Is Your Gut Sabotaging Your Hormones? Transcript

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Intro to Gut and Hormone Health

When the gut is unhealthy, estrogen detoxification through the liver and the intestines is impaired. So if the estrobolome is disrupted, excess estrogen gets reabsorbed instead of being properly eliminated, leading to symptoms like PMS, fibroids, breast tenderness, and weight gain.

And for adrenal fatigue and cortisol dysregulation, chronic gut inflammation will trigger stress response. Over time, this can exhaust the adrenal glands, resulting in fatigue, sleep disturbances.

The gut also influences cortisol clearance. Dysfunctioning gut health can either prolong stress responses or contribute to burnout. Do you feel like your hormones have turned against you?

Trust us, you're not alone. We're Dr. Serena and Dr. Heidi. And on Hormone Heroines, we explore all the root causes that are behind hormone imbalances.

And we teach you how to thrive through them. Join us for real talk, expert tips, and even a few laughs. Hi, and welcome back to Hormone Heroines. I'm Dr.

Serena and this is Dr. Heidi. And today we're going to be talking to Dr. Julia Ward. Dr. Julia Ward is a compassionate and pioneering physician with over a decade of experience in functional medicine, offering a holistic patient centered approach to health and wellness.

After earning her medical medical degree from University of Southern California and serving in the US Navy, where she practiced general urgent and emergency medicine, both domestically and abroad, she faced personal health challenges that led her to functional medicine.

Meet Dr. Julia Ward

Frustrated by the limitations of conventional care, Dr. Ward embraced a root cause approach, completing a fellowship with the American Board of Anti-Aging and Regenerative Medicine in 2016. She has since dedicated her career to empowering patients with knowledge, promoting sustainable lifestyle changes, and integrating cutting edge science into her practice to address physical and environmental factors in impacting health.

A devoted wife and mother of five, Dr. Ward combines her passion for medicine with a steadfast commitment to improving lives through transformative care.

Thank you for joining us today, Dr. Ward. Thank you for having me. Yes, of course. Yeah. So I know today we wanted to focus on the gut hormone connection and how your microbiome shapes not only your mood and metabolism, but much more.

So let's get started. I'm excited. Yeah. All right. Can you explain the connection between the gut and hormone regulation and how do they influence each other?

Yeah, absolutely. So the gut and the hormones are in constant communication through what's often referred to as the gut hormone access. So the gut microbiome plays a critical role in metabolizing and regulating hormones, particularly estrogen, cortisol, and thyroid hormones.

So if the gut is unhealthy due to dysbiosis or leaky gut or chronic inflammation, it can impair hormone clearance, leading to imbalances such as estrogen dominance, adrenal fatigue, and thyroid dysfunction.

Additionally, the gut produces neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine, which impact hormone production

and regulation. And so this is why gut health is really foundational for both hormonal and mental well-being.

So I'm really curious, do you see, I'm assuming you do some gut testing, do you see specific patterns within the microbiome itself that then shows up more with those different pictures you just talked about?

Yeah, you can definitely see some imbalances.

How the Gut Microbiome Regulates Hormones

When we do gut testing, stool testing, we use a number of different functional labs, but they will all do analysis of inflammatory markers, looking at how well you're breaking down like fats, proteins, carbohydrates.

It's looking at other things that indicate more inflammation. And then it's doing a whole DNA analysis of all the bacteria because we have certain like keystone species that we want more of that are beneficial like bifidobacterium.

And it can also, so it can look at some of these ratios of bacteria as well. And then it's also in addition looking for potential pathogens. potential parasites, and potentially pathogenic bacteria as well.

And then things like short-chain fatty acids, which are, you know, kind of feed the colon cells, like we need these short-chain fatty acids, and sometimes we don't have enough of them that can cause problems in and of itself.

So, yes. Yeah, one pattern that I often see in my patients, I'm curious if you see this too, is when I see a positive H. pylori, I often see a lot of other infections, whether that's like more of a dysbiosis picture just because their commensals are way off or they also have like a parasite in there or some other inflammatory bacteria in there because more stuff is getting in.

