Introduction to the summit and guest

The average time for somebody to have symptoms before they can get an official diagnosis or a label of what they have going on is about seven years. And that's symptomatic.

So like there was probably years and years before that, that they weren't symptomic, but it was kind of in the works already. Again, looking at like all the different stressors that the person has in their body and their lifestyle, like the things that can control.

That's what this is all about too, is like figuring out things you can't control because a lot of this you cannot through your diet, through lifestyle through stress management.

This is Doctor Talks. Hello and welcome to this episode of the Environmental Toxicans, Autoimmunity and Chronic Diseases Summit. I'm Dr. Wendy Trubo. My co-host is Dr Ed Levitan, and we are so excited for our guest today.

It's Dr Tiffany Kaplan. She's the bestselling author of The Lupus Solution and founder of Kaplin Health Institute and cofounder of Central Coast Center for Integrative Health.

That's quite a mouthful, by the way. And that's an integrated practice in sunny California, seeing a wide array of chronic conditions and helping patients achieve optimal health.

Tiffany, welcome. We're super psyched you're here today. Welcome. Thank you for having me. Yeah, it's a great topic for a summit. Yes. I need to get out there more.

Totally. So I left a lot out of your bio because I wanted to ask you about it because, I know that your past gave rise to your passion. Can you talk about how your experience personally led to you professional development?

Yeah, a couple of ways. So I got into functional medicine as a patient first. That's how I was first introduced into it. I, was struggling with some chronic issues myself going through in the middle of grad school, I started to have tremendous brain fog and anxiety and depression.

And I really like spiraling downhill. and of course, traditional medicine was just like, Oh, here's an antidepressant, you know, and it would kind of like put a bandaid on it, but it didn't make me feel any better.

You were depressed, right?

Tiffany Kaplan's personal health journey

You had a deficiency of Zoloft, Right? Yeah. You're just a student, right? So I went to a, I found a functional medicine doctor who was like doing something different.

And I was, like, this is cool. She did all these labs. He did like a stool test and he was looking at all this stuff. I'm like I don't have gut problems.

Like, what are you doing? And then she really just helped me. put all the puzzle pieces together and it made it really clear that my lifestyle and my diet and all of these other factors were making me feel so bad.

And so starting to change my, diet, and change, my life style and work on the stress and like make all these changes, like totally changed my lives, saved my.

I was at a very low place at that point, but it just, it clicked. Oh my God, this is amazing. So much more to help

people doing this. So that's what got me into functional medicine.

And then in our practice, me and my husband, we started really focusing on like autoimmune conditions because we found that that was something that is so common.

We were seeing so much of it. I had a family member get diagnosed with lupus and then it was like, oh my gosh, nobody knows anything about lopus. So we just started trying to get the word out like yeah, you can do something when you have a chronic disease, when have an auto immune disease.

You can something about it, You don't have to be stuck with it And so that's what we focus on teaching people is like all the tools that they could be doing to get their health in order like I experience.

So it's, yeah, I love what I do because it is just so rewarding. Did you end up with an autoimmune diagnosis yourself? I did not. I work very hard to prevent one.

Yeah. A lot of autoimmune stuff in my family, everything from like array and Hashimoto's and Crohn's, and ulcerative colitis and all this stuff. So I worked very to like make sure I'm not going to get an auto immune disease.

Right. That's one legacy you don't want to continue. Exactly. Okay. You took a kick on that. Yeah. Yeah, I didn't get the message or the memo before, you know, pursuing that legacy, unfortunately, but we're reversing it.

So I ate out without being sick last week or two weeks ago, three weeks go. It's good. There's hope in autoimmune world. That's what I'll say. So let's find out.

So our goal, our personal goal is the resolution and reversal of autoimmune disease as well as the prevention of Autoimmune Disease. You're an expert in this.

Let's talk about what are the things that cause someone to be sort of set up or predisposed to having an auto immune disease? Yeah, great question because a lot of people's first instinct is to go to genetics.

