Introduction to Mold Toxicity and Histamine Intolerance

– Welcome to the Environmental Toxicants Autoimmunity and Chronic Diseases Summit. I'm Dr. Wendie Trubow. And my guest today is Gail Clayton. She has a bunch of degrees. So strap yourselves in DCN, CNS, MS, RPh, LDN She's a retired clinical pharmacist and clinical nutrition specialist. She, this is a personal story for her and she's an expert on mold and recovery from mold sensitivity, histamine intolerance.

And this all stemmed from her exposure to toxic mold and finding the ways around it and finding really ideal health after being quite ill. So, Gil, welcome to the summit. I'm so delighted that we could feature your story and talk about ways to recover from mold toxicity and histamine intolerance and how to know when to detox and all of that. So, thank you for being here.

– Hi, Wendie. Thank you so much for inviting me. It's truly an honor to be able to share my story and my knowledge, like you said, this is personal for me. I got sick with toxic mold only.

I didn't know that's what was making me sick. And so I really struggled, but once I figured out what was making me sick, it was really a nightmare trying to figure out, you know, how do I get well because you develop this, this histamine intolerance and and histamine is also a neurotransmitter and it causes all kind of crazy symptoms inside the body.

You know, the toxic mold exposure causes a lot of digestive symptoms, skin symptoms, neurological, all kind of things. And I didn't know who to who to contact and but, I found a lot of my answers in diet and diet changes and, you know, I ended up going back to school to change, you know, and changed careers from pharmacists to nutrition because, like, I couldn't believe that diet changes can make such a huge impact on how I felt.

And, you know, so I initially was just going to get a masters and I finished that and I'm like, well, I'm just gonna keep on going.

Autoimmune Paleo as the Core Anti-Inflammatory Approach

And then I got my doctorate in clinical nutrition and, you know, picked up with, you know, a lot of the big names and, and environmental illness and we put our heads together and um and so me and Dr. Christensen, you know, uh kind of put together our heads and, and come up with a protocol where the very first thing you have to do with, with mold and even any environmental illness is to lower your toxic load, stop exposing yourself. So even with mold, it's not just getting to a clean environment, you have to stop using toxic products because, you know, a toxin is a toxin to the, to the body, you know, lower and stop putting all that stuff in and exposing yourself and let your body and immune system kind of go back into homeostasis. And part of that is following a very anti inflammatory diet and people think, oh, that means I have to like starve myself, but it's really just learning how to what foods or anti inflammatory, what foods are inflammatory and um start switching over and then what, what we have found is doing that for like a week before you do anything else.

Just, you know, a very good clean. And Dr. Christensen and I use the autoimmune paleo is our go to but some people are very, very sensitive because of the histamine. And so, you know, we may need to adjust that somewhat and then we gotta like really nurture the gut and you know, see what else is going. So we do do some testing.

– Okay. Got it. So Gail I'd love to drill into this when you, so when you're talking about anti inflammatory foods, you just mentioned the autoimmune paleo diet. So it sounds like you really lean on the autoimmune paleo diet as the gold standard for anti inflammatories.

That did I hear you correctly? – Yeah, pretty much, you know, for one thing, mold toxins mimic some of our hormones and, and also it stimulates the autoimmune power pathway.

And so some people develop autoimmune diseases, but even if you have not developed an autoimmune disease, when you look at labs, you can see that they're, you know, in the CBC, like some of the differential that they're heading in that direction, you've activated the adaptive immune system and we want to calm that down.

And so, and, and then, you know, also the hormones are, you know, mold toxins mimic our hormones in our body. And so we got to really look at the autoimmune paleo, really lowers that the effect on the hormones somewhat. Okay. Yeah.

– Okay. So the autoimmune paleo, when, when you say anti inflammatory, you're really talking about that protocol. Can you talk about what are foods that would not be considered or be considered pro inflammatory as, as big buckets for people just so they can say okay, there's a line in the sand. Here's where, here's what I want to aim for and here's what I want to avoid.

– Okay. So the main principle is that there are eight categories of food that cause 80% of the inflammation in our bodies. So we avoid those eight categories and it doesn't have to be lifelong.

You know, people just kind of get a little bit freaked out like, oh my gosh, what are we gonna eat because that's everything in my diet. But, you know, you just remove those eight foods.

But we tell you, you know, and you can get some good books on the, on the A I P protocol that have all kind of great recipes.

Histamine Symptoms, SIBO Confusion, and Gut Testing

But you know, removing things like we, you know, it's we corn soy, dairy eggs, shellfish and, and then we also go the A I P removes night shades too because a lot of people that have already developed an autoimmunity are very reactive to night shades.

