Introduction and Guest Background

Welcome back. We're continuing our conversation on reversing Crohn's and colitis and our autoimmune chronic digestive conditions. I'm your host, Sinclair Kennally.

And today I am joined by my wonderful friend and colleague, Dr. Elisa Song. She's an MD who Stanford, NYU, UCSF trained. She's an integrative pediatrician, a pediatric functional medicine expert, and mama to two thriving children.

She's also the bestselling author of Healthy Kids Happy Kids, which is also the name of her amazing Instagram community. I hope you're following her there in her integrative pediatric practice, Whole Family Wellness, she has helped thousands of children get to the root causes of their health concerns and empower parents to help their children thrive.

Body, mind and spirit. By integrating conventional pediatrics with functional medicine, homeopathy, acupuncture, herbal medicine, and essential oils. Dr. Song created Healthy Kids Happy Kids as an online holistic pediatric resource to help practitioners and parents bridge the gap between conventional and integrative pediatrics.

With an evidence based, pediatrician backed, Mama approved approach. Welcome Dr. Elisa, it's so wonderful to have you on here. Oh, I always love chatting with you.

We were chatting offline and I could chat with you forever, but we want to we want to get your audience learning. So yeah, exactly. So you and I both wanted to talk about autoimmune digestive conditions in kids today.

So let's jump right to it because I know our parents need some support right now. This is a really complex day and age to be a parent. And so tell me your clinical assessment.

How common is autoimmunity in children today and how worried as parents should we be. Yeah. So the CDC, the latest numbers have shown that nearly 1 in 2 kids has some sort of a chronic diagnosis.

Now, there are, I believe, many more kids who fit into this category who don't necessarily have a diagnosis. And yet, as a parent, you know, you're thinking something's not quite right.

They shouldn't have to mix all the time or diarrhea all the time, or headaches or joint pain, like they're just not thriving. And so when we look at autoimmunity in particular, because that's what, you know, so many listeners right now are thinking, I just I don't want the same thing happening to my children.

it's not all doom and gloom, right? As a pediatrician, I would not be out there educating and speaking on this if it were hopeless. But we do know that we have to be really kind of eyes wide open and aware.

How Common Autoimmunity Is in Kids

And to the fact that autoimmunity is on the rise in our kids. So there is a very nonspecific autoimmune blood marker, which many listeners probably have had in their life.

It's called an RNA or antinuclear antibody, very nonspecific. It does not mean that you have an autoimmune disease, but it is like the canary in the coal mine that, you know, if you have this positive RNA, we just know you're your child.

You are maybe ready to tip over into that. And so researchers followed different age groups through the decades from about the 1980s on, found that the age group with the most rapid rise in RNA positive levels were our youth

12 to 19 year olds.

So, you know, doubled in the 80s to the 90s and then again tripled. Our genes have not changed. And yes, there may be autoimmunity. That quote runs in the family.

But this goes to show you it is not just folks, not just children who have autoimmunity in the family. We have to look at other factors. And that's exac, where we have the power to impact the future health of our children, even the current health of our children.

Our genes don't set our lifestyles and our health in stone. Yeah, I think that's a really important distinction to make, because there's a lot of fear mongering out there right now about how, you know, genes are setting everybody up for autoimmunity.

And you know, that I understand with the prevalence of DNA testing how fun it is to do that. But I also want to make sure people understand that this is not a death sentence, and it's certainly not a life sentence.

Well, I'm so glad you said that because, you know, with with the rise of so many direct to consumer genetic panels, snips, markers that are available, you know, it started off with 23 for me.

And this is I mean, it's been several a couple of decades now at least. Right. And everyone hung their hat on. Oh my gosh, I have an MTHFR mutation. My kid does. So now you know. Forget it.

My my future health, my children's future health is doomed. And so now we get into this granular. We can see all of these genomic, you know, markers that might increase our risk.

