut hero, right?

And I break down the steps, and when teach your kids how do that, It's amazing. I mean, they'll look at packages and be like, but mom, this has, what is this mono di something, right?

And they know because that's an ingredient, the mono and diglycerides that they put back. And so even, even organic chicken nuggets can have ingredients that are gonna cause inflammation.

So if you just can be a little more savvy about then swapping out those packaged foods. For the better packaged food that don't have those inflammatory ingredients, that can be a huge step in the right direction, even if your kids aren't eating a ton of, you know, fiber and fruits and vegetables just yet.

So that's one part of it. The second part is, okay, what can we try to get in more? And we have a HUGE fiber- and nutrient gap. in our country, in kids and adults.

But when two-thirds of kids in teens, their diet is made up of ultra-processed foods. And on some surveys, one in two kids the United States don't have a single vegetable on any given day.

One in three kids doesn't' have any fruit on a given you know, it becomes a slippery slope. And I get surprised sometimes when I see families in the office, they are, quote, healthy families.

But when we really think about it, their kids, especially once they get to middle school or high school, are not eating any vegetables or fruits. Maybe they're eating a little broccoli at dinner.

They're not getting enough fiber, that means. Our microbiome champions are three Fs, our fiber. our fermented foods. and phytonutrients, which I know pH is not enough.

It's easy to remember, right? So fiber, fermented foods and Phyto nutrients. So, fiber that's all plants, that your legumes, your berries, you're nuts and seeds, so getting all of those in.

And then fermented food is probably the biggest gap. I mean, if you think about the fact that less than 5% of US kids actually meet their minimum daily requirements of fiber, it's even less for fermented foods, right?

So we want to try to make that a part of your kid's diet. They can get a little bit of kraut juice mixed in with their foods or cut up that sauerkraut really, really finely.

You can brew kombucha at home together and make yummy flavors. In my book, I have a recipe for a fermented blackberry lemonade, but you can ferment anything, including fruits.

So ferment your fruits, and I give you a trick to do that with probiotic capsules, so you don't even have to have a whey starter, right? Or make your brine, you just start with the probiotics capsule, but you can ferment any fruit and then use that in your smoothie.

If you're making a smoothie, they might as well use some fermented fruits in there. Right. And so getting yogurt. Also with the probiotic capsule. I mean, we literally did that for, I don't know, five and a half years.

You can just put a can of coconut milk with a probiotics capsule and it's just, you know and if it goes bad you can start over and start this big thing.

Yeah. That's right. Keep going. No, I mean, it's a lot less daunting than people think, right? You just have to start it and you realize, oh, that's actually pretty easy to do, and it really is so fun to get your kids involved.

And you can do it seasonally. You can get whatever. Go to the farmer's market and, you know, let's try fermenting this, just seeing what it comes out as.

So nourishing your microbiome is really important. When we think about getting in these plants, I talk to families and especially little kids and I just say, let's think about making your meals top with plants on purpose.

So purposefully, because we can go about the day and in theory, we would love to eat vegetables. I know for me, like I love vegetables, right? But there are some days where it's like, If I haven't planned, it doesn't get in that easily.

Especially if you're busy at work or whatever it is. So on purpose means every meal you are sitting there thinking, okay, how can I make this meal pop with just one or two more plants?

If i'm having some oatmeal, can i add some pumpkin seeds and some raisins in the cupboard? Which probably a lot of people have, right? And let's not forget herbs and spices, throw on some cinnamon.

Or clothes or you know to mark i mean all these the spices add those phytonutrients right the color that are microbiome loves and are my friend takes those and create all of these amazing compounds that actually are beneficial for our epigenetics.

I mean, that's the fascinating thing is our microbes, if we have the right ones, can take the foods that we eat that are beneficial and convert them into compounds that help our genes determine whether or not they're going to be on or off and work for us or work against us.

And so there's this beautiful microbiome gene connection there. So if you think about this ecosystem inside of our gut that is really one of their sole jobs is to take care of us.