So we recommend following that for minimum three weeks, maybe four weeks. And then at the same time, maybe a week into the diet, uh add in some to kind of kill off.

Most people develop candida bacteria overgrowth because those mycotoxins when we breathe them in the bloodstream, carry them right to the gut and they kill our normal flora.

And then we end up getting the more resistant strains that, that aren't killed off so much by the mycotoxins as an overgrowth. And then we get gas bloating and then the little vill I get damaged and that creates a whole nother, you know, problems. So we want to, you know, really nourish them. So we give nourishing herbs and things to help repair that lining. And so when you're eating anti inflammatory diet, the inflammation in the gut goes way way down and a lot of the G I symptoms go away.

And then we take that opportunity while it's not inflame to, to do a gut protocol for, you know, like for 4 to 8 weeks depending on, you know, the person's response.

But at the same time, what, what is really lacking in most mold recovery protocols is that stress response because the Amygdala is just firing and that's the Amygdala is the organ appear that, that, that it processes all incoming stimuli, whether it's external or internal and it tells the body how to react.

And, and so it's in this fight or flight, constantly sending off signals for to release epinephrine, norepinephrine and histamine and cortisol. And so then that suppresses your, your immune system even further.

And so what in order to recover your digestion, you have to get that cortisol down. So, because you want a very Veronis immune response in the gut and you can't do that if your, if your amygdala is firing.

So we um also recommend incorporating a lot an hour a day of stress reducing strategies. There's really good programs that you know, do brain retraining and then there's other things that you can do on your own.

– Got it. I want to take a step back because at the beginning of our talk, you, you alluded to the symptoms that people can have when they have histamine intolerance or histamine reactions or their histamine system is activated inappropriately. Can you speak to that?

So people might be able to map on, oh, that might be me because we are because micro toxins and molds are absolutely an environmental toxin. We're looking at how do we, how do we make people understand that the impact that it's having?

So can you talk about the what symptoms people might be experiencing when they have mold exposure and then histamine reactions? – So, you know, one of the things that I see a lot of people when people come to me um to help them, they're like the very first thing they say is I've had Sibo for two years and I've gone to, you know, this doctor A B C and D and they're treating me for Sibo.

And, you know, that's a big clue that maybe it's not Sibo, maybe it's histamine because SIBO and Candida overgrowth and histamine, excessive histamine.

Reducing Exposure and Calming the Stress Response

It's very confusing and the symptoms are, are very similar, you know, and so when I have in my intake form, I go through all the foods and everything they're doing, eating, drinking, and I dive deep into all the different things that could be affecting histamine, either they're releasing too much histamine, or they're not able to break histamine down for one reason.

And so, you know, a lot of times I'll jump into functional testing like organic acid testing and to see where the metabolic blocks are. And so what we wanna do is we want to stabilize the histamine response with natural remedies. And also with, we may need pharmaceuticals or over the counter and the histamines to stabilize it.

And then look further as to how can we improve the metabolism of history because histamine is part of normal digestion. But after we eat our food, our we have enzymes that gobble it up really quickly.

So it doesn't cause symptoms. – Okay. So it sounds like for symptoms that people are having, if they're over, over asking the system, certainly gut issues, bloating gas, discomfort after eating, people noticing brain fog or any type of hormonal disruptions when they have histamine issues.

– Right. Any of those things that can, it can even cause like, like psychotic events. Um, histamine is, and the person that's having the histamine issues that's neurologically may not even realize that their mood has changed but the people around them, you know, may start, like, moving away, you know.

So that, and that's another bad thing because you lose your support from your family and your friends because they're like, they're crazy. But one thing to it's, not psychotic, it's more like neurotic that, you know, become very obsessive, obsessive and, and there's a lot of fear.

That's very, very common. People get into their fear and they're just, you know, they can't relax and, and let their body just be calm and everything starts triggering this fear response and it looks very neurotic.

– So obviously, people, I need to get out of there moldy environments before obviously, you can, you can bind, but it's not going to be as effective if you're continuing to flood the system with exposure. So get out of the exposure.

And then how long do people typically want to, how long does it take to quiet the system down before they start to feel less afflicted? Or do you need to start in right away with the autoimmune Paleo protocol? How do you approach that?

– Not everybody can move away from their multi environment, they just don't have a place to go where they don't have money because remediation is extremely expensive.

So diet changes really, really help in those situations. And so, I mean, there's some things that you can do, you know, maybe seal off that one room with plastic and, and get air purifiers, remove carpets and those kind of things can be somewhat helpful.