But that's all it says. And so we really have to understand that yes, it might increase your risk. But for me that is an amazing wow okay. Now I know I have this increased risk or my child has this increased risk.

And now I know what I need to double down on to make sure that my child doesn't tip over into that, or if they already have or I already have. I know the intervention points that can reverse that epigenetic trend.

Yeah. Thank you for saying that. Reverse the epigenetic trend I like that. So let's let's dig in then, because the whole title of our interview is can you prevent autoimmunity in children?

And I want to reassure parents that you're in the right place. Yeah. What do you think are the biggest three risk factors for autoimmunity in our children right now?

And can they are they preventable? Yeah, 100%. So I would say, you know, which which of the three are the biggest needle movers. It just depends on your your story. Right.

Top Risk Factors: Nutrition, Toxins, and Gut Health

Your Ted story and how you're living and eating in the moment. So one of the top ones is really, our nutritional insufficiency or deficiency state that we are chronically living in.

And that could be for a host of different reasons. Many people have heard that we are the most overfed, undernourished population in the world. It's only getting worse.

So we have this micronutrient depletion of our soil. So even if you're eating as clean as possible, you're just not getting as much of the nutrient density that we need from our soil, from our plants, to really sustain living in our modern world.

and yet then we have the nutrient depletion of even the healthiest foods, and also the fact that two thirds of our children and teens diet across the state comes from ultra processed foods.

The more processed food is, the the lower the nutrient density, the higher the, toxins. You know, we're going to talk about microbiome disruption. And so we have this sort of balance where, you know, the foods that are serving us are supposed to serve us are less nutrient dense.

And then we have the ultra processed foods which are wreaking havoc on our immune systems and our gut and our brains and minerals like zinc, magnesium, iron, selenium.

And of course, we have vitamin D. All of these are such common nutrient deficiencies in our kids. And each of those are so important for a healthy, appropriate immune response that we also have.

Number two, our increased world of environmental toxicity. And here's where we have to sometimes stop scrolling through our Instagram feeds because you can start thinking, oh my gosh, how am I going to live?

I just I need to put a bubble around my child. And unfortunately, even if you live in a bubble, even if you just kind of shrink wrap your child and say they're not going to be exposed to anything, they're still going to be exposed by these forever chemicals.

They've also been called everywhere chemicals. We can do our best to reduce our burden of them, but we can't avoid them altogether. We know that, you know, in virtually every single sample of breast milk and cord blood that they found different levels of environmental toxicants.

And so, we just have to understand we are being exposed. We can't live in fear because we need to live in our modern world and thrive. We also don't want to bubble wrap our kids, because we don't want them to be isolated and lonely, and we know the harmful inflammatory effects of that.

And so making sure that we can, really make detox a lifestyle for our kids, helping them to understand. Right. It's not just about the one off. I'm going to do a spring cleanse and a fall cleanse.

It's like, no, we have to make sure that the detox really is a way of living. Not this, you know, one off heavy duty. And sometimes you'll need that. If your kids are sick or you're sick, you might need.

Although at those times you need even more gentle, right? But you might need to be a little more targeted. And the number three, which is really tied into all of these, is, is the health of your child's gut microbiome.

So our microbiomes have changed through the centuries. We know that we as we you know, as children, adults are losing, you know, broad species of probiotics in our gut, especially a category of probiotics called bifidobacteria, which bifidobacteria, we know for adults, you know, through the pandemic, there was a study that looked at adults with worse Covid outcomes and found that that was correlated with lower levels, significantly lower levels of bifidobacteria in their gut.

We also know that the that the loss of bifidobacteria in infants gut sets the stage for something called loss of immune tolerance, which is one thing that seems to be, really contributing to the rise of food allergies and anaphylactic food allergies in our children.

And so we need this bifidobacteria to talk to our immune systems and say, hey, we have this thing that's irritating to us. How are you going to respond?

