Brain-First Healing and the Gut-Brain Axis

Hey everybody, Dr. Rob Silverman here, Proven Health Alternatives. I've got Lori Hamill, she's a functional nutrition therapist. She blew me away with the information.

Lori, thanks for taking time out of your day. Dr. Rob, thanks for having me. I really appreciate it. Oh, I'm happy you're here. So you are known as the brain first person.

Tell me a little bit about that. Well, if we calm the brains first, then everything below the neck gets easier to deal with. It's hard to heal digestion if you've stuck in fight or flight, anxious thoughts, ruminating thoughts.

If we can calm all that down, everything else below that gets better. So there's a gut to brain axis and you're talking about the downward spiral. We're taking about brain to gut axis.

Brain to Gut axis, yes. Outstanding. So what's the why behind taking back the brain? My why? Is that what you are asking? Yeah, give me a why. Well, my why is because I struggled with anxiety, depression, and eating disorder for over a decade when I was younger.

Calming the brain saved my life. So amino acid therapy literally saved. My life so without that, I don't know that I would be here. That's what makes me really passionate.

And then I get to see thousands of clients over the years, you know, the same thing happened to them and it's just fires me up all the time. That's great.

You know, that really caught my eye when you talked about amino acids. And I mean, you talk about a bevy of amino acid. I usually look at taurine as the aminoacid.

Taurin does decrease excitotoxicity, it closes down the synaptic cleft, and all that follows with that. So why don't you go into a little bit of detail.

Tell us about the amino acids that you like. Amino acid is a building blocks of protein. What do you them for and how you came about that? Yeah, so when I'm talking about amino acids, I mainly work with like emotional pieces.

So we're talking About what neurotransmitters, you know, dictates, how we are feeling, our functioning, those kind of things. And so I am looking at serotonin, GABA, your endorphins, catecholamines, and then really that all bounces on glucose regulation.

figuring out which amino acids you're deficient in in those five different areas. So if we're talking about serotonin, could be 5-HTP, it could tryptophan.

I like to lean towards trypophane because that converts into so many different things, right? Where 5HDP only converts converts into serotonin, but sometimes people don't respond to tryptophan.

So we need that 5-HTP. When we're talking about your endorphins, I'm going for D-phenylalanine because it just really calms that nervous system, makes you just feel like you're super joyful inside.

Your endorphins are like your inner joy.

Amino Acids for Mood, Focus, and Neurotransmitters

And so DPA really helps with that. When we're going with the catecholamines, it could be LPA, L-phenylalanine, D-

L- phenyl alanine. Could be tyrosine which is a lot of my go-to for supporting that catocholine process.

So that helps you to focus your ADD, ADHD. kind of that apathetic depression, maybe you're craving things for focus, you know, for energy. So it's helpful for your thyroid, all those kinds of things.

GABA, I love taurine, the GABAPathway, tauring's amazing for that. Gaba itself, L-theanine. There's lots of different things we could use there. And then glutamine's is amazing, that glucose regulation.

Those are my basics. When I'm working with people, we kind start with nine different amino acids, try them, and then see which one your body responds to.

So when you talk about the nine amino acids, you're talking about these essential aminos? Yeah, well, there's eight essential amino acid. I like to throw in lithium orotate in there because it's super brain protective.

Um, so when I'm sending out my sample kits to all my clients, that we're going to trial them because I do sublingual testing. You get a kit in the mail from me.

Lithium or otates always included in their too. Great add, great add. Now glutamine, the most abundant amino acid in the body. Great for mucosal lining healing.

Wonderful for muscle development. Leucine, signaler of health, gold medal winner. I believe that leucin, because it stimulates the mTOR pathway in protein synthesis, is a longevity amino Absolutely, absolutely.

Yeah, I love Lucy and I like I, you know, Valley and ice Lucy, and all those, those are amazing. The only challenge I have with some of those sometimes because I don't, I have so many people that come to me like on branched chain amino acids, right?