But the pattern that I see the most from that is because of the H. pylori it decreases their stomach acid and that allows all those things to get in. But also then I see decreased protein digestion as well as decreased fat digestion.

Is that a common pattern you see as well? Yeah, absolutely. And it's made, I think, especially worse if somebody is on some sort of acid blocking drug, you know, one of the proton pump inhibitors, that just tends to make things worse.

And it just allows for what we call opportunistic bacteria to kind of take a hold. So if you imagine your gut microbiome, like a jungle of bacteria, and they're all kind of competing for space, and we want the good beneficial bacteria there mostly, but certain things can knock them out and then that just leaves more space for those opportunistic, which may or may not be a problem, but they're not, even if they're not a problem, even if they're not causing disease, they're still taking up space.

So you now have less of the beneficial bacteria there. Yeah. Yeah. Great. So then what role does the gut microbiome play in maintaining hormone balance?

All right, so the gut microbiome helps regulate hormone metabolism through specific bacterial strains, particularly the estrobolome, a subset of gut bacteria that influences estrogen processing.

So if these bacteria are out of balance, the body may either reabsorb excess estrogen, contributing to estrogen dominance, or it can fail to recycle enough estrogen, leading to deficiencies that impact bone health, mood, and metabolism.

But beyond estrogen, the gut microbiome also affects cortisol regulation, insulin sensitivity, and thyroid function, all of which are crucial for overall hormone balance.

And just to speak about the thyroid for a minute, our thyroid is primarily putting out T4, and then that has to be converted to T3. But with gut microbiome imbalances, that can be blocked.

And unfortunately, I think a lot of physicians are trained to, when they're looking at the thyroid, they're running something called a TSH, thyroid stimulating hormone, and a T4.

And they don't look at the T3. or they don't look at the free T3 or the free T4. It's a very incomplete kind of a picture. Plus, the majority of traditional insurance-based medicine is prescribing Synthroid for thyroid deficiencies, and Synthroid is just synthetic T4.

Testing for Dysbiosis and H. pylori Patterns

Maybe your body just physically can't convert that T4 to T3, and so even though your numbers are fine and okay by those standards, you're still effectively hypothyroid and you're still having all these symptoms of being hypothyroid.

Oh, it's so nice to hear you say that because we deal with this so much. You know, being naturopathic doctors in our family medicine practice, we are PCPs and we see a lot of people come in.

They're like, I just have all these, you know, hypothyroid symptoms, but they've always been told their TSH is fine. I was like, yeah, your TSH could be fine.

I've seen lots of TSHs be fine, but I test there. I always test free T3, free T4, total T3, total T4. because you need the whole picture. Because if you do have enough, let's say your TSH is good and your T4 is good, but your T3 is low, then we need to get some more minerals in you that can help your body convert that.

And we don't necessarily have to add anything. You can do leothrionine, which is T3. You might not need to. You might just need to be able to convert it better.

And so I often see that a lot. And in the conventional world, it's always the TSH with a reflex to T4. And it's like the TSH in and of itself, the ranges of TSH just make me mad because they are based off of old white men.

And that is not how my body works. My body does not work like that. So I do still run a TSH because it tells us if your thyroid is struggling to do these things because your T4 and your T3 could be normal but have a high TSH.

So you just need the whole picture to find out what is causing what and how to help it. So it's great to hear you say that because so many people do not think that way.

And I think the big one is the mineral deficiency too for converting the T4 to T3. I see it all the time where, especially in like younger women too, where it's like, okay, they maybe just coming out of their teens in their early 20s, they're not eating the best and they have a ton of mineral deficiency.

And they're like, oh, I'm tired all the time. And then you run a thyroid and it's like, oh, it's because you have no T3 because your body's not converting it because you aren't getting any minerals in your diet.

So it's a common pattern I see and you can fix a lot of it with getting enough minerals. And to go back to your topic, if your gut's inflamed, it's really hard to absorb minerals.

It is. Yeah, yeah, absolutely. Speaking of that, how can imbalances in the gut health really contribute to conditions like estrogen dominance and adrenal fatigue and thyroid issues?