Are you going to respond appropriately, deal with it and clear it? Or are you going to respond with this chronic, simmering inflammatory response? Or are you going to respond with this inappropriate immune response and start attacking yourself, which is what we see in autoimmunity.

And so understanding how to optimize your task gut microbiome at any age, but especially if you can in their infancy, can really help to prevent that auto immunity from switch from flipping.

This is such an important point because, you know, there's a confluence of factors here. So it's never just one

domino, right? And we and as parents, you know, you can get very focused on like this is the moment my child changed, which is certainly important data.

We also got to figure that there's there's a lot that's been brewing under the surface for quite some time. And part of, you know, rescuing your child from these chronic conditions is gently unpacking all of the factors in the proper order with the right care.

Right. That is beautiful. Because, you know, I think in, I love that functional medicine brought to light this idea of looking for the root cause. And yet now it's also doing a disservice to our parents and our children because there's never I'm not going to say never.

There's hardly ever just one root cause there may be one root cause when when it comes to if there's, you know, a huge, huge, instant environmental, you know, toxicant exposure, right?

Maybe. Right. Yeah. Acute. An acute poisoning. Right. But otherwise there's there's never just one that that tipping point that you see in your child, maybe it was, you know, medical intervention or whatever it is. Right?

That tipping point is just the straw that broke the camel's back. And you have this whole backstory of, well, what happened to, move your child's immune system or their gut or their brain into such a delicate, imbalanced state that something pushed them over the edge.

But then when we unravel, like you said, kind of unpack gently the story, we can see, okay, where do we need to intervene now to help, shift the direction that your child's immune system, brain and gut are all heading in?

Yeah, that's such a beautiful point. And like to your point about that, Bifidobacteria, there's so many factors in your environment, in your child's diet that would be affecting this beneficial strain, that can help modulate the correct immune response.

And one of those is actually it's been shown that Emfs EMF exposure. So that would be like the signal from your Wi-Fi router. And smart devices actually make beefalo, grow slower.

Why the Gut Shapes Immunity in Children

Yeah, it it retards growth and appropriate population control in the gut of beneficial bacteria strains, including bifida, and actually speeds up growth of pathogenic bacterial strains like E.coli and Salmonella.

So if you're wondering why your kiddos gut is off, yeah, it's probably the herbicides and pesticides and there's more about our environment that we're interacting with all the time.

And we just we get to learn about these things a little at a time. You never going to. I love the way you say don't bubble wrap your child because that's so important.

We can't come from fear. But what I found is that kiddos can absolutely heal if we focus on the factors we can control. Absolutely. And there is so much and this is where it is a message of, empowerment and just taking things one step at a time.

Because here's the thing. If you take one step at a time, let's say, you work on lowering the EMF exposures or just really, really minimizing the ultra processed foods that your kids are exposed to.

Well, that's going to move the needle in improving their gut microbiomes, improving bifidobacteria, and also all the other beneficial keystone species that are supposed to be there.

And then that's going to have a ripple effect on the gut immune system connection, your gut brain connection, gut hormone connection. So you start with one and then you wait and reassess and see, okay, what else do I need to address.

But we do not have to do everything at once. That's a great point. So you like to quote Hippocrates about how all disease starts in the gut. Can you, expand on how this applies to children specifically, especially as it relates to, immunity, Hashimoto's, Crohn's things?

Yeah. That for kiddos. Yeah. So, you know, Hippocrates has said all disease starts in the gut. At least we think so. Right? He's credited with saying that. Yeah.

but, you know, I also like to flip that because we want to move forward, envisioning our healthy, thriving child, not just the disease state that we're trying to prevent.

So all health also does start in the gut. That gives us a more proactive place to start. But when we're thinking about our children's immune system and you know, your your child is not completely a blank slate when they're born, but but there's a lot to be written, right.

And a lot of that we have in our control. And so when we recognize that for for children and for adults, but 80% of our immune system lies in our gut microbiome and the key ways that our microbiota.