Like, I just have it in my family. I'm just doomed to have, you know, and that kind of is the trap for other things, other chronic diseases like diabetes and stuff too.

But we know in the functional world that it's preventable and it is something that can be reversed when you have it. So what we're trying to do for people is educate them on the root causes of like why they can't be more predisposed, like you said, to developing a disease in the first place.

Some of the causes that we find really common are sometimes overlooked in a standard medicine model because, you know, they're not necessarily treatable problem with them pills.

Like leaky gut or something can set up somebody to have an autoimmune disease or having a hormone imbalance or have a toxin exposure or stress, adrenal dysfunction.

And so a lot of those things aren't conventional diagnoses and they don't really get looked at. But when we start to peel back the layers of like, why did somebody get sick in the first place?

Those are some of the common root causes that we'll see like over and over again. Yeah, and I think, did I miss leaky gut? Did you mention it and missed it?

Okay, so I missed that. Yeah. I mean, like you can't have an autoimmune disease if you don't a leakey gut. So, okay. Genes play a role, but not a huge role.

Right. It could be what kind of makes it easier for your body to get triggered in an abnormal way. it can kind set you up, it doesn't mean that it's going to happen.

You can definitely work with your genetics to help support it functioning better.

Root causes and triggers of autoimmunity

prevent the problem from happening. I mean, that makes sense because 40% of the population has one or both of DQ, Dq8, HLA antigens for celiac except celia is only like one.

So if your genetics was running the show, everyone who had the Hla subtype would have or juvenile rheumatoid arthritis because that's on the same gene.

Everyone would that if they had a gene, so that really makes that your genes are not your destiny because… So what are some of the triggers? Cause we talk about triggers.

Other than OBGYN residency? Other then that, yes. Cause that is a large population. Don't do an OB-Gyn residency and you'll never get an autoimmune disease.

That's one way. Yes. So I think it all boils down to stress and stress resilience. Like your body will experience so many different things and factors over time.

And if it's able to, if its healthy enough to handle those different types of stress, it can kind of compensate and move on and not trigger something abnormal.

So when we think about stress there's like obviously mental, emotional stress. Going through a residency or something, but then there is also physical, chemical stress like having too many toxins or having even hormonal imbalance, or having food sensitivity, we're having a microbiome imbalance.

So down to like a cellular level and like physical chemical level, there's lots of different things that create stress on the body. Like for example, one of the things I see gets overlooked all the time is like blood sugar.

how important blood sugar is, like your blood, sugar needs to be at a pretty stable, consistent level or be able to, be handled well in order to not create this like constant stress on your adrenals and your cortisol and, your body as a whole, because that's the energy source, right?

And so, just looking at like what creates stress, on the body and then if there's too many stressors at once, that when things start to break down, I like when you talk about blood sugar.

Cause in conventional medicine, when, at least when I was taught, uh, dark dark ages, like long time ago, we, it was the Funstone's days. We were at 5.7, A1CO 5.7. It's no big deal.

Just pre-diabetes. You're not, you're really not diabetic. That's nothing to worry about. And we know that. At 5.7, you're already having significant damage from its sugar.

And we look for markers that are way, way below that. I'm trying to really convince, alter a patient's reality of, wait, my regular doctor said this was fine.

Well, we're the strict parent. I guess we are the… Like I'm the Strict Parent and your doctor is a little bit easier going and I am stricter. Well I think it's not actually stricker.

It comes from different goals. So we say we want people to be vibrant through at least a hundred years old. And if you have a goal of A1C of 5.7, you're not going to get there very likely.

Really looking at, it is not just Blood sugar regulation, yes, ups and downs are huge and we, a lot of people are now using continuous glucose monitors and that's an awesome thing.

And one level even, probably below, I don't even know, is behind this, like making sure that your blood sugar is just

not too high overall. Like, and then you get to continuous, glucose monitor.

Yeah, right. I was just thinking about, Tiffany, I'll share with you that one of our colleagues' boyfriend's mother did a program that we put on. So it's kind of far removed, but she was eating a standard American diet.