Right. So estrogen dominance. So when the gut is unhealthy, estrogen detoxification through the liver and the intestines is impaired. So if the estrobolome is disrupted, excess estrogen gets reabsorbed instead of being properly eliminated, leading to symptoms like PMS, fibroids, breast tenderness, and weight gain.

And for adrenal fatigue and cortisol dysregulation, chronic gut inflammation will trigger stress response. leading to high cortisol levels. Over time, this can exhaust the adrenal glands, resulting in fatigue, sleep disturbances, immune suppression, and the gut also influences cortisol clearance.

So dysfunction in gut health can either prolong stress responses or contribute to burnout. And I just want to say like how damaging chronic high cortisol levels can be.

And I think women especially, and especially as a woman, you're constantly taking care of other people, you're taking care of kids, you're taking care of family members.

Estrogen Dominance, Cortisol, and Thyroid Effects

And that can lead to chronically high cortisol, which one of cortisol's jobs is to mobilize blood sugar. So it actually raises your blood sugar. Because it's trying to give you energy to get away from whatever stressful thing it is.

It doesn't really, you know, your body doesn't make a distinction between emotional stress or physical stress. It's just trying to get you away. So it's raising that blood sugar and over time that can lead to insulin resistance.

And so oftentimes I'll have patients come in and their hemoglobin A1C, which is a picture of how the blood glucose has been over the past three months, is on the high end of normal.

Mine was that for years. And it's not because I'm eating a lot of sugar or a bad diet. It's just I was stressed all the time. And then you get to a point where you're just normalizing the stress and you're thinking, Well, you know, I'm not really stressed because I've been way more stressed or this is just normal for life for me.

You're just used to it. You're used to that level of stress. Yeah. And we just kind of discount how much, you know, you're in, you know, if you're in that constant survival mode, it can be really damaging to the, even to the blood vessels themselves, a whole nother topic.

But there's a special lining on the inside of our blood vessels called the glycocalyx. And it's like a clear gel-like matrix held in place by little tiny hair-like projections.

That glycocalyx lining holds the fluid into the vessels. It prevents anything from damaging the wall of the vessel. And it houses a lot of natural antioxidant defense mechanisms like nitric oxide.

And cortisol and high sugar will destroy that glycocalyx lining. So it will actually degrade your vascular function. And that can lead to things like kidney disease and high blood pressure and brain fog.

Strokes, heart attacks, all the, yeah. I think that people, most people don't know that sugar is very spiky. So it's very damaging. So when you have a lot of blood sugar in your, or a lot of sugar in your blood, it's like kind of like scratching.

It's like a cat scratching its way down your vascular system. And then that makes it so that those plaques can build up there. And, you know, I always, when I'm trying to explain this to patients, you know, when you have high cortisol, it's highly inflammatory anyways.

It's a great hormone. We need it, right? We definitely need it. But it's also a highly inflammatory hormone. And with it increasing our blood sugar, the sugar kind of looks like to me, those little spike balls.

You know what I'm talking about? Those little rubbery balls that like dogs have and chew on and they've got the items poking out everywhere. That's kind of what I envision as a sugar molecule in my blood.

When you raise that, that really does so much damage to all of our arteries, our veins, everything. People forget that that's coming a lot of times, not just from the food we eat, but because of that high cortisol picture.

And this day and age, especially in our society, especially for women, we are always on high alert and have a ton of cortisol, it seems like. Yeah, absolutely.

Yeah. And then like you said, that inflammation becomes a vicious cycle because that high stress of cortisol causes

physiological stress, which then raises cortisol even further.

And then it just becomes an even more vicious cycle. It can be hard. So, going back to gut a little bit, what are some gut-related symptoms that you see that may signal underlying hormonal issues?

Well, definitely bloating and gas, especially after eating certain foods. Constipation or diarrhea or combination, some people cycle through both. Sugar or carbohydrate cravings, that's a big one.

That kind of signals that there may be some insulin resistance going on. Fatigue or brain fog, often linked to cortisol imbalance. PMS, heavy periods or irregular cycles.