So whether they're beneficial bugs or pathogenic bugs, how they communicate with our immune system really informs our immune system. Hey, how are you going to respond to this thing that's, you know, that we're exposed to whether it's a food or an environmental toxin or an infection.

So any of these our gut is our largest interface with our outside world. If you think about it, where one hollow tube and, you know, from from mouth all the way down to where the poop comes out, that is our biggest exposure of everything we're eating, even breathing, the toxins we're ingesting, you know, the butts in our water, all of that.

And so you bet our gut plays a really important role in, in telling our immune systems what is friend or foe. Now, for babies, especially where their immune systems are just getting trained, right.

All of these things are brand new, so their immune system has to learn for that very first time. How do I respond? And so we know disruption to the gut microbiome in those early key stages can really set the stage for having the path that we don't want.

There was one very, very large study, a military study of nearly 800,000 children that followed babies, from the time they were born to up to four years of age, and found that infants who were given antibiotics or antacid medications.

Why those two medications? Because they pretty instantly disrupt your gut microbiome. So infants who receive those medications in the first six months of life had a second increased risk, sometimes double the risk of virtually every single allergic disorder by the time they were four years of age.

So that includes eggs, asthma, asthma, hay fever, anaphylactic food allergies. And I'm going to put autoimmunity in there because we know autoimmunity is of course an immune condition.

And we know that this imbalance in the gut microbiome in early stages can set the stage for an increased risk for all sorts of chronic health conditions.

When your kids are older, teenagers and adults. Now, that being said, if if your child is, you know, they're eight and they have asthma and you know, and you're thinking, oh my gosh, they've had multiple rounds of antibiotics.

Yes, that is your starting point. We know that. But now, you know, to look at their gut microbiome, because if you went to a conventional dermatologist or immunologist, chances are they're not going to say, you know what?

Let's take a look at your child's gut microbiome and see the state of imbalance. It's in first. Right. They're going to target the symptoms, which yes, your child may need symptomatic relief.

Absolutely. But when we're looking at some of the underlying factors we have to then know right. If it's an immune

system issue, that is a microbiome issue.

If it's a brain symptom that is a microbiome symptom. So this is where you know really and truly that knowledge is power. So you know, now if you are trying to prevent autoimmune any from happening, we still look at the gut microbiome.

if your child is showing some signs that maybe they're headed that way, then we absolutely look at the gut microbiome. So whether you want to be proactive as a parent or, kind of reactive and proactive at the same time, we still want to know how do we lay the foundations for a healthy gut microbiome and how do we restore balance if there's already been some disruption? And that's beautifully said.

Okay, so for all the parents in the audience who like yes, that absolutely happened. oh. And now we're 8 to 10 years or 12. Yeah. Or 15 years into this.

What do I do, doctor Lisa, we suggest that they start. So I'd like to you know, many listeners have heard of the five hours, you know, for healing the leaky gut, but but really, it's it, there's so many factors, I think even, before we get to the five hours.

So when I talk to kids about and parents about is is a gut reset. So a total reset. So the when I talk about the reset, the re in reset is really returning returning to the foundations, returning to what I call the five things from microbiome magic.

Resetting the Gut: Foundations and Leaky Gut Repair

Because I want to teach kids how to live in this way, in a really in a fun way that that is sustainable. So we have to get down to the basics of what we know nurtures our gut microbiome with the things that we're eating or not eating with, how we're breathing and engaging.

Our vagus nerve every day with how we're moving our bodies, sleeping and hydrating. All of those five things are the foundations and why I call it the five things for microbiome magic is because for for parents and kids, they don't want, I don't want as a parent.

You know, another thing that I have to add on to my daily regimen, right? We have already so many things to do, but these are five things that you are already doing every single day.