She drinks three cokes a day, four maybe, and she did this four week program to transform how she is eating. And during the course of the program, her headaches resolved, skin rashes resolved.

she stopped having irritable bowel. off the sauce. And we were just talking about her because it's been a year since that program and she's not maintained any of it.

All of those issues have returned. This thing about blood sugar is one can of Coke has 39 grams of sugar in it, so I think that's something like 12 teaspoons practically of Sugar.

Just the impact that has on every system in our body. Not even the toxins. Fructose corn syrup. Which has the mercury with a side of mercury. And glyphosate.

Side of Mercury and glyphasate, like, just pile it on. Crazy. We love sodas. The glyphase is the magic word. It like sends me off the cliff because it's everywhere.

Okay. Yeah. So if someone, I mean, when I look back, a hundred percent it was stress combined with the way I was eating combined, with crappy genes. so genes play a role, but that on top of the exposures, on the sleepless nights, the stress.

I really remember being in residency and being like, I am not right. That was not discounted by having an amazing boyfriend at the time. He was amazing.

You know, he would do acupuncture on me like once every other week when I saw him. That's not offset, that's what I was going for. Glutton for punishment, then married me and had to deal with the celiac.

Anyway, back to the point, because we're all about preventing autoimmune disease. So if someone's recognizing, okay, I have these potential triggers or I'm constantly in a state of stress or not sleeping enough, or yeah, maybe I could clean up the way I eat potentially.

How do they even know where to start? What's the magic first step? That's a good question. And it is different for everybody. Like I'm sure you guys see too, like everybody has their different triggers or their main areas that they need to focus on.

Blood sugar, symptoms, and where to start

For some people like getting off the soda is like the biggest thing that could do and like that's the one thing to first, you know, and build tiny habits, take tiny steps.

Other people are like all ready to go into like a full reset of their diet and their lifestyle all at once. So we kind of have to meet the person where they're at.

But I think what somebody can do themselves is to start taking kind of an inventory of what they notice in their body and starting to pay more attention to what it's telling them.

So the way we look at symptoms, symptoms are kind like if we were a car, it is our check engine lights, like our way of noticing that there's something going on in our body.

And so if somebody's noticing that they're tired all the time or they have some pain or are getting headaches or their having diarrhea or bloating, like start to kind of take note or journal what they are noticing and when and if it's connected to anything else.

Oh yeah, I was really stressed. So yeah I didn't sleep. I ate this certain food. And then they can start kind to investigate it for themselves and start put some of those pieces together.

But really where we find the biggest difference is when somebody works with functional lab testing to know exactly what's going on in their bodies so they're not just guessing and in that way too we can start to narrow down well what are the biggest culprits like what the areas that we should focus on to build a good foundation so that the house doesn't fall down as we're building it so like something as simple as like a blood sugar problem could be a priority in fixing so that your cells work so everything else works or making sure somebody is digesting so the food becomes less of a problem.

So just trying to figure out like for that person what the biggest dysfunctions are and what's trickling into everything because sometimes the symptoms that they're chasing are really just a response to something else that's going on, right?

So, I mean, people come into your practice and they have an autoimmune disease and you can fix them in a week, right? Cause you're that good. Just get my magic wand out and there we go.

I keep forgetting mine at home. Like I had one and it broke. It shattered. So how long does it take? What does, what does take and how What does it take and how long?

So again, everybody is so different. I have seen some people turn around pretty quickly because like, let's say they're eating the standard American diet, they are, you know, not doing anything right.

They're not sleeping, there's constantly stress, They are not moving, their sedentary, and then they just start to like go through an elimination diet and like so many symptoms start clear up in a matter of weeks.

And I've seen that type or that end of the spectrum. And then I'm also seen where, you know, we're doing all these things and it takes months to start to get the person to a more stable place because maybe they've had this autoimmune disease for like two decades, three decades.