But they're still anxious, they are still depressed. So I actually have them stop that for just a little bit because they compete at the same receptor sites like of L-tryptophan so it can drive that L tryptophane down.

And so if we've got anxiety, depression, OCD, I really want to build that pathway first and then we can add those back in. So those are the branch chain amino acids you mentioned before, leucine, isoleucin, and valine.

Valine yep. Excellent. Those, to me, they under the Branch of Essential Amino Acids are your core aminos. Yeah, absolutely. Now, you are unique in that I don't hear a lot of people talk about amino acid.

I hear them talk neurotransmitters. So that's fabulous. Let's segue that into brain health is not just about the brain. No, I mean, we were just talking about the gut to brain access.

We have to heal the guy in order for the brain to, to function. Well, there's so much communication. There's probably more communication going upwards than there is downwards.

Um, but I still feel if we call that support, they mean support the brand with the amino acids that helps the got as well. So I talk about brain first therapy, Honestly, you know, there's so much tryptophan.

There's still much serotonin going on in the gut, so when you're taking these specific amino acids for those specific neurotransmitters, it's working in both aspects.

Yeah, I wrote a couple of things down when I was thinking of you last night, you know, and coming on the podcast. Number one, we don't lose cognition overnight.

We lose signaling integrity first. That is true. Two, brain health is no longer a neurological issue. It's a systems biology issue, that's why it's got the brain, the super high way to health.

So what kind of tests do you recommend to enable you to know which amino acids to prescribe? So the amino acid

testing to do is super simple. I send you the kit of amino acids in the mail and then we actually open up the capsules, put them underneath our tongues, stare at each other awkwardly for like two minutes and see what your body and your brain does with the Amino acid.

You'll notice a difference. Something will shift whether it's you feel calmer or the weight is lifted off your chest maybe your shoulders feel better maybe you're stomach doesn't have the not in it anymore the green is greener the blue is bluer that happens that fast with amino acids and so i don't rely on blood or urine testing for any of that.

I go off a symptom-based questionnaire in those five categories that we talked about, and I just keep it super simple because then people are like, oh my gosh, I actually feel a difference with this supplement, right?

And then they know that that's going to help them in the long run. So it also helps with the psychology of it all, the emotional component of at all. People are so used to taking supplements, they're like I don't know if it's helping or not.

But when you do the sublingual testing with the amino acids and your anxiety goes down right away, then you know that that's going to help you. Another thing that I really like about the fact that you incorporate amino acids is we look at muscle recovery and muscle mass.

You know, muscle, mass, the longevity organ, Gabriella Lyon, et cetera. And most people don't look the aminos like that. They look them as an adjunct.

We look a protein, but protein's not going to function well without proper amino acid profiles and ratios. Exactly. It's foundational to every single thing in your body, whether it's your hair, skin, or nails, muscles, to your hormones, your enzymes, it is everything.

Let's talk a little bit about something called neuroplasticity or brain neurogenesis. Those amino acids are having a positive effect on the brain, so they enable you to rewire your brain neurons so you can free fire them.

That's the idea of neuro plasticity. Take me through which amino acid you like to utilize for that. I'm just going to stick with those five categories, to be honest.

And then, you know, tryptophan is huge for that. So when you get that brain calmed down, and you don't have those OCD thoughts anymore, because that's going convert into so many different things, eventually it's gonna convert to NAD and everybody's talking about N. A. D., right?

Testing Amino Acid Response and Therapeutic Dosing

So it is HUGE for brain health. Um, you know, sometimes we'll use like a full spectrum amino acid, not just the essentials, but the full-spectrum. So I like the total amino solutions by Janessa.

And I liked to use that because people are deficient in all of the amino acids, it's not, just those essential eight. Like you were saying, if you don't have that beautiful profile, It's hard for your body, hard, for, your brain to regenerate and, and you, know for that neuroplasticity piece.

I think all of them are essential. I really don't think that there's just eight. Neurodegenerative disease is on the rise without question. Alzheimer's through the roof, Parkinson's coming up close, we've got ALS.