So we can learn how to make small shifts in how we're doing them. If we can teach kids how to do these, to be gut heroes to the trillions of tiny, microscopic friends in their tummies, it makes it so much easier, then to get back to the foundations, because we can, quote, heal your leaky gut, you know, with the five hours, but without the foundations, these five things that that are creating that microbiome magic, you're going to slide right back into microbiome disruption.

Right. And we've seen that as practitioners you get your kids into remission and you're like okay everyone's good. But then the next thing the next hit occurs and they start sliding right back with the foundations.

We're creating microbiome resilience okay. So that's going back to the foundation. So now the set part set we have to seal and heal the leaky gut. And that's what a lot of practitioners and parents listening have already done.

And they know they know the foundations. But you know we're giving the gut lining nutrients to heal including things like and this can vary, but including things like, glutamine and zinc and omega threes and quercetin are some of my favorite.

we're also and healing the leaky gut, removing anything that is inflammatory and triggering in the moment. So that can include psychological stress, which can trigger something called Xinyi Lin to be released from your small intestinal lining.

which trigger? Which is a sign of leaky gut within an hour. Right. So it's not to say to have no stress. It is to say, right, we got it. We got to focus on our stress management, vagus nerve, parasympathetic tools, but also foods.

a big culprit. I'm going to say is gluten. It's, you know, gluten alone, right. Gluten. Yep. Especially in the US where we're, you know, with such, you know, with our foods that are so kind of GMO and really packed with more gluten than, than other places in the world.

gluten alone can trigger leaky gut and gut inflammation, even if you don't have celiac disease, even if you don't have any other, you know, autoimmune issues going on it, it sets a stage.

So I do think that is important. Yeah. And we we have to get realistic about this because, you know, so many times when we have parents come in and they're like, that's a huge transition for them.

How do I regulate my child? How do I run my household? You know, with shifting the diet, we want to make sure that we're not making the child who is the sickest the the problem.

And absolutely it's best if it's a whole family chef. Right. And it does benefit everybody while you're healing that way. They're not eating separate foods, which is scarring in and of itself, especially, you know, at certain ages.

Yeah. Yeah. Well, and it is so important to make this a family affair because, I mean, of course, we all share similar genetic makeups in the family, and I've had so many kids and parents when the when they get on board with the gluten free diet and or, you know, gluten free trial, at least a lot of times other family members are like, oh my gosh, I didn't I never realized that.

I woke up every morning with back pain, but now it's gone. And I, you know, and you know. Or I'm sleeping at night. I'm sleeping through the night around my midsection.

Yeah. Or I'm more. I don't have that brain fog. I didn't even know a brain fog was. But now I know because my brain is so clear now. Right? Or that little drip I didn't even know I hadn't.

That's right, that's right, that's right. So, it is really important to m you know, when we're talking to kids about this, it's really, you know, we want to, educate and empower them, and we want to bring them along in our own educational journey, too.

Right. Because kids are going to be much more likely to, be invested in trying and then also coming back to this, even if during their high school years, they're like, no, sorry, I'm not going to do this right.

That happens. Right. And I've had kids who when you're younger, it's so much easier to, you know, have more of a say of what goes in their mouth and on their bodies.

I mean, think about I mean, my my kids right now are all into the fragrances. I'm like, oh my gosh, you know, so it's a thing. And like the skincare regimen and the I mean it's a whole thing.

And so but the education piece. Right. A really like letting them know okay. This is the potential of this is why we do this. and then really having them be more in tune and noticing how their body and their brain feels, what's going on in their gut, what's going on on their skin, their mood, whatever it is, you know, after they make different choices for the better.

You know, if they have a meal that is loaded with, you know, antioxidants and, you know, not processed, and, you know, how did that had it? How how did soccer go or how did your school play go?

Or, you know, whatever it is, right? Or if you choose the unicorn, you know, neon Frappuccino with, you know, with the, you know, cake pops and the whatever.

Right. How did you feel then? Right? We just want them to connect the dots because it is not for most children, as

they get older and teenagers or as they head off to college.

