Painful Periods Aren't Normal (And What You Can Do to Stop the Pain) with Dr. Cecilia Cruz Transcript

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<Untitled Chapter 1>

Why period pain is over-normalized

Period pain had been so over normalized Period pain had been so over normalized in our society, and it doesn't help that in our society, and it doesn't help that if you go to your doctor, they really if you go to your doctor, they really just don't have any solutions for you just don't have any solutions for you outside of maybe birth control.

outside of maybe birth control. That's why today we're talking all about That's why today we're talking all about period pain. What is normal, what isn't period pain. What is normal, what isn't normal, and what can you do about it?

normal, and what can you do about it? Cuz there are actually a lot of things Cuz there are actually a lot of things that you can do to get to the root cause that you can do to get to the root cause of period pain and heal it. And I am so of period pain and heal it. And I am so honored to be joined by our new honored to be joined by our new associate physician, Dr. Cecilia Cruz, associate physician, Dr. Cecilia Cruz, um who has a personal experience with um who has a personal experience with endometriosis. She personally healed her endometriosis. She personally healed her own period pain and other endometriosis own period pain and other endometriosis symptoms, and is now helping other women symptoms, and is now helping other women do the same through a functional do the same through a functional medicine and preventative lens. Um she's medicine and preventative lens. Um she's such an incredible asset. You know, I'll such an incredible asset. You know, I'll mention it at the end of the episode as mention it at the end of the episode as well, but if you listen to this and you well, but if you listen to this and you want more help, I highly recommend want more help, I highly recommend booking a clarity call with Dr. Cruz, booking a clarity call with Dr. Cruz, where you can meet her, talk about your where you can meet her, talk about your own symptoms, and see what it would look own symptoms, and see what it would look like to work with her uh because again, like to work with her uh because again, she's truly an incredible doctor she's truly an incredible doctor and such an incredible asset to anyone and such an incredible asset to anyone who needs her. All right, enjoy the who needs her. All right, enjoy the episode. Dr. Cruz, thank you so much for episode. Dr. Cruz, thank you so much for being with me today.

being with me today. >> Thank you for having me. I'm excited to >> Thank you for having me. I'm excited to be here. be here.

Dr. Cruz's background in functional and preventive medicine

>> Yeah. So, before we jump in, I'd love to >> Yeah. So, before we jump in, I'd love to have the listener learn a little bit have the listener learn a little bit more about you and your background. If more about you and your background. If you can share that with us.

you can share that with us. >> Yeah, absolutely. >> Yeah, absolutely. So, my background is in uh functional So, my background is in uh functional medicine. I did my intern year in medicine. I did my intern year in general surgery, um general surgery, um and then transitioned from there to and then transitioned from there to preventative medicine. I did um my preventative medicine. I did um my residency in preventative medicine at residency in preventative medicine at UCSD. Um UCSD. Um and then got advanced functional and then got advanced functional medicine training, and that's really my medicine training, and that's really my passion and my main focus of practice passion and my main focus of practice now.

now. now. >> Awesome. What inspired you to go into >> Awesome. What inspired you to go into preventative medicine and functional preventative medicine and functional medicine?

medicine? medicine?

Dr. Cruz's personal journey with endometriosis

>> Yeah, that's a great question. So, you >> Yeah, that's a great question. So, you know, it's it's such an effective way to know, it's it's such an effective way to treat patients, treat patients, but also it was a very personal story.

but also it was a very personal story. So, So, So, um um um I was diagnosed with endometriosis I was diagnosed with endometriosis in residency and at the time, in residency and at the time, you know, I had access to all the best you know, I had access to all the best knowledge, all a lot of great OB/GYNs, knowledge, all a lot of great OB/GYNs, and and and I wasn't really getting answers.

I wasn't really getting answers. Everyone was telling me Everyone was telling me there was nothing that I could do about there was nothing that I could do about it, that we just had to monitor it, um it, that we just had to monitor it, um and that it could it would just get and that it could it would just get worse and then maybe at some point I worse and then maybe at some point I would have surgery because, you know, would have surgery because, you know, there was really no intervention we there was really no intervention we could do before that.

could do before that. And then I came across functional And then I came across functional medicine and I realized there was so medicine and I realized there was so much that we could do before much that we could do before um you get to surgery or before it um you get to surgery or before it advances.

advances. advances. Um so, you know, really finding the root Um so, you know, really finding the root cause of disease, of symptoms now has cause of disease, of symptoms now has become a main focus and passion.

become a main focus and passion. >> Yeah. >> Yeah. >> Yeah.