We are their host, right? And it's in the same way where we think about taking care the ecosystem around us, I mean, Earth Day as we're recording is right around the corner.

And so, you know, our kids learn in preschool. We have to reuse, reduce, recycle, and take care of Mother Earth. Otherwise, we will not have an ecosystem to live in that's going to take of us.

So same thing with our gut ecosystem. If we don't take the internal ecosystem inside of, well, not going be able to really survive in the best way possible.

I have ask you these two nuanced eczema questions because for us during this initial healing phase, I mean, ferments are such a valuable and required part of a healthy whole diet, but during that initial healing phase, there's an undisputable histamine intolerance going on when you have eczema specifically, and feriments are high in histamines.

They're just highly histimine foods. The way that we got around that, like I said, is we did make that yogurt that was just based off of a probiotic capsule, and I worked that into smoothies, otherwise we just did probiotics for that first healing period.

How do you recommend navigating that with kids with eczema? Yeah, you have to just see what your child can tolerate, right? Because histamine is a real issue.

I mean, of course, the itching, I think that is the histamines response. And so there can be histamin from foods. There can even be gut microbes that are producing histimines in your gut, whether or not you're eating high-histamine foods, and so that's why doing a stool test is really important, because I actually just was looking yesterday at a still test that had some of the highest levels of histamine producers in the gut that I've seen.

And this patient is having significant gut and skin issues. So looking at that, because that may be the source of his histamines. So there's sort of, you know, when I think about histamine and a mass activation for kids with eczema, there is the external sources of histamines, like is your gut, are your guts producing histameine?

And there are low histimine probiotics that are available now. There's Smidge and Seeking Health has a low-histamine one that I'll use for patients who have histimeine issues.

or there can be foods that trigger histamine release. So, you know, I mean, spinach is put into a lot of smoothies, but spinach has sort of a double-edged sword because it can behind histamines.

It can also, though, be high in quercetin, which is what I like kids with eczema to really have a of because quersetin which a natural compound found in the skin of red apples or red onion, capers, furs, grapes, you know, tea, green tea.

Quercetin is our, quote, natural antihistamine. It stabilizes mast cells to prevent histamine release internally, because many kids with eczema, it's not just external histamines released.

Internally, your immune cells, in particular mast cell and basophils and other immune cell that have histamin, are

they're pulling the trigger too quickly on releasing their contents, which include histamine, right?

And not just histamines, there's things like prostaglandins and other inflammatory chemicals that are being released that can contribute to the itching and the swelling and all of that, and so I do like to from a food standpoint, Just figure out what level of histamine in the diet kids can tolerate at that point.

It may be that in beginning they can't tolerate any fermented foods or maybe they could do a little bit of crowd juice, right? And maybe, they do one or two leaves of spinach but not like a huge spinach salad, so you just gradually.

There are enzymes that can be very helpful, because certain people genetically are lacking an enzyme called DAO, diamine oxidase, that breaks down histamine in the gut.

Microbiome Magic Framework

So this is purely gut-related histamines, not internal. If you are one of those and you do have a histamin intolerance—histamin you're not tolerating the histamine from foods or that's being produced by your gut.

You can take this tiny little DAO enzyme before you eat, and that can help break down the hystamine in foods. So that could be a temporary measure as your immune system gets more normalized to histamines, right?

And then internally, the quercetin is an amazing histamin stabilizer, as I mentioned. Zinc, that we've been talking about, Zinc actually can lower your blood histamine levels and can stabilize mast cells and vitamin C.

So the nutrients from food and then also sometimes taking an extra supplement can really help stabilize a histamines. while you're trying to then sort out, let's just calm the fire, figure out is the Fire coming from foods?

Is it coming? From environmental toxins? is it? Coming from mold? It is coming. From gut dysbiosis or environmental allergies that haven't been detected like dust mite allergies, right?

Yeah, what I've seen is, and what we certainly lived is just, yeah, it's coming from your dysbiosis. That's what's stressing the system is you have a dysbiosis because you're experiencing asthma and you can see it and your toxins are all dumping out through your skin and it is a mess.