But as far as like recovering, I had a client one time that she, within 30 days, her symptoms score went from 365 down to 25 and 30 days and started losing weight and, you know, and the mold was in her air conditioning unit and, you know, and I had coached dress and I think it's in your A C unit and I said, what if you, if they find it replace the whole thing because they think they can treat it with chemicals and this and that, but it's mold is like a cancer and you leave one will sell the next thing, you know, it's grown way out. So personally, if I had mold in my A C unit, I would just play, replace everything, events that ductwork and everything and have a whole new system inside it out.

And so she listened to me and she did that And her whole family like overnight was like 50% better, like just overnight from removing the AC unit. And of course she didn't have carpets and all that.

Recovery Timelines, Weight Loss, and Detox Support

So she really had minimal contamination and then a month later, you know, she was like, most of these symptoms were just gone and then I've had other people that just, you know, take a long time and I think a lot of it has to do with genetics.

Our ability to detox are, you know, in our mental state, you know, the chronic, you know, the Amygdala up regulation, the limbic system becoming dis dis regulated.

There's a whole host of things and men and women and it depends on your age. And so I can people ask me, well, how long am I gonna, how long can I get? Well, and I'm like, well, I don't know, anywhere from two weeks to two years and – So it's certainly a range.

I mean, you really alluded to something also. That was amazing because I've noticed it in patients in my practice that when you really get to the root cause of the issue, particularly with toxins, which could include the micro toxins, metals, other environmental toxins, pesticides or herbicides.

People are able to shed the weight. They've been hauling around for years and have not been able to get rid of, which is so profound because, you know, I say to people if you're not, if you're doing everything right and you're not losing weight, it's a toxins issue that we haven't uncovered.

– Yeah. Well, obesity is, is synonymous with inflammation. So I don't really specialize in weight loss, but a lot of people that are overweight and they've never been able to lose weight and, they come to me and I find all kind of things.

So I do a work up and I just fix what I find no matter what it is, whether it's mold or toxins or this or that. And like you, you follow an anti inflammatory diet and that's 80% of the inflammation in the body. And so, boom, you know, £10 if you're, if you're, you know, maybe 10 or £20 over 20 or £30 or whatever, typically you'll lose £10 the first month. But if you're really overweight, like £6200 overweight, typically, what I see is a 20 to £30 weight loss in, in the first month and then they're all excited when I see them on a follow up there jumping up and down and, you know, you know, like most of the symptoms are gone. Yeah – That's amazing. Can you talk a little Gail about how antioxidants play a role and help people recover from histamine intolerance and mold exposures? – Yeah. Sure. So this is one thing that's really key is that when you're in the, in the world and our toxic world or in with toxic mold, you're not gonna get sick until you deplete the antioxidants in the body because antioxidants are very high concentration in all of our barriers, you know, like our eyes and our nose and, you know, in our whole digestive system and in our respiratory system.

And, you know, and that's why sometimes in the family you'll see one person really, really sick and other people are looking at him like what's wrong with you?

It's not affecting me, you know, so uh the antioxidants, we have to really sure those barriers to prevent because there's so many assaults right at the barrier.

And the antioxidants will, will uh will grab those toxins and, and um and reduce them safely. So they can be excreted from the body and antioxidants and polyphenols. Uh I started talking about polyphenols before COVID about as far as like, um you know, how they can, you know, modulate the immune system that polyphony als are very, very important and they come from things like chocolate, coffee, brightly colored fruits and vegetables, teas and herbs.

You know, a lot of times I tell people that just go to the store and buy a whole bunch of different kind of herbs and mix them in a jar, shake it up and put it in the spring full on everything you eat because the bacteria in our gut eat those.

And that's how they grow out. And you want a very diverse intake of polyphony als to make sure all of them, all the little bugs in your gut are very happy and they grow way out and they talk to your immune system. And so when your immune system is dis regulated or polarized in one direction or another, the polyphony als is what helps pull them back into homeostasis. So you want, you want a lot of really good healthy polyphony, herbs and spices and teas. Any detox protocol should be, should contain herbal teas and rotating them. You know, because all of those really great herbal teas have medicinal qualities.

So in our um in our protocol uh that we, we actually teach, you know about the diet and all, all the intricacies on the course that Dr. Christenson and I'm a call molddetoxdiet.com.

Antioxidants, Polyphenols, and Rotation Diet Strategies

And so the teas and probiotics also bind and, and, and eat up the micro toxin, not just toxins, but even the metals and all environmental chemicals, the probiotics in your gut to help restore function and, and, and bind to those toxins and actually sometimes just break them up and dissolve them so you can get them out. – It's a fascinating, are you recommending that people look? So it's funny we have, Deanna Minich on this and it also, and she really talks about the variety of the foods that you eat to make sure that every day play a game and try to get 50 different things in your mouth that, that will give you that that huge variety. – Right?