What is actually normal during a menstrual cycle

>> Amazing. Well, that's one of the things >> Amazing. Well, that's one of the things that, you know, perfect segue into what that, you know, perfect segue into what we're talking about today. We really we're talking about today. We really wanted to talk about period pain. One of wanted to talk about period pain. One of the things we were talking about before the things we were talking about before was, you know, how over normalized was, you know, how over normalized period pain really is. And I was period pain really is. And I was curious, like, what's your take on that?

curious, like, what's your take on that? Why do you think maybe it's been so kind Why do you think maybe it's been so kind of glossed over in conventional medicine of glossed over in conventional medicine and over normalized?

and over normalized? >> Yeah, you know, I think that it's >> Yeah, you know, I think that it's because because because the reality is that the reality is that doctors are not getting a training on doctors are not getting a training on how to treat and how to treat and deal with painful periods, right? We deal with painful periods, right? We don't really don't really we understand the symptoms, we we understand the symptoms, we understand maybe the pathology, but we understand maybe the pathology, but we don't really get trained on how to treat don't really get trained on how to treat it. You know, I think once we realize it. You know, I think once we realize that it's that it's a woman's having painful periods, our a woman's having painful periods, our next resort is going to be an oral next resort is going to be an oral contraceptive pill to help control contraceptive pill to help control manage the symptoms.

manage the symptoms. Um and so I think that really that plays Um and so I think that really that plays a huge role. We're just not getting the a huge role. We're just not getting the training, unfortunately.

training, unfortunately. Um and so most doctors just normalize it Um and so most doctors just normalize it and and say, "Well, it's it's normal. and and say, "Well, it's it's normal.

Here's the pill to help you feel Here's the pill to help you feel better." And you move on, right? better." And you move on, right? You know, at most you might get an You know, at most you might get an ultrasound, some very basic hormone ultrasound, some very basic hormone labs, and if that's normal, that's where labs, and if that's normal, that's where everything stops. Um but again, there's everything stops. Um but again, there's really so much that can be done um and really so much that can be done um and and dig into to really figure out why and dig into to really figure out why you're having painful periods.

you're having painful periods. >> Yeah. Yeah, I you know, I completely agree. Yeah, I you know, I completely agree. And I always like to remind people cuz I And I always like to remind people cuz I feel like it's such a frustrating feel like it's such a frustrating experience for a woman to go to her experience for a woman to go to her doctor and really just be doctor and really just be you know, feel sort of written off, even you know, feel sort of written off, even if it's not intentional. They're like, if it's not intentional. They're like, "Well, there's nothing we can do. Just "Well, there's nothing we can do. Just go on birth control." go on birth control." Um I always like to remind people that Um I always like to remind people that the doctor cares, at least I truly the doctor cares, at least I truly believe that. And that our you know, believe that. And that our you know, doctors want to help people, but like doctors want to help people, but like you said, they just don't have the tools you said, they just don't have the tools to necessarily do that.

to necessarily do that. And especially when we're, you know, And especially when we're, you know, smart people, we don't want to feel smart people, we don't want to feel We're like, "Well, there's nothing you We're like, "Well, there's nothing you can do." rather than saying the truth, can do." rather than saying the truth, which is, "I don't know. I don't know which is, "I don't know. I don't know anything else that could help." Um with anything else that could help." Um with that, I mean, let me let let's set the that, I mean, let me let let's set the record straight right off the bat. What record straight right off the bat. What is actually normal then when it comes to is actually normal then when it comes to a woman's experience during her a woman's experience during her menstrual cycle, during her period?

menstrual cycle, during her period? Yeah, so painful periods are definitely Yeah, so painful periods are definitely not normal. You know, not normal. You know, I just I think that's so important for I just I think that's so important for women to understand that is your body women to understand that is your body giving you signals that something is off giving you signals that something is off or wrong and that you need to address.

or wrong and that you need to address. Um Um Um and so normal really perhaps is having and so normal really perhaps is having um um um some mild cramping before your like a some mild cramping before your like a couple days before your period or the couple days before your period or the day of even.

day of even. Um Um Um normal would be not even feeling any normal would be not even feeling any cramping and just having your period cramping and just having your period start.

start. start. Um maybe a little bit some small changes Um maybe a little bit some small changes and like energy or like you might and like energy or like you might notice, you know, but very mild. Um it notice, you know, but very mild. Um it shouldn't be taking you out of work, it shouldn't be taking you out of work, it shouldn't be taking you out of school, shouldn't be taking you out of school, you shouldn't if you're planning exams you shouldn't if you're planning exams or um or um your your work around your period, your your work around your period, that's a huge red flag.

that's a huge red flag. Um and so really, you know, Um and so really, you know, normal is just normal is just you have your normal life and then you have your normal life and then around, you know, day 28 to 32 you're around, you know, day 28 to 32 you're going to have your period start and it going to have your period start and it you know, it shouldn't be painful, it you know, it shouldn't be painful, it shouldn't be you shouldn't be really shouldn't be you shouldn't be really tired, you shouldn't tired, you shouldn't have difficulty concentrating, all those have difficulty concentrating, all those things are not normal.