Difficulty losing weight and anxiety or mood swings. Okay. Yeah, definitely. We see the same kinds of things too. I've seen a lot of in perimenopause, especially when your hormones are already starting to dip, that the gas and bloating really just comes from foods that you would always have eaten before.

But again, like you said, that esterbolone, it feeds off of estrogen. And if you don't have enough estrogen for it to kind of metabolize and go through and detox, it starts to shrink.

And then your whole microbiome just gets thrown off. Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. So I know we kind of already touched on this, but I kind of want to go a little bit more into it.

How do stress and cortisol levels really impact the gut health and hormone function? Yeah. I think one of the most interesting things is that chronic stress can alter gut motility and increase permeability, leaky gut, and then disrupting the microbiome, all of which affects hormone regulation.

I don't know if you've ever noticed, if you have some sort of major emotional upset, you're more likely within a few days or a week to come down with a cold or a flu.

It just lowers your immune system because the majority of our immune system is actually housed in the gut. And so it's very responsive to what is going on outside of us.

I would notice that sometimes like coming home from college, I'd be on vacation and I was so stressed at college. And then I finally get home, okay, now I can relax.

I would get into a you know, some sort of an argument with a family member.

Stress, Blood Sugar, and Gut Inflammation

And that would just be enough to slow down my gut. And then it's like, when you have that high cortisol and it sort of slows the gut motility, now all the potentially pathogenic bacteria that would normally have just passed through are now have time to cling on and invade.

And that's when, you know, the illness can start. So it definitely can slow down digestion, leading to bloating and constipation. You know, it can disrupt the estrogen metabolism, increase that leaky gut situation, which just basically increases inflammation.

Yeah. So what kind of like role does diet and nutrition play in supporting a healthy gut and balanced hormones? Yeah. So a nutrient dense anti-inflammatory diet is really key to supporting both gut and hormone health.

And so I'm often recommending fiber-rich foods to support the microbiome diversity and estrogen clearance. Fermented foods like sauerkraut, kefir, kimchi for gut bacteria, healthy fats like omega-3s from Wildcott.

fish, avocados, olive oil, cruciferous vegetables like the broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower to help detox excess estrogen, polyphenol-rich foods, berries, green tea, dark chocolate to nourish the microbiome.

And then bone broth and collagen for gut lining repair. What we want to avoid, which is just as important, is processed foods, sugar, gluten, excess alcohol.

All these can worsen inflammation, disrupt gut bacteria, and interfere with hormone regulation. And just a note on the gluten. The gluten in our country, it's all genetically modified.

So now the gluten that we produce here is basically undigestible. And it really creates these micro, you know, these tiny little pores in our gut. And so as the food is moving through the gut, you get bits of food squeezing out into the bloodstream and that causes a major inflammatory reaction that causes the liver to then put out more cholesterol to try and kind of patch those those holes.

It's an inflammatory response. And so I think there's a misconception. A lot of people think that I'm eating red meat and that's going to increase my cholesterol.

And it's really not that. It's really the gluten and the processed foods. You know, it's the leaky gut that's causing that increased cholesterol. Right.

Yeah. And I, you know, it's funny, I see a lot of in older women or like mid 40s, 50s, perimenopausal menopausal women, they can't even tolerate gluten anymore.

They'll start having diuretics. I myself can't tolerate gluten anymore. I plan on going to Italy and trying it out. Well, you can go to Europe and you can eat some bread and you'll be all right.

But let me tell you, I have a plan on it. But I find that it's so funny that it just I think one of the things that we've talked about before with our patients, especially is gluten's also at its, yes, it's completely genetically modified and we process it in a horrible way, but it's also added to everything in our foods.

So if you are eating a standard American diet or even half, even if you're eating half whole foods and some of the standard stuff, you're getting so much gluten that your body just can't keep up with that much gluten anyways because they just add it in.

It's a cheap filler and it adds protein to things and so they like to have that on there because everybody likes protein. Well, it's not a great protein.

Do you find that with your patients as well, that in especially like mid 40s, early 50s, that it's even harder for us to kind of digest? Yeah. I mean, I used to eat peanut butter sandwiches all the time.