So, you know, there are a lot of times they're just not ready for those, which is great. It's more of a graduated practice anyway. And if you could just dial it back calm it down put in these key supplements because yeah these kids are in such a state of you know disease like they're just so far from the baseline that they do I believe that supplements are a required part of this this healing process if or this far south from where we want, health-wise, you know, if it's just not exactly going to be enough.

So those are really good staples to have. I mean, itching, histamine, they all go hand-in-hand. These are all things that absolutely need to in your cat.

The quercetin, the vitamin C, and the DAO in some cases is just so helpful. Thank you. And I also wanted to ask you, mom to mom, and since you are Dr.

Mom, I mean, how are some ways that you make your breakfast pop with vegetables? Like you mentioned, raisins, which… You know, that's another one for eczema is the dried fruits don't really work as well.

Yeah. It's an extra natural food chemicals that come along with those. But, you know it still is something that I would love it if I could incorporate a little more any or one, vegetable into these breakfasts that doesn't make my kids scream.

Yeah, I mean, we love Mexican breakfast, right? We love huevos rancheros. I think breakfast burritos can be a really great way with that salsa. You can put in, you know, there's cilantro, tomatoes, onions.

We put some jalapeños in there. So there are four and then you're squeezing the lime in. And then beans at breakfast love, and you can refry beans or kidney beans, or black beans.

My kids actually It's a little bizarre, but they will eat black beans out of the can. I'm like, that is a bit strange for me. But I am so glad that they love beans, because you can incorporate that.

In America, a lot of people think of breakfast foods as pancakes and waffles and things like that, which you actually can! That's okay, right? But with the pancakes or waffle, I always add in a little extra collagen.

I throw in some protein powder, and then even then I'll chop up pecans really finely. So add some, whatever nuts I have. We have bags of nuts and seeds in our pantry, so we'll just grab some of those.

And I love adding cinnamon to everything. It's so good for blood sugar regulation and amazing for your microbiome. And so just thinking about, and then of course, topping it with fruit.

So, you know, we usually have apples, or my daughter actually loves taking apples. Keep the skin on if you can, right? Because the is skin is high in quercetin.

She chops them up really fine and she just sautés them, teensy bit of ghee, a little cinnamon, then she makes a compote for, our pancakes. And if have pears, throw that in there as well.

Just thinking, instead of just the pancakes with the maple syrup, fancy it up a little bit and put some other things in there. So you can do that with sweet or savory.

If your kids like omelets, then I just throw in bell peppers, zucchini, carrots. Like my staple, I'll prep a bowl of diced carrots, zucchinis, bell pepper, Sometimes mushrooms, if my kids will let me, they're not huge mushrooms.

But we'll have that dice because then I could saute that quickly, make a chili or make tacos with that. I can put that into soups. We have a lentil soup, we just throw that in.

So if you just have some prep, then it's easy to throw into whatever you're cooking, right? And then, I haven't done this in a little while, but my kid's love it when over the weekend I'll just batch make, a whole bunch of breakfast burritos.

You can put in sweet potatoes and butternut squash and regular potatoes. So you have a little variety there, right? Different color. And just throw in, when you're scrambling the eggs to put it in the breakfast brewers, throw and chopped spinach and throw some onions and bell peppers in there.

Then, of course, the beans and the burrito and you'll have your salsa. Of course the bacon, my kids always want the So we just wrap that all together.

And so, I mean, they love eating it. They're tasting the bacon and they loved the potatoes in it, but it's also, you know, chock full of other foods that they don't mind in that format.

Oh, thank you. You do have a lot of really great recipes in your book. There's so helpful. I think it is just that reframe. That is what really helped move the needle for us.

And especially when they're so young, that's when their developing their taste buds. They don't know any better. This is food, so there's always, always a way to put in more nutrients.

And if that is the point of eating, right, is to nourish yourself and yourselves. If you can really just reframe it in your mind as the buyer and the server of the food.