You know? Like their whole life they had problems. It's not going to go away overnight. So typically like the patients that we see that come in with an auto immune diagnosis, because sometimes we get people that haven't had the diagnosis but they still know that there's something wrong and we can still help them get some answers.

Just, you know, when there's something like or even a MS or lupus patient, typically we'll work with them for six months to a year to really get them to good stable place.

And that's our goal is to get into a place they know how to keep taking care of themselves from that point on. So usually it's like a minimum of six month that we work somebody.

How much work are you doing on toxins? Like what role is that playing in your practice? So we definitely look at that as like one of the root causes. And for some people, that's one at the top things that is continuously keeping their immune system unhappy and causing problems.

Like I could think of a couple of people on the, top of my head, there was a MS patient that we were working with. For a while, I think we did work with her for like probably six months and she was doing really good for a couple months.

And then she came back and was all flared up and couldn't figure out because she wasn't doing anything different with diet or lifestyle. Everything seemed fine.

She wasn' doing any different. We really started to talk about what could be the issue. Turns out she got a new mattress and it was like off gassing and causing her to have a reaction.

Um, or had like a RA patient who went on vacation and her symptoms got so much better. She came home, they

came back and it ended up that she's using a oil diffuser every night in her bedroom.

And like, she stopped using that and things got better, so toxins definitely could be a. role. And sometimes that is like the thing we'll focus on. Sometimes we're just kind of making sure the body can handle the toxins and like working on the liver detox pathways and the stool, like being able to eliminate through having good bowel movements or sometimes glutathione.

Glutathion is a staple for when we were talking about autoimmunity. It's like one of the things that literally regulates our immune system. So that's an antioxidant that can help us detox.

Toxins, detox support, and key nutrients

So depending on, you know, if that's the main driver of their immune system challenge, that might be something we focus on first, or it might just be kind of cleaning up everything else and the body can handle the toxins better.

And then educating the person on like, where the toxins come from, right? Yeah, so huge plug for if you're in the market for a new mattress, make sure that it doesn't have flame retardants in them because they are tremendous endocrine disruptors and throw your system off.

And I always say like if something needs to be… It's important. If you decide to smoke in your bed, it's really important to have that. Yes, if your a smoker and you live in a row house and your going to smoking in bed you need that, but otherwise you don't need.

But I think I always say if it needs to be off gassed, maybe don't buy it, right? Like think about if its going to stink when you get at home and that's another plug for filter your car, especially if you're getting a new car.

Filter out that new cars smell even though it's tempting because that car smell is 300 chemicals coming your way. So someone who's hypersensitive, hypothetically speaking, like someone on this call wouldn't do well with that.

I mean, nobody we know, of course. Right. How come I was going to say, are there any other supplements or nutrients that you tend to recommend for autoimmune specifically for our immunity?

Um, specifically. Not, not specific. Cause again, we're not really just treating like the auto immune diseases looking on like what's making the immune system not.

function and be balanced. So actually there's things like nutrients like glutathione that help with the Treg cells of the immune system. Like vitamin D and omega-3s and glutathiol.

Those can help the t regulatory cells to kind of balance things out. Yeah, those are kind staples for pretty much anybody that has an autoimmune disease.

But other than that, it's really what's causing the problem. I mean, do you remember when we were learning about vitamin D, the most fascinating part of it is that it regulates the tight junctions in your gut.

So if you're taking vitamin d, that can assist with not having leaky gut versus not taking Vitamin D. Especially, you know, we are talking offline about how you live in California and it's beautiful, like 361 days of the year, but we live Massachusetts and its beautiful like 95 days a year.

365. It's Beautiful. sunny California, so it's called sunny, California. But anyway, that if you're living in a place that's not as nice, you definitely need vitamin D.

And everyone needs it so that you can help regulate your gut and your immune system and tight junction so you don't develop leaky gut. So I think it was amazing learning about that.