We've had a lot of autoimmune conditions that will be perceived as neurodegenitive disease. How are you finding your prescription of amino acids, those nine essential amino acid, help to attenuate a of the symptomology of neuro-digenerative diseases?

And Dr. Rob, I see it helping so many people all the time. You know, um, it's always part of my protocol. So there's never, there was never not a time that I don't use the amino acids.

Whether you have MS, you've ALS, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's. We're always using the, amino acid. That's my first line of defense. I like to say, because when you nourish the nervous system, because that's what we're doing with amino acids, then things can heal.

If you don't nourish the foundation of, I mean, when we created in the womb, what is it, our spinal cord, everything comes out of that. So if we don t go back to the nervous system and we d n't feed it which is really what you're d oing with the amino acid because it's food for the body.

You don' t feed i, you can't regenerate, you c an't detox without the proper amino ac d protocol. There's just so many compo nents there. Anxiety, top of everybody's list right now, unfortunately.

Why do so many people suffer from anxiety when they're doing all the right things? I think it's multifactorial. One, you're probably deficient in amino acids.

That's what I see all Food is still deficient. So I feel like we need to take that supplemental amino acids. Um, we get caught up in society. We get, were just talking a little bit about politics before that we were listening to the wrong things.

W we focus our brain and we focused our emotions on things that don't have really have control over. And so that makes us anxious. Then when our emotional system is anxious and our physical system suffers, right?

So it's always mentally, emotional, physical. I think we just forget who we are, who got created us to be, and that You know, when you talk about amino acid supplementation, and many people talk, about supplementing, how does this amino acids supplementations differ from the supplement you may just get in a health food store?

So this is targeted. This is therapeutic doses, very targeted towards what's going on in your body and in our brain. You could go take a random amino-acid supplement and it's not going to give you the results that the targeted therapeutic dose will give.

Great. So here's one for you. You're going to love this. Since you and I both believe in not just root cause resolution, root causes resolution. Why don't medications fix the root caused causes of anxiety and depression for so many people?

Well, because it's not nourishing the brain. So the it just masking the symptoms and it shutting down your your body's own mechanisms. SSRIs will stop your body's recycling process.

So tryptophan, like we talked before, recycles into lots of different things. Your body uses it as it needs it. And so an SSI stops that whole process, right?

And it falsely inflates serotonin in between the two synopsis. That's why over time, it just doesn't work anymore because it's not creating new seratonin.

It's We're giving your body the nutrients to create it itself, right?

Brain Health, Neuroplasticity, and Neurodegeneration

And so when you're using the amino acids, we're saying, Hey, wake up, Wake up serotonin because here's some nutrition for you. Start making your own stuff again and it will write and then it recycles it.

And then, it has such a profound effect, not just on your mood, but it affects your muscles. It affects her heart. how your digestion works, where medication just kind of hinders all of that.

It's basically a long-term antibiotic in your gut, it kills your microbiome. So there's lots of factors there. Yeah, the drugs are pointed at diminishing the symptoms, which have that place, but not really pointed out root cause in many instances.

You mentioned serotonin, seratonin. 93% of serotonin comes from the gut. We've got that gut to brain, brain to gut access. Whatever you do to your got, you duty your brain.

Whenever you're dutying your The biggest nerve is that critical nerve that communicates the brain and the gut. You talk a lot about calming the mind first.

What does that really mean in practice? Well, it's just nourishing your whole system. Because when you have enough protein, you've got enough amino acids, enough fats, that's going to calm that whole neurology.

And so we're kind of, we are top down creatures, right? We eat here first, We think here, first. We're top-down. So when we calm this down, then everything else gets better.

Let's look at anxiety. I'm afraid of heights. It's fine if I don't know it, but once I see it it's, I am a different person. And I have shaking, and I want to sit on the ground.

and my wife will say, it is a small hill. But to me, It is Mount Everest. Right. So how quick can I turn that around with supplementation? Really, really fast, to be honest.

I'll tell you my fear, I'm afraid of driving on a bridge, and so when I know I am going to driving a long bridge I will take some extra tryptophan, or if there is just water on both sides of the road.