You can always add something in just to make it a little more nutrient dense. That goes a really, really long way. You know and I actually did need a reframe too.

I mean even as a pediatrician that you know because there were times that and there still are sometimes right where you're so busy in the mornings and everyone's it's chaos getting to school and you have to make the breakfast and pack the lunches and, you there was a time where I was just feeling so like I just don't care what they eat at lunch right now.

I want to pack up the fasting. But the reframe there is really, you know, the most important way you can spend your time is figuring out how to nourish your kids and also have them see, okay, this is how we're prioritizing our time, right?

Instead of, waking up and, being on your email for 20 minutes, right? Okay, no, I'm taking the time to prep the vegetables to put into, you know, the kids' lunch.

And then as they get older, they can help too. Like yesterday, i was running around trying to get ready for, to take them to school and I asked Kenzie and Bodhi to please prep their own vegetables, which I mean, would I love if they did it every morning?

Yes, but I also understand I want to prioritize their sleep too, right? So that's something I willingly do, But they can also participate in helping and, you know, and prepping maybe their vegetables and their fruit bag the night before.

I mean, apples are hard just because they get brown, Right? You just spray a little lemon juice on there, put cuties into a snack pack and they can chop up celery and carrots and cucumbers.

Those are going to last overnight. So there's a lot of things you can do the night before so that it's not a frantic you know, everybody's screaming and crying in the morning experience.

Yeah, I just thank you for saying that. It's just like you are Dr. Eliza Zog and you're still saying these things matter, right? And this is still a priority for you.

And you this honestly, it's like, you do you get the most bang from your butt if you just can you spend these extra five minutes. This doesn't even take a long time, five at night thinking, not even thinking.

But just, OK, what do I need to do for tomorrow to get through? the day, dietary for the kids. And then it's, you know, whatever, five, 10 minutes in the morning.

Even if you're feeding them junk or real whole food, You still have to spend that time. You don't get out of it being a parent. It's just really isn't that much more.

Then you gain so much time back when your kids aren't sick. So much for mums back. Thanks. Thank you for saying that. Yeah. I mean, even just on the weekends, especially as your kids get older, you know, they have lots of different activities and you're going to this soccer game or this swim practice, whatever it is, right?

Life is busy, with time that you can take on weekends. And again, I do not always do this. Do I wish I did this every weekend? Yes. It is an ongoing goal.

But this weekend, we did the grocery list. Actually, thank goodness my daughter is driving now. She did some grocery shopping for me, so we divvied that up.

I prepped a huge salad, chopped up red cabbage and green cabbage, and shredded carrots, cilantro, what else did we put in there? Bell peppers to make an Asian slaw kind of salad.

This huge bowl, which really it took me I mean, with a mandolin, it probably took me like 30, 40 minutes, right? And this huge bowl, lasting us for three meals, and so you just do it all at once and it was delicious.

Histamine Intolerance and Eczema

It's fresh right there. And if it's in the fridge, your kids are going to be more likely to grab it and eat it as opposed to if they go and there's nothing prepped in Are they going to cut up their own carrots?

Probably not. Maybe, maybe not, right? Are you going, you know, slice your own apple? Maybe. maybe, not right. And so, but if it's right there and they're hungry, they can see, oh, okay, there's some grilled chicken and the slaw.

Just make myself a little salad. I had to finally put up my hands and say, okay, no, it's not going to happen for me because I always wanted that block of time in the weekends and be like, yeah, then I could food prep and do all the things.

It never happens, right? It's never happened ever, ever. So that's okay. I just restructured and made some new routine stacks so that it was like okay I really can spend five minutes at night, a couple of minutes in morning and it does work.

However you want to look at it, but it just is so worth it. Just to take a look of your week and like where can that fit in, put some intention to it so thank you.

I also, I mean, part of your framework, you focus on the nervous system and stress, and that's a big part. And everyone who's listening is under a lot of stress.

It's stressful to watch your kid be in misery and not exactly know what to do. You're trying everything and you're not sleeping. That's stressfull. I was just wondering, what do you tell your patients when they're in that boat?