And even in California, you would be surprised how many people that we get that are just low in vitamin D. Like I

can literally think of just two people on the top of my head that when we tested their vitamin levels without taking any vitamin, they had somewhat normal levels.

Everybody has deficiency no matter what they have going on. It's just our demand for it is so much higher. So even people who spend a lot of time outside, like really, it's maybe not enough.

Well, I think it made sense because when you're outside in sunny California, you are going to put sunscreen on or a hat on. You're still working in California so you aren't sitting outside working.

So you haven't… You are not getting the benefit of being in california or if you put on sunscreen so that you don't get skin cancer. Huge plug for vitamin D.

Why do some people not get autoimmune diseases? Or why do they say, okay, I haven't felt well for years, but I just finally got my auto immune disease?

What's that about? Right, like it just came on overnight, right? Yeah, I think that's a common misunderstanding is that it can happen just like that. It really is usually a process of years to get to that point because what's happening is the body is trying to constantly compensate for things.

So it's always trying keep you alive and help keep safe and like fix the problem. And so when there's too many problems or the problems have been so chronic, that when it really comes to a head and becomes a diagnosis.

right an issue or it gets to the point where there's so much tissue destruction that's happened that now it can be symptomatic and showing up positive on like testing.

So the average time for like at least something like a lupus diagnosis the, average for somebody to have symptoms before they can get an official diagnosis or a label of what they have going on is about seven years and that symptomic so like there was probably years, and years before that that they weren't symptotic but it was kind of in the works already, right?

And so again, looking at like all the different stressors that the person has on their in their body and their lifestyle, like the things that they can control.

And that's what this is all about too, is like figuring out things you can't control because a lot of this you CAN through your diet, through lifestyle through stress management, That's why some people cannot get an autoimmune disease, right, is they recognize how to take care of themselves in a way that's going to help their body handle what it goes through on a regular basis.

And it gives them some of that resilience to be able to handle stuff so it doesn't trigger a problem.

Why autoimmune disease takes years to diagnose

Got it. Cool. I mean, it sounds like you love what you do. You mentioned that at the beginning, like, you really… I just, I love it, It's like everybody is like this puzzle and I get to put all the pieces together and, and just see light bulb moments going off when I talk to people about like what's going on in their body.

And I see them like oh my God, nobody ever explained that to me. It was like yeah, this is cool. you could do something about it Cool, so where can people find more stuff about you?

Where can they find you, how can you connect? Yeah, you can just go to our website, Kaplan Health Institute. It's kaplanwithac.caplanhealthinstitute.com.

And there's more information, our blog and everything on there. Our lupus solution book is written for lUPUS patients to help them understand what that disease is and looking at it through a functional lens.

So if somebody has. Lubus, that would be a great book, but just in general, like autoimmunity, it's a way to look at functional medicine perspective of like the root causes of why somebody develops something like lupus or an autoimmune issue.

So our book could be good resource for some people. But yeah, just online. This is awesome. All right. That's lot of information. Thank you. Yeah, there's I think there are a lot ways that people could look you up, work with you, find you because it is critical.

Because we're essentially a country headed for an Autoimmune crisis. I think I saw in the paper that by 2035, that over 50% of the world will be obese, not just America.

It's just ridiculous. That's only 12 years away, Ed, just to put some reality in. Yeah. And that's a major driver, obviously, of autoimmunity. Chronic diseases.

Crazy. So. Toxins are the root cause of obesity. One of them. And it's preventable, which is the good news, right? Yes, totally. Reverse call when you understand it.

Yes. All right. So on behalf of everyone, I mean, this is great. Thank you for being here for this episode of the Environmental Toxicans Autoimmunity Chronic Diseases Summit.

For the people who are just joining in, you're going to want to go back and listen to this. Our guest is Dr. Tiffany Kaplan. And for the rest of you who have been with her the whole time, go follow her and find her, and have a great day.

Thank you for tuning into Dr. Talks. We hope today's episode has enlightened and inspired you on your path to optimal health. Each day is a new opportunity to make choices that empower your well-being.

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