And I used to like be sweaty and I would have to drive down the middle of a road, But when I have enough tryptophan, my serotonin is good. There might still be that thought process there because it is a fear, but I'm not going to have that physical response anymore.

And then I can logically tell myself, you're fine. This is the small hill. You know what I mean? So when your neurology is nourished, when you have enough amino acids, your thought process becomes more logical.

So essentially, because I'm not taking those amino acid, I admit it. And I am afraid of bridges myself. I hate to tell you that. You can drive over a bridge, and I'll go with you.

But if I have to drive a over bridge I will stop just as I come to the bridge and say, uh-uh, back it up. Let's go get a bicycle and go across the walkway.

That must be causing some stress and trauma and inflaming the brain. Yeah, definitely. How can we address that other than taking the tryptophan? You could take a full spectrum amino acid.

I really feel like there's a deficiency issue going on there with you, Dr. Robb, so I would make sure. You're not the only one who thinks there is deficiency with me.

So I would just encourage you to take that. I mean, you can try to talk yourself out of it, but we don't have to white knuckle through everything. Sometimes it's just a deficiency.

And then when we fix the deficiency, support that deficiency then we can let go. So we're not white-knuckling and then, we tell ourselves like, this is okay.

We can drive across the bridge, we can walk across a bridge. The bridge is stable, you know, all those kind of things. What are the most common deficiencies you see in high functioning women because women are making the move?

The gender of 2026, if I can say that, is without question the females growing in all businesses. We're watching female basketball more. They're great to watch the basketball guy.

So let's address that because everything's always been based on dosage on men, not females. See women very deficient in serotonin. So that's why they're stuck on SSRIs and they are stuck in ADHD medications.

Their catecholamines are low. Those would be the two biggest areas I would say, but most people are going to be low in the GABA area as well. I don't know, you have to assess all five different areas.

But I would say anxiety is on the rise in women because there's kind of, we're shining more now because people are noticing and those kinds of things, but there is also that extra pressure.

And so we are not taking care of ourselves as well as we could. We're not resting as much. All women who come to me are undernourished. Nobody's eating enough protein or enough healthy fats, skipping so many meals.

I love fasting, but not on a daily basis. You know, so there's lots of disruption that's going on there. So I think as women are rising, we also need to talk more about how do we nourish ourselves better and amino acids as part of that conversation.

You know, it's funny you mentioned and you just segwayed into intermittent fasting. There's an article that just came out that said it may not be as effective as we thought.

Having lectured on intermittent fast, women have to intermittent and fast differently than men. Absolutely. So I'm a push button because I am a male, you know.

Anxiety, Womenu2019s Health, and Intermittent Fasting

12 and 12, 14 and 10, 16 and 8. It doesn't really matter. But women, especially of the age of menstruation, poses an issue because when progesterone goes up, that's a common effect in the last two weeks of that traditional cycle.

However, stress, and intermittent fasting is a little bit of a stress decreases progesterone. You're putting women into a tailspin. So you're really highlighting probably a conversation that we should talk about and have a whole intermittent fast.

Women have to intermittent and fast different than men. And so here's my suggestion. I suggest that if women start the first week of their cycle, the 1st 2 weeks of our cycle 16 and 8, so 16 hours of a fast, 8 hours are feeding perfect.

Week 3, take it down to 14 and 10. And week 4, when progesterone really spikes and you don't want to knock it out and go into PMS, which is a real thing, men, it's a really thing.

It's not a made up term. Get them down a 12 and 12. If you cycle them like that, Intermittent fasting will be much more effective. Men, you can stay at 14 and 10 and 16 and eight, like I said.

So I got a call today and I put somebody on a new protocol. And they said, why do I feel worse on a new protocol than better initially? Help me, Laurie, please.

Oh, well, maybe your body's detoxing. Your body is trying to heal. It's kind of like when you break your leg. Once they set it, it doesn't feel better.

it still hurts. And you're going to go through ups and downs as that leg is healing. The same thing with the nutritional protocol. Whatever health protocol you might be on, there's going be ups down as your health heals.