Thank you for reminding me because I definitely want to get back to that point as well because one of the five things for microbiome magic, I call it breathe.

But by breathing, we have to breathe every day, right? We have breathe at every minute of a day. How we breathe and gauge our vagus nerve plays a huge role in our immune system and our gut microbiomes.

Psychological stress is one the most potent chronic sources of inflammation for kids and adults. And, you know, as you said, when you have a child who's sick and who is itchy and he's not feeling well, that is stressful for them and for you.

But in those moments, in between, if we can really learn how to regulate our nervous systems, If we could learn to breathe with our bellies, and that's why I call it breathe, because the simplest thing is just to learn with your diaphragm.

Slow breaths, not with you shoulders. Filling up your lungs like there's a balloon in your belly that you're inflating while you are keeping your shoulders down.

and then slowly inhaling and slowly exhaling, and teaching your babies and your kids how to do that. And you could just have a moment when you're laying down to go to sleep, put them to asleep, where you are just both on your backs and doing some belly breathing, or at the table before you sit to eat, let's take five belly breaths, because guess what?

That vagus nerve, it doesn't just help you to feel more calm, It helps your digestion. It helps reduce inflammation, it helps improve the beneficial bacteria in your gut microbiome.

It help reduce the levels of your stress hormones. I mean, there's so many physiologic things that are going on when we engage our vagus nerve that in the book, I don't even call it mind-body medicine because that for a lot of people and practitioners, unfortunately, puts it in the realm of, well, that's optional.

I'll do that when I have time. But really, you know, this Vegas nerve work that we do is one of the most important prescriptions that I can give to a family.

And it is something that is an ever ongoing process, right? Because life doesn't get less stressful. And we all have to, as adults and as teenagers and kids, really learn how to continuously regulate our nervous systems.

This does not mean being zen and calm all the time, right? Because that's not appropriate either. There are times where we do want our stress response to kick into gear.

It's recognizing that stress is not in and of itself a bad thing. It's just, we have to learn how to manage it. And so that is, it has a whole chapter in my book because it's so important.

Also, believe in aromatherapy. I think it a real role. Just one more tool you can have just put in a diffuser or put a little bit on the bottom of their feet.

Even engaging in that practice is just another way to remind you. yourself as you're putting your kids down, like, okay, calm. It's just like an extra touch point, which also helps their nervous system.

And yeah, I'm so glad that there's such a big chunk of your book dedicated to this. Cause it- Well, and the essential oils are amazing because you can even, that's another vehicle too, as your diffusing it.

Or if you have a little roller, you just can use that as a way to just It's like a slow breath in and smell it and then you get that therapeutic, you know, aroma, but then also it forces you to slow your breath down, which is really, I'm doing double duty to support your vagus nerve.

And then, You mentioned it briefly before, right? These kids are, their immune systems are compromised and they tend to get sick a little bit more and even just, quote unquote, normal kids, they get to sick all the time.

I would just love to hear your approach to acute illness and how do you deal with that in your practice and your household? I will say by supporting your child's gut microbiome, and there are certain probiotics and prebiotics that have been found to actually reduce the rates of colds and fevers and flus during the winter.

So simply supporting a child gut's microbiomes will reduce how often they get sick and can reduce even the severity of their illness. That's why we still start with the gut there.

I mean, that if I have a kid who's just getting sick after sick, after a sick or getting ear infection after ear, infection, After ear infections, I always start With a stool test because that that tells me there's something going on with that gut immune system interface.

And so, but the same approach, if kids are getting Sick frequently, then I think, okay, well, what nutrients are they? Are they needing more of to support their immune System?

Guess what? Zinc is one of them. I mean, that's another huge one. But, you know, supporting their gut microbiome. And when kids get sick, it's really important to recognize as a parent, It's not something that we want to step into fear with.

You know building, its training for your child's immune system if we can do it appropriately. So we don't want be afraid of illnesses. We certainly don' t want our kids to live in a completely sanitary bubble because that is actually worse for their immune systems.