It is not unfortunate. I mean, I say unfortunately it's a learning process, right? It's not a reality that they're going to eat 100% the way that we want them to eat all the time.

And let's face it, we don't do that either. Right? We have to acknowledge, right, even as adults who, we quote, know better, better. Many times we are choosing to stay up a little bit later because I just want to, you know, send off a few more emails or, oh my gosh, I just see this, you know, this one, one show that I want to finish watching or whatever it is.

Right? Or, you know, last week was National Donut Day. I know I shouldn't, but I really love glazed donut. I mean, how many times do we do that? So it's not realistic to think our kids are never, ever going to.

What is realistic is to empower them with the knowledge so that they can make informed choices, and they know how to make those informed decisions. And as their brains and their frontal cortex and that rational decision making part of their brain continue to mature into their late 20s, they know they have the foundations and they're going to come back to it.

So that is really it's one of the keys to, I think, lifelong success for our kids is not to get hung up in the oh my gosh, we're not doing it 100% correctly right now.

because like I said, that is a part of growing up is to learn from our mistakes and learn from, you know, what are the choices we make. And so you guys, as parents, you're going to get out.

Trust me, I have so many kids are now off to college and they're they know the choices and they're continuing to make them or at least recognize when they did it and the impact that it has and how to build that cushion around their gut microbiome and their immune systems so that they can bounce right back.

So that is, you know, when we think about sealing, healing the gut, that's that's part of this set. Eliminating gut dysbiosis, the set the e eliminate gut dysbiosis if it's there, which I will say for autoimmunity.

This is one of the key pieces because in your test gut microbiome if you look and do a, you know, microbiome analysis, you may find different bacteria that we know can increase your risk of autoimmunity.

And these are bacteria that I look for like Klebsiella or Citra bacteria or Proteus, where even if they're at low levels and they're considered, quote non pathogenic, I would like to remove those if we're concerned about autoimmunity.

And I've had kids who have had autoimmune conditions where the final thing that switch them into remission and ultimate healing was getting rid of their Klebsiella dysbiosis.

So really you know, taking a look and seeing that can be an important part of of, you know, preventing autoimmunity.

Vagus Nerve, Nervous System, and Co-Regulation

And the t this transform I mean the gut microbiome that is so key when we transform the gut microbiome and really create resilience, we are working to solidify, strengthen, create a resilient gut brain connection and resilient vagus nerve.

That is the one of the most important pieces in either preventing or reversing any autoimmune phenomena that can be occurring. This vagus nerve piece is not just a lot of people listening.

Will will know the vagus nerve because that's how we just we we rest and digest and we meditate and we feel good and we're common focused. I love that that is 100%.

I want that for you and your kids. But what I tell kids and parents that the positive state of being. That is an awesome side effect of engaging your vagus nerve, right?

The real reason to engage your vagus nerve every day and learn how to do that on your own every day is because it reduces chronic inflammation. It helps you recover from illnesses.

It helps regulate your blood sugar and your hormones. It helps support and optimize your gut microbiome independent of diet. And that is really key because for some parents, it's the most stressful thing to think about changing diet because their kids maybe are eating a handful of foods.

Well, okay, we do want to move away from ultra processed foods and work on that. But if that's that's more for the long game, then work on your child's vagus nerve because it will move the needle on their gut health.

I think that's really beautifully said. You know we we see a lot of vagus nerve talking like the meditation communities or in the biohacker communities.

But what we're why it matters so much is fundamentally when our kids are unwell. Like this is one of the easiest ways to support them in shifting their experience and becoming self regulators once more.

Right. And it's not a supplement, thank goodness. Yes, yes. I mean, there are different, devices now you'll see that all you know can work on the vagus nerve.

there are kind of external ways, like you said, in the biohacking community, the vagus nerve is the thing right now. and there are different ways to measure your vagus nerve function by, by looking at your heart rate variability.