That's just nature. Let's talk a little bit about some non-pharmaceutical pathways to brain optimization, something that I've seen you talk about in a lot of different podcasts because you are without question, you're a hot topic on podcasts.

You're all over the place. Nobody talks about amino acids for the brain. When I'm talking with my guys, And my gals and my team, and I say amino acids for brain, they look at me and go, we haven't heard that.

I said, well, you haven' heard it because I haven''t said it, because we're in our little bubble. Yeah, that's it. Help me out, Laurie. We're talking amino acid, right?

So we can continue talking about that, but just even going outside and grounding yourself. Like putting your toes on the ground. So, you know, just shift the ions in your body.

That helps with your brain health. You know walking out in the sunshine. I teach all my clients to get out and that early morning sunlight go for a walk that boosts your serotonin boost your dopamine boost, your endorphins.

Go out midday go out again at at you know sunset so that your body gets in rhythm with nature and so we can take all the amino acids we want but if you're not doing the practical things to you whether it's eating enough protein getting on the sunshine grounding.

You know, swimming in water that's not chlorinated, you know all those kind of things. We still have to change the lifestyle that we're living to in order for our brain health to shake to Change to changing how you think, You Know, so many of us live in fear and we've got these negative thoughts going on.

Well, God didn't create our Brain to live that way. He gave us a beautiful brains. we should live empower love in a sound mind, right? So, it's changing our thought patterns.

It's change the way that we speak. Life and death is in the power of the tongue. So there's lots of components there outside of just those basic nutritional supplements that you talk about.

I agree with you. We don't talk enough about brain health. If we take it for granted, we think that it is just an organ that is going to function for the 70 to 100 years that live.

Where is brain-health headed in next 5 to 10 years? I want you to look in your crystal ball. Yeah, I think that's going to be a hot topic because there is so much neurological degeneration going on.

So it has to a topic if we want to still survive and thrive as a society. You can live to 80 or 90 with dementia, but that is not aging well. How do we prevent that dementia?

How we do prevent Parkinson's? I live in Iowa. It's glyphosate central here. We're so toxic here, there's so many Parkinson. and dementia, thyroid cancer, all those kinds of things.

So we have to have those conversations. Otherwise, we're going to end up with, you know, in every corner, We're gonna have a new nursing home, or, so I think we Have to Have that conversation, and we need to know how to detox the body, detox, the brain properly, So that we can reverse these things that are happening in our society.

So you really talk about prevention for brain health like decades before, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's. ALS, interesting. Alzheimer is more common in women.

Parkinson is common with men.

Lifestyle, Detox, and the Future of Brain Health

Autoimmune, much more commonly with women You can make a case and we can have a discussion that this is all based on our exposure, like you said, to chemicals.

Absolutely. I mean, look at what we put on. Our bodies as women that you don't put. On your bodies is mine. Well, you'd be surprised what I do. My mom a little Metro when it comes to that, but I know what you mean.

But my husband like uses nothing. And I have to tell him, honey, please put some lotion on your head. It's dry. Right? You know, because you just don't, most men don t do a lot of extra body care.

Well, we ve got makeup, We ve Got lotion, and we've got the conditioner, you know. We've Got everything as well. And we got spray tans. You Know, women are doing Botox where most of the time men Don't do Botax.

we have got all these things that we're putting in our body that are toxic. So we Have to have that conversation. How can we get clean makeup? How do we do clean lotion?

you Know? Why is Botx toxic? All those kind of things. So, yeah, the conversation definitely needs to be had because definitely women suffer from more autoimmune and neurodegeneration than men do.

Yeah, to speak about chemicals, glyphosate. You and I both hate glyophosates. It just came across my desk last week, believe it or not. Obviously, I always eat gluten-free oatmeal, but there's a glyphasate- free gluten free oatmeal now.

That comes from one degree. I didn't know that. Yes, it was a patient. And you learn so much from your patients. Yes. So why don't you share one thing to ensure cognitive health over the next 10 years?