Right? But when they get sick, we want to approach that with calm. And in part four of my book, I have listed out the 25 most common acute illnesses in kids.

I mean, pretty much anything you're going to cover from fevers to sore throats to earaches to tummy bugs and how to think about it, you know, when to call the doctor, right?

Which is, not as often as we might think, but I want you to know. Okay, this is when, as a pediatrician, would like you contact me if you are my patient, or consider heading to urgent care or the ER.

But then apart from that, the diet and lifestyle factors that can be really supportive and also how to use homeopathy, essential oils, acupressure points, all the things that I do in my own practice and with my children to help kids recover faster and more completely.

and reducing the need for antibiotics. So that is also really important. And I even have a section in there, if your kids do end up needing antibiotics, then what you can do to recover your child's microbiome.

Can you take us through your quick plan? If you do have to use antibiotics which sometimes you, do what is your best bet after that to repair?

Stress, Nervous System, and Acute Illness

So part of it is those foundations. You have to return to those five things for microbiome magic. Again, if that foundation is shaky, there's no amount of probiotics you can take that's going to restore your gut microbiomes.

So it's, yes, I do use probiotic to help restore some of the microbiom recovery, but probiotcs are actually not the most important part. it's the foundations.

And part of those foundations are, you know, those those microbiome champions, there's fiber, phytonutrients, fermented foods, trying to get all of that in.

Part of the reason why I created my new supplement was to Get those Foundations in, in a way that would be very easy for families because we want those plants.

We want those different sources of fibers, we want all the different colors. Eight in 10 Americans are lacking, have a color gap in pretty much every phytonutrient color category, right?

And so if your kids aren't getting much in the yellow-orange zone, all right, well, microbiome magic has turmeric in there and there's carrots and you know things like that and so getting in that foundation is really important because that's what's going to help the beneficial bacteria that are in your gut to grow and thrive.

We all have a unique microbiom and then also if you're giving probiotics in addition to they need something to feed on. So they're also gonna feed those microbiome champions to actually stick.

There was one study that looked at, it actually looked a fecal transplants versus antibiotics versus just wait and watch after antibiotics. And the group that just took the probiotics, they had the slowest time to recovery.

It was fascinating, right? But this study didn't use prebiotics and microbiome champions with it. So it just goes to show you, you can throw down hundreds of whatever, billions of colonies of probiotics, but they need to be nourished just like your child.

We eat seed and feed, right? And we do a prebiotic tea here because it's that step. You can't skip it. That's right. I would love for you to go a little bit more into this new supplement that you're launching.

This sounds like something my kids need to have. Yeah, it's amazing. This is my fourth baby after my kids and my book, right? And so it is called Microbiome Magic, and we're calling it a gut health superfood powder all in one daily essential for kids in their microbiomes.

So it Is a complete multivitamin and multi-mineral, just knowing that kids often have some gaps in the nutrient profiling with really good dosages. There's, you know, there's 100 milligrams of magnesium in 1 scoop.

there is good amounts of zinc. really bioavailable and easily absorbed and methylated B vitamins because I mean so many of our kids need more methylation support but beyond that so that's for the kids but for their microbiomes there are clinically studied prebiotics like HMOs or human milk oligosaccharides that have been proven to to increase bifidobacteria in babies and children and adults.

There's two studied kiwifruit extracts, Actizen and Levo, that can improve and increase your other keystone bacteria called Ficalibacterium. I mean, this is just some of the science I spent years picking out the exact ingredients.

We're here for it. Yeah, there's a kid, it's called a rafty oligo fructose. It's another prebiotic that has extensive studies in babies and children. So for me as a pediatrician, It was so important to have pediatric studied ingredients too, because I mean, pediatric studies lag so far behind adult studies.

When we have the evidence, we want to use that for our kids' benefit. And there's also 30 different plants in here. There's organic fruits, vegetables, and phytonutrients.

That's really important because in the American Gut Project that looked at 10,000 poop samples, they found that people who had the healthiest microbiomes ate 30 or more different plant each week.