I think those all can have a role. However, learning how to regulate your nervous system on your own without external tools is really, really key for children.

And for adults and is completely free, right? And that's the thing. You know, we can we can use all of these tools. And sometimes we do need those external tools to just kind of immediately bring us back into like, I'm frenzied, I don't know, to okay, let's, you know, slap on this device or put something on your neck or yes, that can bring you back.

But if we but we still have to do the work and it's not a lot of work. That's why I call it in the book. One of the five things for microbiome magic is breathe, because we have to breathe every single day.

Now, if we can learn how to breathe in a way that immediately pulls us into that parasympathetic and engages our vagus nerve by just doing our belly breaths or diaphragmatic breathing, we can do that anytime, anywhere, without looking different to our kids.

It's really important, right? Even if they're kind of hyperventilating at their desk because they have to go up in five minutes to give their presentation in front of their entire class.

All right, let's do some five belly breaths at your desk. Immediately engage your vagus nerve, and then you go up in a more centered state in a way that also is less inflammatory, too.

Right. but this is something that that we can do. And if you teach your kids this, even yourselves. Right. Because I've had countless adults, parents who are sitting in my office and we're trying to do belly breathing together, and even the parents are trying to focus.

Okay, wait. I don't move my shoulders and wait. How do I, you know, breathe with my belly and and it's it's not it should be natural. You look at babies sleeping and breathing and they're not moving their shoulders.

Their belly is moving up. Bend down slowly as they fully inhale and exhale. And we've just now start to breathe with our shoulders. So going back to that narrow state, unfortunately we've moved out of it.

So we have to practice now. But that is one of the best ways that we can support full optimal health and also healing for our kids and for ourselves. Yeah, that's beautifully said.

Okay. So for kids who are already feeling unwell and have been for quite some time, I love the vagus nerve stimulation. I love the the layout of the reset that you just gave.

How about for parents who feel like, okay, Doctor Lisa, I'm trying all these things. what can I do for my super fragile, very progressed kid who's got an autoimmune condition and we're really in the weeds right now.

Where would you start with them? You know, honestly, I probably would still start with the vagus nerve. That's great to hear, right? Because because if we're still in that state of, oh my gosh, I'm doing everything.

Nothing's working. My child is so sick. we are still in that sympathetic mode, and our children are so energetically connected to us, especially to to us as moms.

Right. and of course, you know, kids can be connected with any of their caretakers, but there is this co regulation that occurs where, I mean, you you can feel it as a parent if you walk into your room and even if your child's back is turned to you, you know immediately how they're feeling.

Like if you just take a moment, you know, even without them saying a word, right, you can feel that and that whether they're excited and happy or you come in, you're like, oh my gosh, something's wrong, right?

And so if we are in this fight or flight still of and I get it, I mean, I have kids who are so sick and you know, as parents, especially the mom is you are up all night, you know, hunting on Doctor Google, like, what is the next thing?

Who can I see? What can I try? And you're, you know, sleeping three hours at night because you're up until two in the morning, then you have to get above five to start getting breakfast and lunch and whatever ready for school on top of, you know, making it to making your own deadlines at work.

And it's just, if if we work on our nervous system and regulation, I mean, us right? As parents. Yeah. Right. And then and then we help our children also we're going to co regulate together.

And then the next step can sometimes become a little bit more clear. And so and also more effective. Because here's the thing. If we're in this fight or flight state, you could be doing all the right supplements, medications, detox protocols, you know, whatever it is, living, you know, clearing all the toxins and, and and I don't mean to blame anybody or anything.

Right. But but your own immune system is now kind of held hostage to your, your sympathetic. And so if we can just learn to let that go, so many of the interventions that you are doing correctly, right, will start to work more, more fluidly.