things are not normal. >> Yeah. Okay, great. And I love that you >> Yeah. Okay, great. And I love that you highlight that red flag of if it's highlight that red flag of if it's taking you out of your daily life. It's taking you out of your daily

life. It's like that's a really key factor to say, like that's a really key factor to say, okay, is this how much is this really okay, is this how much is this really affecting me? I feel like sometimes we affecting me? I feel like sometimes we can get used to a certain symptom. I'm can get used to a certain symptom. I'm like, that's just how my body is maybe.

like, that's just how my body is maybe. But you know, if you are having to plan But you know, if you are having to plan around that, that's a really big sign around that, that's a really big sign maybe that that something's something maybe that that something's something more is going on.

more is going on.

Red flags to watch out for

And with that too, are there any other And with that too, are there any other kind of like red flags to be watching kind of like red flags to be watching out for or signs that are abnormal out for or signs that are abnormal during Swift's period?

during Swift's period? >> Yeah, absolutely. And I think it just to >> Yeah, absolutely. And I think it just to touch on what you just mentioned really touch on what you just mentioned really quickly about that's you feel like quickly about that's you feel like that's just how your body is, right? You that's just how your body is, right? You you grow you grow up this way often you grow you grow up this way often times period pain starts times period pain starts at a young age or early 20s or maybe at a young age or early 20s or maybe since you started getting your periods.

since you started getting your periods. Um Um Um and then our the women probably around and then our the women probably around you like how your mom, your sisters, you like how your mom, your sisters, right? They're probably going to right? They're probably going to normalize that as well. So everyone just normalize that as well. So everyone just thinks this is probably the norm, right?

thinks this is probably the norm, right? >> Mhm. >> Mhm. >> Mhm. >> But yeah, it's it's really important to >> But yeah, it's it's really important to understand that. It's It's your body understand that. It's It's your body again trying to give you signals, right?

again trying to give you signals, right? That let's address something here. It That let's address something here. It might be inflammation. Um might be inflammation. Um a variety of thing hormone imbalances, a variety of thing hormone imbalances, but but but Other red flags to look out for so Other red flags to look out for so really if you're having really if you're having blo- like bloating. So a lot of uh women blo- like bloating. So a lot of uh women get a lot of bloating either throughout get a lot of bloating either throughout their cycle or at that time of the their cycle or at that time of the month. That's a huge red flag. Um pain month. That's a huge red flag. Um pain with intercourse would be another one or with intercourse would be another one or if you're maybe spotting mid-cycle.

if you're maybe spotting mid-cycle. >> Mhm. >> Mhm. >> Mhm. >> Those would be maybe some of the more >> Those would be maybe some of the more common ones. Some people common ones. Some people are if you're having more severe are if you're having more severe symptoms some people might have vomiting symptoms some people might have vomiting or be bedridden, you know, during that or be bedridden, you know, during that time of the month. So obviously that time of the month. So obviously that would be a huge red flag as well, but would be a huge red flag as well, but yeah, so those are some things other yeah, so those are some things other things to look out for.

things to look out for. >> Yeah, that's great. Yeah, and I feel >> Yeah, that's great. Yeah, and I feel like you know, even again, one of the like you know, even again, one of the things that I think of in my mind when I things that I think of in my mind when I think of like the normalization of think of like the normalization of period pain is I I have this commercial period pain is I I have this commercial just like seared into my memory for some just like seared into my memory for some reason. I think it was for Pamprin. So reason. I think it was for Pamprin. So it was like it was like the you know, it was like it was like the you know, period pain medicine. And I remember period pain medicine. And I remember just being like, oh, this is what you just being like, oh, this is what you take when you

have you know, period take when you have you know, period cramps. And again, to an extent like you cramps. And again, to an extent like you said, some cramping can be totally said, some cramping can be totally normal. It can be a little normal. It can be a little uncomfortable.

uncomfortable. uncomfortable. But even just normalizing having to take But even just normalizing having to take medication for your period every month, medication for your period every month, like things like that. It just I feel like things like that. It just I feel like that just over normalizes it again.

like that just over normalizes it again. And so it's great to say, you know, And so it's great to say, you know, maybe that isn't totally normal. Maybe maybe that isn't totally normal. Maybe you shouldn't have to rely on that. Or you shouldn't have to rely on that. Or some of the things you mentioned, you some of the things you mentioned, you know, I think that's great, too.

know, I think that's great, too. Highlighting even like the spotting in Highlighting even like the spotting in between and things like that. between and things like that.