That's what I grew up on. Now, like hesitate to even have a few pretzels because I just, my gut can't tolerate it. And so, and I think that's a source of frustration for a lot of women.

They're like, I don't understand. I'm eating the same things I did before, but yet my body seems to be processing it differently. Yeah, I definitely found that for myself going through premenopause.

I grew up on, you know, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches or like baloney sandwiches or whatever. I have never had an issue with gluten.

Diet Strategies for Gut and Hormone Support

And then what like last year, we did a stool sample test for me and just going through things because I was starting to have, you know, the gas, the bloating, the diarrhea, constipation, weird picture.

And I've always been a great pooper. until this point, and my anti-glyadenin was skyrocketed. And I'm like, what? I've never had a problem with gluten.

Why is it skyrocketed? Well, I also like to tell people that even if you're eating gluten that's imported from Europe,

so it's not genetically modified, it's still a really large molecule.

Like, it doesn't get broken down into a smaller molecule. So no matter what gluten you're eating, it causes a little bit of leaky gut every time you eat it.

So if you're eating it all the time, even if you tolerate it well, there's a limit to how much you can eat because it's affecting those gap junctions in your gut and causing a little bit of leaky gut just to get that large molecule into the bloodstream and absorb.

Yeah. So really, anyone with an autoimmune disorder, arthritis, hypothyroidism, they need to be off gluten. Otherwise, it's like trying to put out a fire while you're adding gas to that flame at the same time.

It just needs to stop. Have you found it hard to get people to stop gluten though? We get pushed back all the time. Yeah, total pushback all the time.

What's really funny is when we do these food allergy and sensitivity tests on patients and it's looking at four different variables for a list of 88 different foods and we get this back and it's so interesting, but it starts off as sort of a negotiation the patient's like, but I eat this all the time or I love this food and I don't understand, and I'm like, look, I'm not trying to argue, I'm just telling you, this is what is going up.

This is what's making your body angry right now. Exactly. Yeah. And you know, some people might still have a craving for foods that is causing a spike in their cortisol because it's giving them a little energy rush.

Yeah, I didn't think about that. I also tell people that when it comes to intolerances, it's dose dependent. To get some buy-in and get people started, I usually always tell them, shoot for 90% compliance.

You're going to have a birthday and you're going to probably want to eat what you want to eat, or you're going to go on vacation and you're not going to have access to the food you normally eat.

But if you're eating like 90% of the time avoiding your intolerances and the other 10% of the time is like broken apart, so it's not like for one straight month I eat horribly and the rest of the month I eat fine.

But if it's like broken out and sparse throughout the entire year, then hopefully your gut is healed enough and not leaky and not inflamed, so that where those little bit of, you know, intolerances don't cause a major reaction and they are tolerated well.

So that's sometimes how I have to have the discussion to just get started. Yeah. Yeah. That's great. Speaking of, what are some practical steps that women or men can take to improve their gut health and in turn their hormone health?

Okay, well, first of all, balance your blood sugar. Start the day with some protein and healthy fats instead of a high carb breakfast. So that's definitely important.

And I think it's really interesting too, you can get these continuous glucose monitors. There's one that we use that's made by Lingo, I think, and it's only like 50 bucks to do this.

And it'll stay on the back of your arm for two weeks. And then it connects to an app on your phone and you can see what it is, what your blood sugar is doing throughout the day.

And I found it fascinating to see what was spiking my blood sugar. What was not the order in which I eat my food made a big difference as to the blood sugar.

So, so that's really interesting. Yeah. I think people forget that, that eating, eating your protein and your fats first really do help to slow down the sugars.

Yes. Yes. Or eating some green leafy vegetables first. You know, it's kind of like if your stomach's like the kitchen sink and you put the vegetables and the leafiness first and then the meat and then the carbs.

It's going to slow down the carbs getting through the system. So you're not going to spike your blood sugar. I love that analogy. Eating bread first is kind of the worst thing you can do because you're hungry, you eat that bread and it goes straight through and it is pure sugar and it just spikes your blood sugar way up.

Let's avoid that. Other things, supporting liver detoxification, so eating cruciferous vegetables. drinking dandelion tea and staying hydrated is really important.