So that is where I still would start. And then we can see, okay, what else do we need to start on? It may be that, did we miss, some, some element of dysbiosis that we're just not targeting with the right herbs or the right treatment or, do we need to maybe incorporate acupuncture as a way to regulate our immune system and support our liver for detox?

I mean, there may be some other tweaks. If you haven't explored homeopathy, do we need to look at, you know, homeopathic drainage or, you know, different modalities that maybe are even a little bit more outside the, you know, functional medicine box?

It is already outside the conventional medicine box. So, I mean, there are many, many more things that we can explore. But I would say rather than going down the rabbit hole of adding more and more and more, this is the time to pause and regroup and really focus on your nervous system.

First. I love that I, I so agree with you and I'm so glad that you mentioned coagulation, right? Because we see these parents go into overdrive, which makes so much sense because you're only as happy as your second child.

Yeah. And you, it's your responsibility. Your mama bears out. Or parents like, I've gotta save my child. Yeah, but your child is co regulating with you and is reading their nervous system cues about safety, and therefore their immune responses and digestive responses are responding to your copy to hold the container for them.

Hope, Recovery, and Where to Find Dr. Song

Yeah, this isn't to blame or shame. This is to invite you to also get support during this wellness journey. And then it's a whole family affair. Yeah.

And I think just sitting there and visualizing, no matter what state of health your child is in, and maybe you're just visualizing, you know, being out in nature and, you know, being in the most content state, you know, laying on the grass with your child and, and enjoying the moment.

But whatever it is, we have to really visualize those positive moments and move towards that picture of a healthy, thriving child. and not stay not have our brain stay focused on how sick my child is and when I'm trying to run away from.

Because that picture in your mind is very powerful. And if all we can see right now is a sick child, it makes it harder to envision moving towards a future of being less sick, being more well, you know, being thriving.

So, and not to make light of of your child's current state of health, but just to say we need to move forward, have have our mind be able to imagine that this is possible, because if we can't imagine it, it's going to be much less likely to happen.

So we really need to and and if that hope is not there right now, then take a moment and find someone who can work with you on envisioning that hope. I mean, that is that is really important.

That's so beautiful. I agree. You know, the one of the things I really appreciate about you is that you make it easy for parents to take that next step, you know, and this is a very complex day and age for our kiddos, for sure.

But it's not mysterious, you know? So healing is, yes, a little bit more complicated than it used to be, but it's not mysterious. There's a logic to this.

Yeah, there's an order for recovery. Once proper assessment has been done, and you might still be on the discovery path to find the right practitioner who's a good fit for you, who really speaks your child's language and knows how to look into the gut, knows how to think in terms of root causes, knows how to unpack them in the right order for your kiddo.

That's not overwhelming, because pacing is the name of the game for kids. Yes, yes. No. But it's it's still just a process and it's absolutely doable.

So I at least see miracles all the time. And I know you do too. Yeah. Thank you so much for your wisdom. Any last words of insight before we tell folks how they can find you?

So I would just want parents who are listening because many parents who are listening, they are they have been on this journey for quite some time. And or even if you're just starting out in your journey and you're realizing, oh my gosh, you know, there's so much that that needs to be done.

it is never too late to restore your child's microbiome, their immune system. It's it may take a little longer, right? But that's okay. I mean, this it is not, we're not here for the instant gratification, you know, let's have this happen tomorrow, because unfortunately, that's not the reality for us.

But it is a start of your journey and it's never too late. Yeah. That's so beautiful. I agree. I mean, I grew up, I was an antibiotic baby and toddler.

I grew up on McDonald's and handy snacks. I became extremely chronically ill and I'm symptom free now, so it's all doable. It's not really. That's right.

So where can folks find you? Where can they follow you? Yeah. So you can find me, on my website, which is Dot Healthy Kids, Happy kids.com and on social media.

I'm most active on Instagram. And that's healthykids_happykids love it. And you put out such great content. Thanks so much. And I was wonderful to do this with you. Thank you for having me.