You know, I feel like it's so important You know, I feel like it's so important to talk about because to talk about because we don't talk about these things. And we don't talk about these things. And then like you mentioned earlier, with then like you mentioned earlier, with you know, your mom and your sister, you know, your mom and your sister, maybe they're having the same pain maybe they're having the same pain period pain. And they're like, well, period pain. And they're like, well, that's what I get. I don't know. No one that's what I get. I don't know. No one knows really what's normal or not if knows really what's normal or not if we're not talking about it. Um so that's we're not talking about it. Um so that's really great to highlight what's normal, really great to highlight what's normal, what's not so normal, what to watch out what's not so normal, what to watch out for.

for. for. >> And women are great at dealing with >> And women are great at dealing with pain. And I think that has become pain. And I think that has become part of the problem, right? That we just part of the problem, right? That we just we're so good at it that we go we go we're so good at it that we go we go through our lives meet doing our meeting through our lives meet doing our meeting our responsibilities, doing meeting our our responsibilities, doing meeting our goals, dealing with very painful periods goals, dealing with very painful periods because because because we're we're we're you know, we we were raised that way. We you know, we we were raised that way. We were biologically able to tolerate high were biologically able to tolerate high levels of pain.

levels of pain. Um so that's another another big factor, Um so that's another another big factor, I think. I think.

How stress and lifestyle impact period pain

>> Yeah, I completely agree with you. And >> Yeah, I completely agree with you. And and even beyond just pain, just and even beyond just pain, just discomfort of annoying symptoms, discomfort of annoying symptoms, it really amazes me how long some women it really amazes me how long some women can go with really terrible symptoms and can go with really terrible symptoms and just, you know, push through and get just, you know, push through and get through like continue to have a smile on through like continue to have a smile on their face. I mean, women are so strong.

their face. I mean, women are so strong. But yeah, a good reminder of, you know, But yeah, a good reminder of, you know, you don't have to be dealing with this.

you don't have to be dealing with this. Yes, you are strong and you can deal Yes, you are strong and you can deal with it, but you could actually just with it, but you could actually just have very easeful menstrual cycles, have very easeful menstrual cycles, also.

also. also. >> Yeah. Yeah, and I actually >> Yeah. Yeah, and I actually for me, you know, I went through some of for me, you know, I went through some of the worst period pain that I had was the worst period pain that I had was during medical school and residency during medical school and residency because my stress levels were probably because my stress levels were probably through the roof.

through the roof. Um wasn't sleeping that great. All these Um wasn't sleeping that great. All these lifestyle factors that were really lifestyle factors that were really impacting impacting impacting um um um my cycle.

my cycle. And you know, I would be having pain And you know, I would be having pain eight eight eight out of 10 sometimes and out of 10 sometimes and yeah, I'd show up for rotations and yeah, I'd show up for rotations and take care of other patients. So I didn't take care of other patients. So I didn't It's really it it made me it has made me It's really it it made me it has made me realize um now being on the other side realize um now being on the other side where where where you know, I've been able to heal my body you know, I've been able to heal my body with functional medicine and really with functional medicine and really finding the root cause and addressing it finding the root cause and addressing it and I think and I think I I it has made me realize how much we I I it has made me realize how much we can tolerate just based on my own can tolerate just based on my own experience too, right? And and how you experience too, right? And and how you just show up and and deal with it and just show up and and deal with it and maybe you're taking a lot of ibuprofen maybe you're taking a lot of ibuprofen um um um and and then you just go go about it.

and and then you just go go about it. >> Yeah. >> Yeah. >> Yeah. Yeah, well, so I mean, as horrible as it Yeah, well, so I mean, as horrible as it is that you've had to have that is that you've had to have that experience also, what an amazing gift experience also, what an amazing gift that you can then relate to your that you can then relate to your patients going through it also and say, patients going through it also and say, "Look, I've been there. I know." "Look, I've been there. I know." But then you can also be that proof on But then you can also be that proof on the other side to say, "Okay, it can the other side to say, "Okay, it can absolutely change." absolutely change." With that I mean, you know, that will be With that I mean, you know, that will be the next place we go, but to get into the next place we go, but to get into sort of the the why behind it. Like why sort of the the why behind it. Like why are someone having period pain? We are someone having period pain?