And so, you know, if that's the goal and your kids aren't quite there yet, first you want to try to make every meal pop, right, with some purpose. And then you can use an external source to get you there in the meantime.

Yeah. Does it taste good? It tastes delicious. It's so berry lemonade flavor, organic. flavors and worked with Julie Matthews, who is she's an amazing nutrition expert.

And we came up with a little recipe book. Now, everyone who tried it in water loved it just on its own. Even a seven year old at a conference, she was like, can I have some more?

But because there's no probiotics in here, it's to feed the beneficial bacteria, you can bake with it. So Julie made energy, these like coconut chocolate energy balls.

She made gummy bears with them, blueberry muffins with then. And so we put a recipe guide together. You can think really creatively about how else you could use microbiome magic besides just shaking it in a bottle or stirring it Oh, great.

Yeah, I'm super excited. I can't wait for mine to get straight. We're going to do it So I really appreciate you being here and for your time and just everything that you're doing to help the next generation really thrive.

So thank you.

Recovery After Antibiotics and Final Advice

And if you were sitting across from somebody listening who's just feeling exhausted and defeated, despite everything is going on in their home, what would you want them to understand about their child's capacity to heal?

So I've been doing this for over 20 years and I want every parent to trust that their kids can get well. It's not always a straight path and there can be up and then down and up, and down.

And so we just wanna make sure that wherever point you are, you just keep looking back. because chances are you're at a better point than you were six months ago or a year ago, and those little baby steps matter.

We can't just take it day by day. It's a long journey. And if you get tired, it's okay to take a little break. I would say for the moms out there and the dads, but usually it is the mom's who are up at night doing the research and trying to figure out how to help their kids.

Do not stay up Googling and researching all night long at the expense of your own health because that's not helping anybody in the long run. Yeah. It's so hard.

Easier said than done. Yes, I know. The goal is right to truncate this amount of time. Like what's happening now is just to make sure that it happens for the minimal amount time so that you can get better and start to live a little

more joyfully, more rested.

And hopefully this is a flip on the radar. incorporating all of these pieces of the framework that Dr. Song has outlined. I mean, my goodness, you can go such a far way.

So where can everyone find and follow you, get a hold of your microbiome magic powder and in the book? The best place to find me is on my website, which is healthykidshappykids.com.

And you could find my book, Microbiome Magic. There are more resources there as well. Then also on Instagram, healthy kids underscore happy kids. Amazing.

All that will be in the show notes. Thank you so much, Dr. Song. Okay, wasn't she fantastic? I told you, she's just the real deal. And I was so grateful that I got a chance to sit down and have a chat with her.

If this episode confirmed what you already knew in your gut, that your child's eczema is not a skin problem, it's a whole body problem. You are ready to stop managing it, stop planning your life around it.

and you're ready start reversing it and move forward from this. That is what the exima elimination method was built for. the gut healing, the targeted supplement plans, to target meal plans.

The master classes, one-on-one coaching, stool testing, so nothing is guesswork. the healing box, all of it. All of is included, is there, full road map.

This is your get out of eczema path, friends. It's the best way I know how to support you through this, from home. No more appointments, no more pharmaceuticals, dreading meal time.

we address it step-by-step- by- step by step. You know exactly what to do. And you know how to run your day based on your schedule, based your child's needs, and based exactly on what will bring your children from where you are now, from sleepless nights and from itchy, red, peeling skin to clear, calm skin, to smiling, joy, freedom, pharmaceutical-free, food- free kids.

That's what we're going for. You can find that link in the show note, friends. And if you have been on the fence, the families who start in summer, who starts right now, are the ones who are seeing real change by the time next school year starts.

August is just a skip away and you can make real, noticeable change, by that time that happens. That window is right, now this is the best place to start.

This is best time to do it when your routines are being Shaken up, you can do it while you're on vacation. You can it anywhere, anyhow, friends. I'm just so passionate about it because it works.

And this is a really, really good time to start. So thank you so much for being here, Friends. 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 exima kids and finally rest easy too.

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