And so one thing that I have found very, very useful, not with mold toxicity. But anybody that is environmentally toxic are extremely inflamed is a four day rotation because it takes 3.5 days for a food substance to get out of your diet.

So, and every time we eat there's an inflammatory response and that's normal, we want that and we need that. But let's say you eat apple today and you know, we get this influence inflammatory response in day four.

It's out that you eat it day one, day, two, day, three, day four and then you're hitting that threshold. And so if you rotate everything. And so in our course, I made a really good four day rotation even with oils and teas and spices and herbs and stuff. And, you know, one time I had a client and she was very inflamed and I said, why don't you try the four day rotation for 28 days?

And then I, on day three, she's contacted me. She's like, You know, I woke up this morning and I'm like 50% better and I'm like, yeah, she's 50% through that four day rotation. And she was just amazed because she had been so inflamed and kind of bed bound for like 10 years.

– Wow, it sounds like you're making a tremendous difference for people that you know, you and Dr. Christiansen worked together a lot on protocols, right? And right, and you king, is there anything I didn't ask you that you want to make sure we share with people.

– Well, okay, so the autoimmune paleo is our kind of gold standard, but we really look at everybody individual. I spend a lot of time studying a case and, you know, a lot of people need some modification because um if you're too thin or your, you know, let's say you're only eating three foods and, and that's all you can tolerate it. Three foods.

Of course, that's not gonna be the appropriate diet for you. So, you know, and also some people have I D S, they may need to do the low fund map. And so, but the generally I'd say like 80% of the people can do the Auto New Paleo do a good gut protocol and they're gonna feel a whole lot better.

But if, if that, if you're down to like 3 to 5 foods you really need to help with, with that and, and the autoimmune Paleo isn't gonna be for you or if you have um, if you're way underweight that may not be appropriate for you.

And even with the Children, you know, a lot of times we see Children on the spectrum and and, and they have sensory issues and of course you, that's, that creates a lot of stress on the parent and when you tell them, oh, you have to do the A I P and the kids and the kids will only eat pizza and French fries.

And so you kind of have to do that kind of work backwards with those kids as, as to, you know, and one step at a time. But, you know, if you, there, there's some certain foods, like if, if they're unwilling then, you know, I have to, I have to really assess their willingness to jump all in and, and some people, you know, need a coach and, and maybe go a little bit slower because it's so it can be so overwhelming. – Yeah, I think that's a really critical point to remember is that you said gold standard and I'm saying gold standard that that might be the goal, but it's not a requirement. It's simply, it's your aspiration maybe and tailor it to yourself and listen to your body and know what your body needs rather than just sort of wholeheartedly throwing yourself in and saying, oh, this doesn't work for me. I'm even sicker.

So it's really, I think I would agree with you. It's important to listen to your body. – And plus some people that follow that autoimmune Paleo.

Individualizing Diets, Resources, and Final Takeaways

I mean, you know, and they're still having, you know, some symptoms, we may do some food sensitivity testing. Like I just had a guy yesterday and, and what showed up high was salmon and he was like, no wonder why, like eating salmon and I was having some issues. So, you know, we found out other foods. So, you know, we go, We do the cheapest route first, you know, and just clean up the diet and do that.

And then let's see what happens and then it's like peeling an onion. You go to the next step, the next step because there's no reason and spend $5,000 on testing straight up when you, when most of the most of the time you're going to get to it very inexpensively. – This is great Gail.

Tell me, tell the listeners, where can they find you? – My, my website is Drgailclayton.com. That's D R G A I L C L A Y T O N dot com. And um and the courses that Dr. Christensen and I made our at molddetoxdiet.com, we have the layperson on getting started with diet changes and then we have a more advanced course called the Advanced Mold Immune. Of course, and that's mainly tailored for practitioners, but a really good motivated lay person, we kind of cut out some of the really technical stuff, but there's a lot of really good information.

A lot of people can't afford to hire a practitioner. I mean, mold is devastating and they've lost everything they own and then they can't work because they're so sick. But it's a very, they're very affordable courses that you can um really learn how to implement a lot of those things on your own.

Explain what happens to the immune system because even a lot of the doctors don't even understand what's going on with the immune system. – And I think these are great resources count. I think it's important for all the listeners to remember that 50% of homes have had some type of water damage.

So that's one out of every two. Meaning odds are good. You've been and lived in, been around, hung out and worked in a building with water damage. So it is really critical to keep on the radar. So, thank you for being here for this episode of the Environmental Toxicants, Autoimmunity and Chronic Diseases Summit Gail.

This is extremely, extremely useful information. I know people should go check out those websites. Thank you. Thank you for being here. – Thank you, Wendie.