Root causes of period pain

We already mentioned maybe endometriosis already mentioned maybe endometriosis being a common cause. Um what are what being a common cause. Um what are what are some of the like root causes behind are some of the like root causes behind period pain?

period pain? >> Yeah, yeah, that's important to know. I >> Yeah, yeah, that's important to know. I you know, it's there's so many I mean, you know, it's there's so many I mean, women's health is very complex.

women's health is very complex. It's there's so many variables that It's there's so many variables that could be could be uh a reason, right? A triggering cause.

uh a reason, right? A triggering cause. Um nowadays often times it's probably Um nowadays often times it's probably something related to inflammation. So something related to inflammation. So increased inflammation in your body.

increased inflammation in your body. Um maybe hormone imbalances. Um maybe hormone imbalances. Uh we know now through research that Uh we know now through research that the gut, so gut health really impacts um the gut, so gut health really impacts um pelvic inflammation, which then can pelvic inflammation, which then can lead, you know, if you're you're you're lead, you know, if you're you're you're having inflammation in your pelvis, having inflammation in your pelvis, you're going to likely have painful you're going to likely have painful periods, and it can lead to a variety of periods, and it can lead to a variety of pathology.

pathology. pathology. Um so it could be something like Um so it could be something like dysbiosis or leaky gut. dysbiosis or leaky gut. Um Um Um those are probably what some of the more those are probably what some of the more overlooked causes. Um and then of overlooked causes. Um and then of course, um if you have things like um course, um if you have things like um endometriosis, which unfortunately is endometriosis, which unfortunately is actually like a very actually like a very under-diagnosed condition.

under-diagnosed condition. Um so it can often be overlooked as Um so it can often be overlooked as well. well.

well. Um but there's increasing awareness Um but there's increasing awareness around it, thankfully.

around it, thankfully. Um that's another huge driver, or um Um that's another huge driver, or um fibroids, for example, can be another fibroids, for example, can be another driver. So driver. So many reasons um many reasons um that you can have be having painful that you can have be having painful periods, unfortunately.

periods, unfortunately. >> Mhm. >> Mhm. >> Mhm. Yeah, it's it's such a shame to me. I Yeah, it's it's such a shame to me. I mean, it's it it it just is what it is, mean, it's it it it just is what it is, but it's so hard for women with but it's so hard for women with endometriosis to get that diagnosis, and endometriosis to get that diagnosis, and for so long for so long often times they have to be struggling often times they have to be struggling with it before they find the answer. Um with it before they find the answer. Um yeah, and it's yeah, and it's it's terrible. Luckily, I feel like it's terrible. Luckily, I feel like there's there's there's better understanding about it. There better understanding about it. There more practitioners who understand it and more practitioners who understand it and are able to, you know, get to the bottom are able to, you know, get to the bottom of it faster.

of it faster. But, you know, I I have a lot of But, you know, I I have a lot of patients, too, where they have their patients, too, where they have their symptoms are just kind of sneaky, too.

symptoms are just kind of sneaky, too. It's like, "Well, it's not, you know, It's like, "Well, it's not, you know, full blatant, you know, maybe really bad full blatant, you know, maybe really bad periods, periods, periods, but some fatigue, some digestive stuff but some fatigue, some digestive stuff that isn't clearing up otherwise, you that isn't clearing up otherwise, you know, it can be so tricky.

know, it can be so tricky. >> Yeah. >> Yeah. >> Yeah. >> Exactly. >> Exactly. >> Exactly.

Can period pain actually be eliminated?

>> Um >> Um >> Um >> From there, you know, so you had >> From there, you know, so you had mentioned your experience, but can mentioned your experience, but can period pain be eliminated? Is that period pain be eliminated? Is that actually possible for women who are actually possible for women who are struggling with it?

struggling with it? >> Yeah, absolutely. And that's the great >> Yeah, absolutely. And that's the great news and why I mean, I am so passionate news and why I mean, I am so passionate about this topic and so happy to be here about this topic and so happy to be here talking about it.

talking about it. Um Um Um before I answer that question, though, I before I answer that question, though, I do want to go back really quick. Um do want to go back really quick. Um because it can be sneaky sometimes going because it can be sneaky sometimes going back to what you mentioned.

back to what you mentioned. You know, I've had women tell me that You know, I've had women tell me that they're having pain with bowel they're having pain with bowel movements, for example, or they're movements, for example, or they're having to like, you know, massage their having to like, you know, massage their abdomen in only in order to have a full abdomen in only in order to have a full bowel movement. Those are red flags, bowel movement. Those are red flags, too. You could be having adhesions too. You could be having adhesions secondary to endometriosis, for example.

secondary to endometriosis, for example. So, um other things, you know, another So, um other things, you know, another big red flag to look out for that gets big red flag to look out for that gets gets overlooked.

gets overlooked. >> Yeah. >> Yeah. >> Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Um Um Um and then to go back to the question and then to go back to the question about about about can it be fixed? And yes, absolutely.

can it be fixed? And yes, absolutely. So, you want to look First, we look at So, you want to look First, we look at what's really driving, right, the the what's really driving, right, the the period pain. So, we want to period pain. So, we want to make sure that if there's pathology make sure that if there's pathology going on, so if there's a disease

or a going on, so if there's a disease or a condition, right, like endometriosis or condition, right, like endometriosis or fibroids or fibroids or um a hormonal imbalance that we're um a hormonal imbalance that we're addressing that first.

addressing that first. But, diseases don't come in isolation, But, diseases don't come in isolation, and this is why I love functional and this is why I love functional medicine because it In order to treat, medicine because it In order to treat, for example, endometriosis, you don't for example, endometriosis, you don't just treat endometriosis alone. You have just treat endometriosis alone. You have to treat the whole body. So, you have to to treat the whole body.