Eat enough protein and make sure it's clean. Make sure its from animals that haven't been vaccinated, that have been eating glyphosate sprayed hay and grass.

I think that is key because if we don t have enough proteins, we do not have amino acids in our body. So I got a quote, what they call a closing reflection on the brain right now.

Number one is brain health is not about perfection. It's about adaptability, resilience, and informed self leadership. I know you'll like that self-leadership thing.

Self leadership, you are responsible for your own health. A thousand percent. Yeah. So where do you see yourself in your practice go in the next five or 10 years?

I always like to ask the guests, like, where, do we see ourselves? Where do we see ourselves? I see myself being the leading authority in brain health and amino acids for sure.

And I've been training practitioners, you know, probably for the last 10 years in amino acid therapy. I have my own course set and certification that I trained.

So I see that growing so that this gets more mainstream. When you ask your staff, what do you know about amino acids? They'll be like, oh yeah, I heard that because not just Laurie's talking about it.

We have a hundred other practitioners that are implementing this amino-acid therapy every single time. How did you get so precise with the amino acids?

Like I said, what you're doing is unique. It shouldn't be, but it is without question cutting edge, maybe even leading edge. Which is so funny, because it's been around for decades.

So when I first learned about amino acid therapy, it was my own struggle with an eating disorder, anxiety, depression. And I went to a clinic that used amino-acid therapy.

Julia Ross is one of the pioneers in aminoacet therapy And so I learned, you know, a lot of stuff from her and, um, yeah, it's been around and so we just need to keep talking about it.

So I wrote this down yesterday. I told you, I had a couple for you in the back. If there was one misconception about brain health, You wish you could permanently retire.

What would it be and what should replace it? So it was two questions. Yeah. So misconception, I would say that your brain can't heal, that it doesn't drive everything, or we have to start with the gut first.

Um, so I feel like your is primary, everything stems out of it. And so, uh, really feel that we need to address the neurology in our body first, and then what was the second part of the question?

And what would you replace it with? I will just make sure everybody's taken their amino acids every single day. Instead of going down the rabbit trail of, And this is not that you shouldn't talk about these things, but the MTHFR or the genetics.

Let's just go back to foundations. So I really want people to go to back foundations, fats, proteins, minerals. Those are all foundation. If you have those covered, then you can go down your rabbit trail.

But if those aren't covered let's not deviate from what It's from the foundational pieces that God gave us to live well. So amino acids, your foundation.

Let's do some rapid fire. I'll hit you with some other supplements. Tell me what you think about it. Why not? Pre and probiotics? Those are good. Omega-3 fatty acids fish oils?

I'm not a fan. Okay. Vitamin D3 with K2? Um, I would say mid-range. Multi-vitamin, multi-mineral? It depends on the quality. How about creatine with amino acid?

I am not opposed to creatine, but I'm not like the craze on the creating. I like I've never I never use it in my practice. But if somebody wants to use and they feel different with it, I think it's great.

brain health supplement. NADH. I think that's good. So amino acids before? I don't really ever need to recommend it, but I know some people use it and get good results with it.

Amino acids, before meal, during the meal after a meal. If we're using it therapeutically, I would say before a me and an empty stomach. Okay. Um, if you're just using as like a supplement, um, just to kind of maintain things, go ahead and take it with a male.

muscle recovery hormones hormones okay great yeah i always like to end my friend listens from geneva and he's like rob you do you know i'm really happy with your podcast you've got some great guests as you have been illuminating give him one thing to do differently on Monday because he's on his, he is my age.

He's 60, He is on this health trail now. Awesome. So double your protein. There you go. Well, it's been a pleasure. I mean, we did this rapid fire, but I knew that was going to happen.

You've got that New York style, even though you live in Iowa, I'll tell you that. Thank you. Love to see you do it again. Am I going add amino acids into my practice armamentarium?

I love it. Thanks, Dr. Rob. It's a been pleasure Thanks Lori. Its been my pleasure, see soon. Proven Health Alternatives.