And then incorporating gut-healing foods like bone broth, fermented foods, prebiotic fibers, and then reducing stress. That's a big one because I feel like a lot of people, myself included, say, oh yes, I need to reduce stress.

Gluten, Sensitivities, and Leaky Gut

I need to do X, Y, and Z. But when it comes down to it, it's like, you know, you kind of run out of time or energy. But prioritizing things like deep breathing, mindfulness, sauna therapy, that's one of the things that we have in our office is an infrared sauna because sweating is a great way to get out toxins.

Yes. I love sauna. Literally just this morning I want a sauna so bad. There you go. And then optimizing sleep. People can lose weight just by getting more sleep.

So poor sleep really affects gut bacteria and cortisol regulation. And then consider doing some gut testing, the comprehensive stool testing that we were talking about earlier.

That can really identify the bacterial imbalances, possible parasites, yeast overgrowth. All these things can impact hormones. Yes, for sure. So what happens when you get people with certain conditions like SIBO or leaky gut in your office and what are the effects on hormone metabolism that you're seeing with those patterns?

Yeah, so SIBO is small intestinal bacterial overgrowth and it's basically where the bacteria in your large intestine have migrated up into the small intestine.

And that can cause a lot of gas, bloating. And typically when you have SIBO, if you take a probiotic or a fiber, things that are supposed to be good for our gut, it can often make that condition worse.

So if you start having even more gas, more bloating when you're taking something healthy like a probiotic or a fiber, you might want to go and get that checked out for SIBO.

It can interfere with nutrient absorption, estrogen metabolism, and thyroid function. It's leading to all these problems. Leaky gut, when the lining is compromised, toxins and undigested food particles then leak into the bloodstream like we talked about before.

And this triggers immune responses. So as well as increasing cortisol production and further throwing hormones out of balance. But leaky gut really is the start of a lot of autoimmune disorders because it's Stuff is leaking out into the bloodstream and the body starts identifying these foreign particles to go and attack them and get rid of them, but sometimes it gets confused and then it starts attacking our own cells.

And so that's where the autoimmune kind of starts. Right. Yeah, we have that discussion a lot with our patients and I kind of paint a picture of like, okay, leaky gut is like this tunnel and it's got a lot of little caverns that you can go off into and if the whole piece of something that you would normally eat seeks through and goes into there, you've got your immune system coming to attack it and kill it because it thinks it's a foreign object, but then sometimes it will attack your body because When it doesn't know what it's attacking at them, it's just kind of it's under attack.

It's going to kind of shoot anything that it can get to, you know, so trying to get all of those down and trying to explain it to people is has has been hard.

But you know, I think they get it eventually. that leaky gut is a huge problem and I think now that it's more mainstream to talk about gut health now finally, they're finally getting like the gut-brain access and like all of these things finally, you know, they're starting to listen a lot better and make the changes to get rid of the leaky gut because I think that's one of the biggest problems and we see that all the time with autoimmunity.

Yeah. Well, and also I see it with all kinds of skin conditions. Like if you have a weak gut, it's going to affect your skin. I like to tell people that we're kind of like a donut.

So your skin is going to be a direct reflection of your gut because it is how we evolved in the womb to have that same cellular heritage for our skin and our gut.

So if your gut's inflamed, you're going to have skin issues. If your gut's inflamed, you're going to have predisposed towards autoimmune disease, predisposed towards all kinds of conditions, including the hormonal disreputation that we've been talking about.

Yeah. And like those thyroid antibodies that you see early on, you'll see the thyroid antibodies increase and the thyroid antibodies are not necessarily causing symptoms, but it is an early sign of you're on that autoimmune spectrum.

Practical Steps for Healing the Gut

There's definitely leaky gut going on if you have increased thyroglobulin antibodies or TPO antibodies, so something to watch for. Sometimes we often see an increased ANA and if you fix the gut, all of a sudden ANA goes away.

It's like they weren't getting diagnosed with any autoimmune yet, but that early on increase in ANA was because of a leaky gut. Yeah, we see that a lot.