Anti-inflammatory diet and omega-3s

So, you have to treat the inflammatory condition that's treat the inflammatory condition that's maybe driving the endometriosis or the maybe driving the endometriosis or the hormonal imbalance. Um you have to hormonal imbalance. Um you have to address lifestyle um you know, things address lifestyle um you know, things like like like stress.

stress. stress. That is That is such a huge driver of period pain and such a huge driver of period pain and um um um you know, conditions worsening even.

you know, conditions worsening even. So, we would make sure to address So, we would make sure to address uh lifestyle factors, sleep, stress, um uh lifestyle factors, sleep, stress, um one of the lowest hanging fruit that you one of the lowest hanging fruit that you can really reach for is an can really reach for is an anti-inflammatory diet.

anti-inflammatory diet. If you If you really try to increase your omega-3 really try to increase your omega-3 intake compared to your omega-6s, we you intake compared to your omega-6s, we you know, that goes a long way in that know, that goes a long way in that inflammatory inflammatory inflammatory cascade and um really what that means is cascade and um really what that means is having a predominantly plant-based diet having a predominantly plant-based diet that's really rich in that's really rich in color and fiber.

color and fiber. Um so, when I I like to say that when Um so, when I I like to say that when you look down at your plate, you should you look down at your plate, you should be seeing three to four colors. If it's be seeing three to four colors. If it's all one color, like you're missing all one color, like you're missing something.

something. something. Um and that's how you know you're Um and that's how you know you're getting all your nutrients and getting all your nutrients and antioxidants.

antioxidants. antioxidants. Other things um and you know, a very Other things um and you know, a very easy, I think also, way to think of an easy, I think also, way to think of an anti-inflammatory diet is a anti-inflammatory diet is a Mediterranean diet. It's very Mediterranean diet. It's very accessible, very diver- diverse, it's accessible, very diver- diverse, it's not very restrictive. And it's one of not very restrictive. And it's one of the more researched diets that we know the more researched diets that we know is anti-inflammatory.

is anti-inflammatory. Um you're getting a lot of colors and a Um you're getting a lot of colors and a lot of diversity in your food through lot of diversity in your food through that diet, so it's one of my favorite that diet, so it's one of my favorite ones.

ones. ones. Um and really minimizing animal Um and really minimizing animal products, right? Which tends to kind of products, right? Which tends to kind of go more towards that omega-6 and and um go more towards that omega-6 and and um you're you know, minimizing dairy, you're you know, minimizing dairy, minimizing meat intake.

minimizing meat intake. Um Um Um So, those would probably be some of the So, those would probably be some of the things that things that are are are easy, accessible, fast that you can do.

easy, accessible, fast that you can do. >> I love that. Yeah, the Mediterranean >> I love that. Yeah, the

Mediterranean diet is really the champion when it diet is really the champion when it comes to, you know, any way of eating.

comes to, you know, any way of eating. And I, you know, the word diet can And I, you know, the word diet can sometimes be triggering to people, but sometimes be triggering to people, but this is like a way of life, basically a this is like a way of life, basically a way of eating, sort of a template.

way of eating, sort of a template. Um and yeah, you mentioned so lots of Um and yeah, you mentioned so lots of plants, lots of color, as much variety plants, lots of color, as much variety as you can get. And you mentioned as you can get. And you mentioned omega-3s. Where are some great sources omega-3s. Where are some great sources for omega-3s if people aren't aware?

for omega-3s if people aren't aware? >> Yeah. >> Yeah. >> Yeah. So, I my personal favorite is salmon. If So, I my personal favorite is salmon. If it's locally it's locally I eat it two to three times a week. Um I eat it two to three times a week. Um that, you know, is really high in omega, that, you know, is really high in omega, low in heavy metals. So, low in heavy metals. So, or in or in um um um if if if you can always supplement, which I I do.

you can always supplement, which I I do. It's just easy to reach, you know, you It's just easy to reach, you know, you want to be getting around 2 g per day.

want to be getting around 2 g per day. Um so, that Um so, that with a supplement is really easy to with a supplement is really easy to reach. So, I I tend to supplement. Um reach. So, I I tend to supplement. Um Other sources of omegas would be things Other sources of omegas would be things like uh walnuts, uh chia. That's my like uh walnuts, uh chia. That's my bread. So, I swapped out my oatmeal for bread. So, I swapped out my oatmeal for a chia pudding in the morning for a chia pudding in the morning for breakfast. I know I'm getting more breakfast. I know I'm getting more fiber, I'm getting omegas.

fiber, I'm getting omegas. Um and about 7 g of protein, too, which Um and about 7 g of protein, too, which I love. So, um and it's low carb. So, I love. So, um and it's low carb. So, for women who are also struggling with for women who are also struggling with um like insulin resistance, it's it um like insulin resistance, it's it tends to be a great option.

tends to be a great option. >> Yeah, awesome. >> Yeah, awesome. Yeah, and, you know, Yeah, and, you know, I feel like you can get so complex with I feel like you can get so complex with like the mercury conversation in the like the mercury conversation in the fish, but fatty fish, low mercury, like fish, but fatty fish, low mercury, like look it up and, yeah, you can get some look it up and, yeah, you can get some resources about why that is.

resources about why that is. Um but, like you said, salmon's an easy Um but, like you said, salmon's an easy go-to go-to go-to uh for that to get more of the benefits, uh for that to get more of the benefits, less of the downside of those.

less of the downside of those. >> Well, amazing. You know, beyond that, >> Well, amazing.

When to work with a functional medicine provider

You know, beyond that, you know, I think diet is so you know, I think diet is so foundational to our health. And like you foundational to our health. And like you mentioned, inflammation is a big driver mentioned, inflammation is a big driver of period pain. So, absolutely, I feel of period pain. So, absolutely, I feel like that's a must.

like that's a must. What about beyond that? Like what other What about beyond that? Like what other factors? Are there things, you know, you factors? Are there things, you know, you mentioned maybe some supplementation, mentioned maybe some supplementation, managing stress?

managing stress? If if we're still struggling beyond If if we're still struggling beyond that, is there kind of a next step that that, is there kind of a next step that you suggest?

you suggest? >> Yeah, absolutely. So, if you've done all >> Yeah, absolutely. So, if you've done all these things and you're still these things and you're still not seeing improvement, it's really not seeing improvement, it's really important to partner with a good important to partner with a good functional medicine provider functional medicine provider that understands women's health because that understands women's health because just like with anything in life, there's just like with anything in life, there's different skill level, there's different different skill level, there's different expertise, right?

expertise, right? So, So, So, you want to be when you find when you want to be when you find when you go to your functional medicine you go to your functional medicine doctor, you want to doctor, you want to feel understood. You want to feel heard.

feel understood. You want to feel heard. Um Um Um because they'll basically they'll really because they'll basically they'll really help that'll really help you help that'll really help you pinpoint the root cause of what's pinpoint the root cause of what's happening. So, there's a lot of guessing happening. So, there's a lot of guessing that can happen when you're just basing that can happen when you're just basing it off of symptoms.

it off of symptoms.

Why testing matters more than symptom-chasing

And so, working with a functional And so, working with a functional medicine provider medicine provider um can help you dive into testing, which um can help you dive into testing, which then makes treatment a lot more then makes treatment a lot more targeted. Um I've heard a lot of women targeted. Um I've heard a lot of women say, for example, I I I take supplements say, for example, I I I take supplements based on the symptoms that I'm having.

based on the symptoms that I'm having. And the thing is that symptoms can be And the thing is that symptoms can be misleading, you know, they're they can misleading, you know, they're they can overlap. And so, overlap. And so, by doing testing, we know we can know by doing testing, we know we can know what's what's what's unbalanced or what we need to treat. Um unbalanced or what we need to treat. Um and then really create protocols that and then really create protocols that are very targeted and personalized to are very targeted and personalized to you. So, we're not using the same you. So, we're not using the same protocol that, you know, you see online protocol that, you know, you see online to treat you. Um because everyone's to treat you. Um because everyone's different, right? So, that's the beauty different, right? So, that's the beauty also of functional medicine. It's very also of functional medicine. It's very individualized and um and then individualized and um and then once we start with a protocol, it might once we start with a protocol, it might take take take tweaking it and changing it for you tweaking it and changing it for you until we find what really works.

until we find what really works. So, it is a lot of troubleshooting, but So, it is a lot of troubleshooting, but I think absolutely starting with testing I think absolutely starting with testing uh like I would start with gut health, uh like I would start with gut health, right? Like how maybe do a gut test, see right? Like how maybe do a gut test, see how that's going, um hormonal uh panel how that's going, um hormonal uh panel to see how your hormones are doing, to see how your hormones are doing, trying to really identify what's driving trying to really identify what's driving the period pain, and then coming up with the period pain, and then coming up with very targeted interventions to help it.