Yeah, yeah. Okay. So with that being said, trying to get our guts nice and healthy, what role does probiotics, prebiotics and supplements play in improving the gut hormone connection?

Yeah, so we want to help restore beneficial bacteria, particularly lactobacillus species, which often supports estrogen metabolism using prebiotics, which feed the good bacteria and improve gut function.

These can be found in onions, garlic, asparagus, just for some food sources. And then supplements based on individual needs. You can use something like DIMM, which helps process your estrogen down a safe pathway.

Calcium deglucarate can help detox estrogen. L-glutamine is really good for gut repair. Magnesium can help regulate cortisol and estrogen balance. And adaptogens like ashwagandha or rhodiola for adrenal support.

And things like immunoglobulins. Immunoglobulins are something that is present in breast milk or the pre-milk really. And it basically steals up a leaky gut, because most babies are born with a leaky gut.

And the immunoglobulins serve to just kind of seal that up and tell the immune system, hey, it's okay. This food is not dangerous. So there's a variety of different brands that you can get.

Some of the immunoglobulins are serum derived, so there's no dairy in them. But those are important too. Can you share a success story or like a case study where addressing the gut health dramatically improved her hormonal imbalance or like overall well-being?

Yeah, absolutely. So I had a 38-year-old female patient who came to me with severe PMS, painful periods, bloating, and brain fog. And she'd been diagnosed with estrogen dominance and adrenal fatigue.

So, we did stool testing, which revealed dysbiosis and leaky gut. She also had poor estrogen clearance due to a sluggish estrobolone. Okay. Yeah, her treatment plan included a gut healing protocol, so removing inflammatory

foods, using probiotics, immunoglobulins, and adding some glutamine for gut repair.

Liver detox support, so, cuciferous vegetables. dim and calcium deglucurate, and then adrenal support, which was adaptogenic herbs, and then some stress management strategies on top of that.

SIBO, Leaky Gut, and Autoimmunity

And so within three months, her periods became regular and pain-free, her loading resolved, and her energy significantly improved. And so this was a pretty classic example of how gut health is really the foundation of hormonal balance.

Yeah, that's really great. How is she doing now? She continues to do great as she follows these principles of just, you know, healthier eating, more movement, more stress reduction kind of practices in her daily routine.

Good, good. Speaking of stress reduction, what kind of stress reduction do you do for yourself? So I like, I do a little bit of meditation using an app called Insight Timer.

There's another one called Slow Dive, which I'll use periodically. And then we also have in my office a system called Brain Tap, which is really cool.

It's like a headset with a visor and it connects you to a guided meditation. But in the background, there's these what they call binaural beats. So they're kind of offset beats.

And then on the visor are flashing lights. So you have your eyes closed, but they're flashing on top of that. And that causes some brain entrainment of specific waves in the brain that can help bring you into that relaxation mode.

So that's kind of a nice system for like, if you're getting frustrated with, I don't know if I'm meditating right. I don't know if I have the patience for meditating.

The brain tap just kind of does it for you. Yeah. You know, you're getting what you need just by doing a brain session. So that's awesome. Yeah, I really like that.

But aside from that, I mean, sometimes just going outside and sitting in the grass or, you know, getting out in nature, doing some hikes, like that's extremely beneficial.

Yeah, that's my preferred too, but we live in the Northwest, so it only happens a few months a year. Yes, yeah, we were restricted here in Houston by the opposite problem of sometimes it's just too darn hot to get outside.

Probiotics, Supplements, and a Patient Success Story

We'll go out during the summer and then you can go out and winter for us. Yeah, that's exactly it. Well, it was really great to have you on our show today.

Where can people find you or get more information on you? Yeah, so my website is drjuliaward.com and they can find out all kinds of information about me there.

Okay. Yeah. Thank you so much for having me. I've really enjoyed it. Oh, we really enjoyed it too. Thank you so much for being here and thank you for joining us today on Hormone Heroines.

We hope to see you next week. Bye. Thanks for watching Hormone Heroines. If this episode spoke to you, follow the show and share it with someone who also needs to hear it.

And write a review. That helps more people find their way back to balance. See you next week.