very targeted interventions to help it. >> Yeah, I feel like it's such a trap that >> Yeah, I feel like it's such a trap that mo- many of us go into of thinking, "Oh, mo- many of us go into of thinking, "Oh, I can just figure it out. I'm smart. I'm I can just figure it out. I'm smart. I'm educated. I'm going to get all this educated. I'm going to get all this information. I'm going to figure it information. I'm going to figure it out." You're absolutely right. Can be out." You're absolutely right. Can be such a trap to like go into each such a trap to like go into each symptom, like, "Okay, I'm going to get symptom, like, "Okay, I'm going to get get a supplement for this symptom. I'm get a supplement for this symptom. I'm going to get to get a supplement for going to get to get a supplement for this symptom." this symptom." And really we're missing this big And really we're missing this big picture of what's really going on picture of what's really going on underneath, and there could be actual underneath, and there could be actual healing that happens healing that happens so that you don't have the symptoms so that you don't have the

symptoms anymore rather than just trying to cover anymore rather than just trying to cover them up with, you know, a supplement.

them up with, you know, a supplement. So, I feel like that's so important to So, I feel like that's so important to do that testing and really understand do that testing and really understand what is, you know, because the same what is, you know, because the same symptoms can be different in two symptoms can be different in two different people, right? You know, different people, right? You know, different drivers, um like you different drivers, um like you mentioned. So, I I like that's so mentioned. So, I I like that's so important.

important. important.

The dangers of unsupervised supplementation

>> Yeah, and and women end up frustrated, >> Yeah, and and women end up frustrated, you know, it's you know, it's only to burn out if you're treating with only to burn out if you're treating with or you think you're treating with or you think you're treating with supplements and you're not getting supplements and you're not getting better, right? You're It's going to It better, right? You're It's going to It can lead to like supplement fatigue, can lead to like supplement fatigue, pill fatigue. And just like with pill fatigue. And just like with medications, medications, medications, supplements, you have to dose them supplements, you have to dose them correctly in order for them to be correctly in order for them to be effective, right? And there's So, effective, right? And there's So, there's a lot of, you know, I think there's a lot of, you know, I think sometimes because you can get them over sometimes because you can get them over the counter, you think, "Oh, I'll just the counter, you think, "Oh, I'll just pick it up and start taking it." But pick it up and start taking it." But dose matters, timing matters, dose matters, timing matters, um how you combine supplements matter.

um how you combine supplements matter. So, you know, it's I think you So, you know, it's I think you definitely need a someone with that definitely need a someone with that background to help you navigate such a background to help you navigate such a complex issue.

complex issue. >> Yeah, what a great point. Yeah, >> Yeah, what a great point. Yeah, supplements can also be dangerous. supplements can also be dangerous.

You know, not all supplements, but yeah, You know, not all supplements, but yeah, if you're not knowing how to dose them, if you're not knowing how to dose them, how to put them together, yeah, that how to put them together, yeah, that could be a big issue. Well, this has could be a big issue. Well, this has been so helpful. I think this is going been so helpful. I think this is going to be such a like I think this will give to be such a like I think this will give people so many highlights into what is people so many highlights into what is normal, what isn't. Again, give them normal, what isn't. Again, give them this avenue that they can take as this avenue that they can take as another option. For the woman who's another option. For the woman who's listening and is like, "Okay, listening and is like, "Okay, that's me. I need some extra help." that's me. I need some extra help." You know, what would it look like for You know, what would it look like for them to maybe reach out and work with them to maybe reach out and work with you in our practice?

you in our practice?

How to work with Dr. Cruz

>> Yes, absolutely. So, right now I'm >> Yes, absolutely. So, right now I'm really happy to be seeing patients really happy to be seeing patients through Modern Women's Wellness, and through Modern Women's Wellness, and they can book a free clarity call with they can book a free clarity call with me to talk about their symptoms or see me to talk about their symptoms or see what it is working one-on-one with me.

what it is working one-on-one with me. They can also find me directly on They can also find me directly on Instagram, and you can message me there. Instagram, and you can message me there.

I'm at dr.cc.crew. I'm at dr.cc.crew. So, there's So, there's var- various ways. var- various ways. >> Yeah, perfect. And we'll link that in >> Yeah, perfect. And we'll link that in the show notes, um both your Instagram the show notes, um both your Instagram handle and our website where they can handle and our website where they can book a clarity call with you. Well, book a clarity call with you. Well, thank you so much for being here. And thank you so much for being here. And again, I just want to say it's been such again, I just want to say it's been such a pleasure having you as part of our a pleasure having you as part of our practice. You are such a valuable asset practice. You are such a valuable asset to our patients, and I really appreciate to our patients, and I really appreciate you taking the time to to share your you taking the time to to share your knowledge here.

knowledge here. >> Absolutely. Thank you so much for having >> Absolutely. Thank you so much for having me. It's been It's been great being me. It's been It's been great being here.

here. here. >> [music]